



Islamabad POST

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Philippines, Pakistan eye joint path on climate resilience

Detailed News On Page-08

UN Charter 'My North Star', new UNGA president

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Govt committed to investment growth: Minister

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Urgent measures

PM Shehbaz declares climate, agri emergency

PM acknowledged that Pakistan could not tackle climate change “overnight” and urged long-term measures to mitigate its impact

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the federal cabinet will announce climate emergency and agriculture emergency after consultations today in view of the human and economic losses caused by the floods. Chairing the federal cabinet meeting in Islamabad today, he said a committee headed by Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal is also being constituted to deal with the situation arising out of floods. Shehbaz Sharif said an apex level meeting will follow the cabinet meeting to be attended by the four chief ministers to formulate a policy to cope with the current situation. He said the federation is contributing its share, emphasizing the provincial governments will also have to contribute. He said the floods claimed the lives of about one thousand people and left thousands of others injured. He said an assessment is being carried out to determine the damages caused by floods to crops. As regards his recent visit to China, the Prime Minister said the business conference in Beijing remained very productive.

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Briefs

India crush UAE by 9 wickets in Asia Cup 2025 clash

Men in Blue chase meagre target of 58 runs in 4.3 overs

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: India began their ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup 2025 campaign by inflicting a crushing defeat on the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. Chasing a modest 58-run target, the former champions comfortably knocked the winning runs for the loss of just one wicket and 93 balls to spare. Leading the way for them was left-handed opener Sharma, who top-scored with a quickfire 30 off just 16 deliveries, studded with two fours and three sixes.

Poland downs drones in its airspace

NEWS DESK

WARSAW: Poland shot down suspected Russian drones in its airspace on Wednesday with the backing of military aircraft from its Nato allies, the first time a member of the Western military alliance is known to have fired shots during Russia's war in Ukraine. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk told parliament it was “the closest we have been to open conflict since World War Two”, although he also said he had “no reason to believe we're on the brink of war”. Polish F-16 fighter jets, Dutch F-35s, Italian AWACS surveillance planes and Nato mid-air refuelling aircraft scrambled in an operation to shoot down drones that began entering Polish airspace on Tuesday evening and kept coming until morning, officials said.

Ata Tarar will chair newly established peace committee



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has formed a National Peace Message Committee to develop a consensus narrative against terrorism, extremism, and sectarianism, with the body working under the National Committee on Narrative Building. According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the committee will be chaired by Federal Minister Attaullah Tarar. Its members include Senator Hafiz Abdul Karim, Mufti Abdul

Rahim, Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi, Pir Nageeb-ur-Rehman, Allama Muhammad Hussain Akbar, and Dr Muhammad Raghieb Hussain Naemi. Other members comprise Maulana Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, Maulana Tayyab Punj Piri, and Allama Ziaullah Shah Bukhari. Minority communities will also be represented through Bishop Azad Marshal, Rajesh Kumar Haridasani, and Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora. The notification stated that the director general of the Internal Publicity Wing of the Information Ministry will serve as secretary of the committee. It added that the committee will finalise detailed terms of reference (TORs) in its first meeting, which will align with those of the National Committee on Narrative Building. Separately, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stressed the need to discourage the elements

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Boat carrying 19 flood affectees capsizes in Jalalpur Pirwala

Meanwhile, Pakistan Navy's relief operation continues in flood affected areas of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: A boat carrying flood affectees capsized in Jalalpur Pirwala, police said on Wednesday. According to City Police Officer, 19 people were on board when the boat overturned. Eighteen passengers were rescued, while search efforts are under way to locate the remaining missing person. The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has reported varying flood levels across major rivers and barrages in the country.

According to an official statement, the Indus River is experiencing a medium-level flood at Guddu and Sukkur barrages, while a low-level flood persists at Kotri Barrage. The commission has warned that water levels at Guddu could rise to a high flood stage within the next 24 hours. The FFC further said the Ravi River is in very high flood at Sidhna and in medium flood at Balloki,

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Karachi rain death toll rises to six

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah refuted rumours of the Shahrah-i-Bhutto, Expressway (Malir Expressway) caving in or being breached to divert waters

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The death toll from rain-related incidents in Karachi rose to six on Wednesday, while over 300 people were relocated to safety after heavy monsoon showers swelled the Malir and Lyari rivers. Lyari and Malir rivers serve as Karachi's main storm drains, channelling rainwater through a network of nullahs into the Arabian Sea.

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ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister of Bahrain General Rashid Bin Abdullah Al Khalifa calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Trump, Modi to speak on trade in coming weeks

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said that his administration is continuing negotiations to address trade barriers with India and that he would talk to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, raising hopes of a deal after weeks of discord. Trump, in a marked shift of tone, said he looked forward to speaking to Modi in the “upcoming weeks” and expressed optimism that they could finalise a trade deal. “I feel certain that there will be no difficulty in coming to a successful conclusion for both of our Great Countries,” he said in a post on social media. Modi reciprocated the optimism in a social media post on Wednesday, saying Washington and New Delhi “are close friends and natural partners.”

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Govt lifts ban on new gas connections

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The government has lifted the four-year ban on new domestic gas connections and announced that consumers will now be provided with re-gasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG) connections instead of local gas. Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, addressing a press conference alongside Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, said on Wednesday that the decision had been taken by the federal cabinet under the instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to ease public hardships.

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OIC condemns attack

Trump issues rare rebuke to Netanyahu over Qatar strikes

Trump says he had tried but was “unfortunately, too late” to stop the Israeli attack on the Gulf state, a crucial broker in the negotiations between Israel and Hamas to end the Gaza war

APP

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump gave Benjamin Netanyahu a rare slap on the wrist Tuesday over Israel's strikes against Hamas in Qatar, as he insisted he played no role in the attack by one close US ally against another. Trump said he had tried but was “unfortunately, too late” to stop the Israeli attack on the Gulf state, a crucial broker in the negotiations between Israel and Hamas to end the Gaza war. “This was a decision made by Prime Minister Netanyahu, it was not a decision made by me,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network. “I view Qatar as a strong Ally and friend of the U.S., and feel very badly about the location of the attack,” he said – although adding that eliminating Hamas was still a “worthy goal.” The Israeli attack on Doha could hardly be more sensitive as

Continued on Page 06

Israel attacks new Gaza tower

NEWS DESK

TELAVIV: Israeli airstrikes have destroyed a newly built residential tower in Gaza City, hours after explosions shook Qatar's capital Doha in what Hamas officials described as an Israeli attempt to assassinate senior leaders. The twin developments mark a dangerous escalation in the conflict, stretching beyond Gaza and deepening fears of a regional conflagration. Witnesses said the tower, one of the last remaining high-rises in the city, was struck late Tuesday evening, reducing it to rubble. Families displaced from northern Gaza who had taken shelter

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Israel attacks Yemen

Doha strikes; Pakistan calls for UN meeting

Dar said the reckless provocation marked a dangerous escalation in an already volatile region, amid Israel's ongoing atrocities in Palestine

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday strongly condemned Israel's “unprovoked airstrikes” in Doha, terming the action an illegal act and a blatant violation of Qatar's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a statement, Dar said the reckless provocation marked a dangerous escalation in an already volatile

region, amid Israel's ongoing atrocities in Palestine. He stressed that the aggression gravely undermined regional peace and security and constituted a serious affront to international law and established norms. Outlining Pakistan's diplomatic response, the foreign minister announced that:

- Pakistan, along with Algeria and Somalia, has requested an emergency UN Security Council meeting to formally bring

Continued on Page 06

Envoys of Greece, EU and Hungary present credentials

President Zardari felicitated the ambassadors on assuming their new responsibilities and expressed the hope that their tenure in Islamabad would help strengthen bilateral relations and deepen cooperation in diverse sectors, including trade, investment, culture and people-to-people exchanges

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Envoys of Greece, Hungary and the European Union formally presented their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari in a ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday. H.E. Mrs. Eleni Porichi, Ambassador-designate of the Hellenic Republic (Greece); H.E. Mr. Raimundas Karobalis, Ambassador-designate of the European Union; and H.E. Dr. Zoltan Varga, Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Hungary, presented their letters of credence to the President. Mrs. Eleni Porichi had been serving as the Charge d'Affaires of Greece in Islamabad for the past several months, effectively managing the mission's diplomatic responsibilities. Her elevation to the rank of Ambassador now marks a significant

step in further consolidating Pakistan-Greece relations, particularly in the areas of trade, energy, maritime cooperation and cultural exchanges. President Zardari felicitated the ambassadors on assuming their new responsibilities and expressed the hope that their tenure in Islamabad would help strengthen bilateral relations and deepen cooperation in diverse sectors, including trade, investment, culture and people-to-people exchanges. He emphasized Pakistan's commitment to enhancing ties with the European Union and its member states, noting that closer diplomatic engagement would contribute to peace, prosperity and regional connectivity. Earlier, upon their arrival at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the envoys were presented with a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Armed Forces.

DNA



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mrs. Eleni Porichi, Ambassador-designate of the Hellenic Republic (Greece); H.E. Mr. Raimundas Karobalis, Ambassador-designate of the European Union; and H.E. Dr. Zoltan Varga, Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Hungary, presenting their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – DNA

18 new dengue cases reported in Islamabad

Anti-dengue campaign intensifies in Rawalpindi amid rising cases

THE district administration in Islamabad has reported 18 new dengue cases in the past 24 hours, while surveillance teams inspected 1,067 sites across the federal capital as part of their daily campaign against the mosquito-borne disease. According to the administration's daily surveillance report, 12 cases were confirmed in rural areas and 6 cases in urban sectors. The teams also identified 56 active hotspots during their inspections, prompting immediate anti-dengue operations, including spraying and fogging in high-risk localities. The district dengue control teams carried out inspections in various union councils and sectors, focusing on areas where stagnant water or unhygienic conditions could help mosquito breeding. The report highlighted that inspections were not limited to residential areas but also extended to commercial sites, schools, under-construction buildings, and other public places. Special attention was given to rural belts where cases have been rising faster compared to urban sectors. Out of the 1,067 inspections, larva was found in several locations, which were marked for immediate treatment and follow-up. The administration noted that the identified 56 hotspots pose a continued risk if not regularly monitored. In response to the findings, anti-dengue teams conducted targeted spraying and fogging in affected neighborhoods. These actions were prioritized in areas with repeated case reports and where mosquito breeding sources were confirmed during inspections. The administration emphasized that

the goal is to eliminate larvae before they mature into adult mosquitoes capable of spreading the virus. The teams are also conducting follow-up visits to ensure that previously identified hotspots remain under control. Alongside its operational work, the district administration issued an advisory urging citizens to take preventive steps inside their homes. Residents were reminded to avoid storing water in open containers, ensure proper waste disposal, and maintain cleanliness in and around their houses. Officials stressed that domestic negligence, such as leaving buckets, pots, or unused water tanks uncovered, remains one of the major contributors to mosquito breeding inside homes. "Citizens must ensure that there is no stagnant water within or around their homes. Cleanliness is key to keeping dengue away," the administration stated in its advisory. The district administration confirmed that the process of larva elimination and inspection will continue without interruption. Teams have been instructed to keep surveillance tight, especially in rural areas where the majority of new cases are being reported. The administration also called for collective responsibility, stating that dengue cannot be eradicated without active participation from the public. While the government is carrying out spraying, fogging, and inspections, household-level precautions remain critical to stopping the spread. Meanwhile, The District Health Authority Rawalpindi and its partner departments have significantly escalated

anti-dengue efforts across the district as the number of dengue cases continues to rise, particularly in the wake of recent monsoon rains. A District Health Authority spokesperson stated on Wednesday that the ongoing proactive campaign was a direct response to the heightened risk of the mosquito-borne disease. He confirmed that currently, 60 dengue patients were admitted to various hospitals in the district, with 36 confirmed cases. To curb the further spread of the disease, 1290 anti-dengue teams are operating in the field. Their primary objective is to inspect potential breeding grounds and control the growth of dengue larvae. "These teams are a critical part of our on-ground efforts to manage the situation effectively," the spokesperson added. In a strict enforcement drive, the District Health Authority is ensuring compliance with anti-dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This year, authorities have registered 3,484 First Information Reports (FIRs) against individuals and entities for violations. Furthermore, 1,596 premises have been sealed, and fines totalling over Rs 9.3 million have been imposed. "These strict measures are aimed at ensuring public compliance and discouraging negligence," the spokesperson said. He stressed that the anti-dengue campaign was a continuous effort and urged the public to adhere to precautionary measures issued by the Health Department and cooperate fully with the anti-dengue teams. — APP

13 uplift cases okays in Faisalabad, one deferred

FAISALABAD: The District Planning & Design Committee (DPDC) on Wednesday approved 13 development-related cases while one case was deferred due to incomplete documentation. After chairing DPDC meeting, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Captain (ret'd) Nadeem Nasir said that total 14 cases were presented before the committee which included the projects related to petrol pumps, chemical and oil storage facilities, private schools and clinics. After reviewing the legal and procedural requirements, the committee granted approval to 13 cases. However, application for the establishment of a petrol pump was postponed as the file work was incomplete. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Nadeem Nasir directed the DPDC office bearers to personally visit sites of new cases to ensure authenticity and compliance with regulations. He made it clear that incomplete applications should not be presented before the committee under any circumstances. The deputy commissioner also stressed the need of transparency and adherence to legal standards in handling such projects to facilitate both development and public interest. He instructed that all required NOCs from relevant departments must be submitted to the DC office within stipulated timeframe for smooth processing of new applications. —APP

Commissioner enforces price control on bread & flour

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Engineer Amir Khattak on Wednesday issued strict directives to ensure the implementation of government-fixed prices for flour and bread across the Division, with a new price for a 100-gram piece of bread officially set at Rs 14. The action follows special instructions from Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to stabilize prices of essential food items. During a meeting on bread price control, Commissioner Khattak mandated that all flour mills must provide complete details of their production and stock to the district administration. He also ordered departments concerned to regularly inspect the weight and quality of flour to ensure the public receives quality products at the regulated price. To handle public complaints efficiently, the commissioner ordered the establishment of dedicated control rooms for prompt redressal. He stressed that immediate action must be taken on any grievances received. Furthermore, Commissioner Khattak directed that official price lists must be displayed prominently at every tandoor (bread-making outlet) for public transparency. He instructed price magistrates to enforce the

fixed prices rigorously in all districts, warning that immediate action would be taken against violators. He also called for monitoring magistrates who have not conducted inspections in the last 24 hours. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hassan Waqar Cheema, Additional Commissioner Coordination Syed Nazarat Ali Shah, Director Food, and other key officials. In a briefing to Commissioner Khattak, in the last 24 hours, a total of Rs 367,500 in fines were imposed and 15 outlets sealed during the crackdown across the Rawalpindi Division for flour price violations. Rs 187,500 in fines were imposed and 12 outlets sealed in the Rawalpindi District, Rs 19,000 in fines in the Jhelum District, Rs 70,500 in fines and two outlets sealed in the Chakwal District, and Rs 90,000 in fines and one outlet sealed in the Murree District. A similar crackdown on over-priced bread resulted in Rs 240,000 in fines and five outlets sealed across the division. Actions were also taken against outlets for reducing the weight of bread, with a total fine of Rs 10,000 and two places sealed in the Rawalpindi District. —APP

Anti-begging drive in Murree

RAWALPINDI: The Murree District Administration, under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, conducted a targeted anti-begging operation on the Mall Road and its surrounding areas of the hilly station on Wednesday. The drive aims to tackle begging, which officials describe as a "social curse" and a significant problem for tourists. The operation was a joint effort involving teams from the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, Civil Defence, Punjab Enforcement & Regulatory Authority (PERA), and the Child Development Project (CDP). During the action, a total of 10 child beggars were apprehended. A district administration spokesperson stated that the operation was directly ordered by Deputy Commissioner Shirazi to protect vulnerable individuals, particularly children, from the cycle of begging. He added that the presence of beggars often causes problems for tourists, leading to numerous complaints. Following their apprehension, the children were transferred to the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau in Rawalpindi. The move is intended to provide them with a supportive environment and help them develop a "positive mindset" to prevent them from returning to begging. The spokesperson emphasized that the effort went beyond simple enforcement, focusing on providing these children with a path toward a better life. —DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses signing of an agreement between State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovation of Azerbaijan and Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications with regard to Asaan Khidmat Centre. — DNA

Floodwater enters more areas in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR: Floodwater has entered more areas of Bahawalpur after a breach occurred in another zamindara (private) dykes while over 100 mauzajaat and villages have been inundated by floodwater in the district. The official sources in the Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue-1122) confirmed that flood water had entered more areas of Northern Bypass and Jhangwala after breach occurred in private dykes. They said that over 100 mauzajaat and villages had been inundated by flood water while around 150,000 people had been affected by flash flood of Sutlej river in Bahawalpur district. They said that 34 rescue boats and hundreds of rescuers of the Punjab Emergency Service, Rescue 1122 had been participating in rescue operation in flood-hit areas of Bahawalpur district, adding that a large number of flood affectees had been shifted to 34 relief camps established in different areas of the district. The official sources in the district management said that Tera Pati, Mahajir Wala, Bagipur, Saeedabad, Chakri Syal, Bhindi Mian, Dera Lala, Dera Bakha, Tara Garh, Goth Shah, Uch and several other areas had been inundated by flood water. They, however, said that rescue and relief operation was underway in the flood-hit areas. It is recalled here that presently, over 100,000 cusec water had been flowing beneath Empress Bridge on Sutlej river in Bahawalpur. —APP

192kg hashish seized in Jalalpur Pirwala

JALAL PUR PIR WALA :The Motorway Police foiled a major drug-smuggling bid and recovered 192 kilograms of hashish from a suspicious car on the M-5 Motorway near Jalalpur Pirwala on Monday. According to a Motorway Police spokesperson, the operation was carried out on an intelligence tip-off. The police set up a blockade, intercepted the suspected vehicle, and recovered the contraband concealed in secret compartments. Two accused were taken into custody on the spot. SSP Motorway Police Rana Sarfraz Ahmad commended the team for the successful operation, stating that Motorway Police would not allow any illegal activity on the national highways. He reiterated the force's resolve to keep the highways free from all criminal activities and to play an active role in eliminating the menace of drugs from society. —APP

KP Governor, US Consul General vow stronger coop

PESHAWAR: Newly appointed US Consul General in Peshawar, Thomas Eckert, called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor's House on Wednesday. Governor Kundi congratulated the Consul General on his new assignment and extended best wishes for his tenure. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, bilateral public relations, and opportunities to enhance cooperation in various sectors. The Governor informed the Consul General about investment prospects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's natural resources and said that Pakistan and the United States share a longstanding relationship. He appreciated the US partnership in development initiatives, particularly in supporting the youth

in multiple fields. Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday attended the provincial assembly session on the invitation of Speaker Babar Saleem Swati and addressed the ceremony marking the ratification of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Rules of Procedure 2025. Congratulating Speaker Babar Saleem Swati and Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on the adoption of new rules, the Governor said the occasion marked a historic milestone in the province's parliamentary journey. He emphasized that the Rules of Procedure 2025 were not just a renewal but a reaffirmation of democratic values and institutional efficiency, tailored to the challenges of the present. —APP

350 people rescued overnight

KARACHI: On the directives of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, rescue operations continued through the night to evacuate people trapped in rainwater in different parts of Karachi. More than 350 citizens were shifted to safe locations, according to Rescue 1122. In Saadi Town, ten people stranded in floodwater were rescued jointly by Rescue 1122 teams and the Pakistan Army. Near Saima Society, two men, three women, and six children were safely evacuated, while in Nishitar Basti and Essa Nagri,

eight people were trapped due to flooding. Rescue officials confirmed that four children, a man, and three women were rescued from Nishitar Basti. At Lassi Para near Sohrah Goth, 15 children, one elderly man, and four women were brought to safety. In another incident, two men trapped in the Lyari River near Intiaz Super Store in Gulshan-e-Iqbal were rescued alive. Floodwaters also entered houses in Khameeso Jokhio Goth near Malir River, where water rescue teams were dispatched immediately. The operation was

carried out with water rescue vehicles, boats, and ambulances. Rescue efforts were monitored by Deputy Commissioners of East and Malir districts, while in Keamari district, operations were carried out with the help of revenue officials and police. Assistant Commissioner Keamari Madhiha Narejo led the evacuation of 100 people to safer locations. Rescue 1122 officials said the round-the-clock operation was coordinated under the directives of the Sindh Chief Secretary. —APP

CM orders additional rescue equipments for flood operations

She also announced that a new planning process would be initiated across Punjab to address the long-term challenges posed by floods

LAHORE: On the directions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, additional rescue equipment and trained personnel have been deployed in flood-affected districts of South Punjab to accelerate relief and evacuation efforts. Over 119 boat operators have been assigned, while hundreds of boats, rubber boats, and life jackets have been dispatched. Authorities briefed the chief minister here on Wednesday that Multan received 108 boats, 199 rubber boats, and 1,130 life jackets; Muzaffargarh 57 boats, 53 rubber boats, and 683 life jackets; Rahim Yar Khan 47 boats, 44 rubber boats, and 519 life jackets; Bahawalpur 38 boats, 40 rubber boats, and 519 life jackets; and Lodhran 19 boats, 18 rubber boats, and 546 life jackets. Authorities also briefed the chief minister that emergency evacuation began after a sudden crack developed in the protective Baloch Wah flood dam in Baharan, Jalalpur

Pirwala. On her instructions, the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Multan, along with Pak Army and Irrigation Department teams, reached the site to fill the breach. The district administration teams rushed to five vulnerable villages, made public announcements, and carried out door-to-door evacuations. Families were successfully shifted to safer locations.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif congratulated rescue teams and relevant institutions for draining water from Gujrat in record time, terming their performance a new example of public service. The chief minister said officers and staff from all institutions worked day and night to restore normalcy in Gujrat. "Alhamdulillah, the institutions have set a new precedent by working round-the-clock during the past four days. They are our heroes," she remarked, expressing gratitude to Allah Almighty that

life has returned to normal in the district. She pledged that the same spirit would guide relief and rescue efforts in other parts of Punjab. Following her visit to Gujrat on September 5, CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif had deployed WASA machinery and additional staff from five other cities to accelerate the drainage process. She said that while Punjab is facing the worst flood in its history, with the blessing of Allah Almighty the challenge will be overcome. She assured that there would be no compromise on the protection of lives, property, food, healthcare, and housing of flood-affected citizens. The CM emphasized that rehabilitation would proceed swiftly after rescue operations, with special measures to compensate for crop and property losses. She also announced that a new planning process would be initiated across Punjab to address the long-term challenges posed by floods. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

Sept01/Libya Revolution Day

Sept01/Tanzania Defence day

Sept01/Uzbekistan Independence Day

Sept07/Brazil Independence Day

Sept09/DPR Korea National Day

Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day

Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day

Sept16/Mexico National Day

Sept16/Papua New Guinea Independence Day


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Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Indonesian envoy for strengthening ties with Pakistan

Direct flights between Indonesia and Pakistan are essential: Zafar Bakhtawri ; Pakistani delegation will actively participate in upcoming trade exhibitions in Indonesia: Waqar Bakhtawri

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistan, Chandra Warsenanto Sukotjo, has said that the completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Indonesia is a timely opportunity to take bilateral cooperation to new heights. He stated that Indonesia is keen to further strengthen ties with Pakistan in the fields of defense, culture, trade, and education. He also acknowledged the existing trade imbalance between the two countries and stressed that enhancing Pakistan's exports to Indonesia is essential to address this challenge. He expressed these views during a meeting with Chairman Pakistan-ASEAN Friendship Association, Zafar Bakhtawri, at the Indonesian Embassy. The meeting concluded with an agreement to further consolidate relations by promoting direct connectivity, cultural exchanges, trade cooperation, and educational opportunities. The meeting was also attended by Waqar Zafar Bakhtawri, Member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), and Mrs. Ingan Malem, Head of Economic Affairs. Ambassador Sukotjo announced his personal initiative to establish a dedicated section at the National Library of Pakistan to preserve the history of Pakistan-Indonesia relations. He clarified that the project is being undertaken without government budget support and will be enriched with Indonesian books and cultural materials to make it more meaningful. Highlighting economic opportunities, the

Ambassador described Pakistan's large youth population as a promising market for Indonesian products. He extended a special invitation to Waqar Zafar Bakhtawri to participate in the cosmetic exhibition in Indonesia this October. On the occasion, Zafar Bakhtawri emphasized that the absence of direct air links between Pakistan and Indonesia remains a major obstacle for both the public and the business community. He stressed that launching direct flights is essential to promote tourism, trade activities, and people-to-people exchanges, and urged the Indonesian Ambassador to take concrete measures in this regard. He also expressed his willingness to host ASEAN ambassadors in Pakistan and organize collaborative events to strengthen regional cooperation. Extending further goodwill, he invited Ambassador Sukotjo to attend upcoming trade exhibitions in Pakistan. Meanwhile, Waqar Zafar Bakhtawri stated that he is eager to actively participate in future trade exhibitions in Indonesia, showing particular interest in exploring new opportunities for cooperation in various sectors.

Telenor celebrates AI Day to drive innovation

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan marked AI Day with a series of interactive sessions, awards, discussions and Expo showcasing the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in reshaping industries, redefining skills, and influencing society. The initiative was designed to raise awareness, encourage dialogue, and provide practical insights into how AI can be responsibly applied across diverse sector . The event, held at Telenor Pakistan's headquarters, 345 in Islamabad, brought together leaders, experts, and employees to explore the transformative potential of AI. A key highlight was the launch of "AI Verse" an AI-focused learning path designed to equip employees with future-ready skills. The agenda also included a panel discussion where industry leaders

discussed AI's role in driving Pakistan's economic growth while addressing regulatory challenges. To further simplify adoption, Telenor introduced "AI for Everyone", an introductory session on prompt engineering and practical AI tools. The event also featured AI Expo, showcasing 10 ongoing AI projects, presented by the teams behind them. Telenor Group, through its AI Awards, celebrated groundbreaking projects from across its business units, where Telenor Pakistan's project 'Thunder', recognised for its pioneering application of AI in energy management, won the top honour in the AI for Innovation category. AI Hackathon at Telenor saw remarkable participation from Pakistan, with 105 teams submitting ideas—the second-highest across the

Group. Speaking at the occasion, Fridjof Rusten, CEO of Telenor Pakistan, highlighted the broader vision: "AI is no longer a distant concept—it is here, reshaping industries, redefining skills, and transforming the way we live and work. For Pakistan, this is a tremendous opportunity to leapfrog into a digital-first future and unlock new pathways for progress. We are committed to harnessing AI not just to drive innovation, but to empower people, strengthen businesses, and accelerate inclusive economic growth—so its benefits extend to every corner of society." Awais Vohra, Chief Technology Officer at Telenor Pakistan, said, "AI is a paradigm shift as it moves beyond a specialised tool to general-purpose technology which has a far-reaching impact across various industries and society. —APP

Call for sharing of experiences amongst ombudsman institutions

ISLAMABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that the ombudsman institutions working across the globe are striving to promote good governance, rule of law and efficient public administration. He was addressing the 26th Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors and the 18th General Assembly meeting of the Asian Ombudsman Association at Nanjing, China, said in a press release issued here on Wednesday. Qureshi, who is also the current President of the 47-member strong Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) called

for greater sharing of experiences and best practices amongst the ombudsman institutions. He added that ombudsman institutions are playing a critical role in providing free and expeditious redressal of grievances and streamlining the systems and procedures for efficient service delivery by state institutions. The AOA Board of Directors, which besides Pakistan, includes heads of Ombudsman institutions from Azerbaijan, China, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Korea, Tatarstan and Türkiye took stock of the activities of the Association in the outgoing year. It reviewed activities undertaken by the member countries at

the national level for the promotion of ombudsmanship and considered measures for upgrading facilities at the Association's Resource Centre established within the AOA Secretariat in Islamabad. The General Assembly meeting was followed by an International Workshop on 'Effective Ombudsmanship for People's Livelihood' which was attended by a large number of delegations from the Asian region and beyond. In his keynote address, Mr. Qureshi, stated that ombudsmanship plays a pivotal role in fostering healthy environment where citizen's rights are fully safeguarded.—APP

Mukalma with Uxi Mufti held

ISLAMABAD: National Language Promotion Department (NLPD) hosted the 10th session of its Mukalma series with distinguished scholar, academic, broadcaster, author, intellectual, and former head of Lok Varsa, Uxi Mufti. Dr. Rasheed Hameed, Executive Director of NLPD, delivered the opening remarks and welcomed the attendees, said a press release issued on Wednesday. He highlighted the invaluable contributions of Uxi Mufti to Pakistan's intellectual and cultural landscape. "Engaging with Mufti in this Mukalma session aims to connect the younger generation with profound insights into research and knowledge that are especially relevant in today's era," he remarked. During the session, Uxi Mufti shed light on the intellectual and literary heritage of Pakistan, sharing his experiences and observations regarding the country's cultural and civilizational identity. He emphasized that the promotion of the national language and folk traditions forms the foundation of a strong and progressive society. "Pakistanis are extraordinary people. Their love for the country is unwavering," said Mufti. "This is a nation

willing to make sacrifices and one that is deeply rooted in literary and scholarly traditions," he added. Referencing various philosophers, Mufti spoke about the significance of philosophy in nurturing critical thinking and a deeper understanding of life. "Philosophy not only underpins the human and social sciences but also guides individuals toward the pursuit of truth and a meaningful life," he explained. The session was attended by a wide array of scholars, teachers, researchers, writers, poets, students, and literary enthusiasts, all of whom paid tribute to Uxi Mufti's immense contributions to literature, research, and cultural preservation. Uxi Mufti also responded to the audience's questions with intellectual depth and insight. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Director General of the NLPD, concluded the event by thanking the participants and announcing that the department would continue to host such intellectual Mukalma sessions in the future. "Our aim is not just to promote the national language and literature, but also to raise awareness about our civilization, culture, arts, and literary heritage," he said.—APP

HEC notifies revised curricula for Pharm.D

ISLAMABAD: The Curriculum Division of Higher Education Commission (HEC) has notified the revised curricula of three disciplines: Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D), Food Science and Technology (FST), and Human Nutrition and Dietetics (HND). These programmes have been developed in alignment with the HEC's Undergraduate Education Policy 2023, reflecting current market demands, industrial requirements, and international standards. The curricula were prepared in collaboration with subject experts from academia, accreditation councils, and industry representatives. Utmost efforts have been made to ensure that the programmes are comprehensive, industry-relevant, and aligned with international best practices—playing a vital role in shaping the future of healthcare and allied health professions. Dr. Arjad Hussain, Director General (Academics & Curriculum) chaired the National Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC) meetings for FST and HND. Mr. Hidayatullah Kasi, Deputy Director, Curriculum Division served as Secretary for all three disciplines. Prof. Meritorious Dr. Javeid Iqbal was the Convener, and Prof. Dr. Fazli Nasir was the Co-Convener of the NCRC for Pharmacy. Prof. Dr. Tahir Zahoor served as the Convener for the NCRCs of FST and HND. Mr. Tanveer Ali, from the Curriculum Division, HEC, coordinated the meetings. The revised curricula have been forwarded to all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for implementation and have been uploaded to the HEC website for access by students, faculty, and institutions.—APP

American woman approaches IHC for custody of kids

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday the Director General (DG) National Cybercrime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in person along with a detailed report in the petition filed by an American origin Pakistani woman for the extradition of her teenage children. Justice Muhammad Asif's court issued a written order for the hearing on the petition of Gulam Ghausia Akhunzada. According to the petitioner, she got married to Taxila's resident Muhammad Owais Tariq in January 2014. Due to the marriage, her husband Muhammad Owais Tariq came to the US and also paid for her expenses. She stated that she have two sons with Muhammad Owais Tariq, 8-year-old Arham and 5-year-old Haider. The petitioner said that my husband took the children's passports by promising to offer Umrah but came to Pakistan. My husband also brought the children to Pakistan without my permission, she said. She said that the local court in the US has also given a decision in my favor.—APP

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Briefs

Nayyar urges
austerity to
support flood
victims

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior political leader Nayyar Bukhari has called on government, judicial, and state officials to end unnecessary protocol and reduce transport expenditures in order to save public funds.

He emphasized that the savings from cutting down official expenses should be redirected towards the rehabilitation of flood-affected communities.

Bukhari further urged the government to halt all ongoing development projects and divert the allocated budgets towards relief and recovery of flood victims.

He proposed that the saved funds should be used to provide free seeds and fertilizers to farmers whose crops have been destroyed. He also appealed to industrial groups, housing societies, and both air and land transport sectors to step forward and contribute to relief efforts.

NDMA
dispatches
20-truck convoy
of relief goods
to Punjab

ISLAMABAD: A convoy of 20 trucks loaded with relief supplies was dispatched by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to Punjab on Wednesday, with Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) set to manage the distribution. The relief goods, comprising heaters, folding beds, mattresses, and quilts, were sent from NDMA's Islamabad warehouse in accordance with directives issued by the Prime Minister.

This latest dispatch follows an earlier operation on September 9, when NDMA sent a convoy of 10 trucks loaded with blankets and water cans, which were also handed over to PDMA Punjab. So far, NDMA has provided a total of 1,660 tons of relief assistance to the Punjab province. The aid includes blankets, tents, mosquito nets, water filtration plants, quilts, folding beds, water cans, and 17 boats.

The NDMA reaffirmed its close coordination with civil and military institutions and emphasized its active monitoring of ongoing relief efforts to ensure timely and effective support for affected communities.—APP

Police put two
illegal arms
holders be-
hind bars

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Bhara Kahu police station team arrested two suspects and seized modern automatic rifles during a major operation against criminal elements. An official told APP on Wednesday that the action was carried out on the special directions of SP Rural Zone and SDPO Bhara Kahu, under the supervision of SHO Ch. Rafaqat Gujar. He said ASI Shahzad Malik and ASI Muhammad Asim, along with the police team, conducted snap checking at different points where they intercepted suspicious vehicles. Upon search, two suspects were found in possession of sophisticated automatic rifles along with magazines.—APP

UN Women, NCSW unveil dialogue
on transforming care economy

The forum reflects the collective commitment of national and international partners—including the National Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Government of Norway, and Jazz—working alongside a broad network of stakeholders to advance the care agenda in Pakistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: UN Women in partnership with NCSW launched "Transforming Care Systems: A Roadmap for Economic Growth and Social Equity in Pakistan" to underscore the critical role of the care economy in shaping the country's future. The two-day dialogue brings together diverse stakeholders to foster cross-sectoral collaboration and define priorities for building a sustainable care economy—one that advances gender equality, strengthens social equity, and drives long-term economic growth. The forum reflects the collective commitment of national and international partners—including the National Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Government of Norway, and Jazz—working alongside a broad network of stakeholders to advance the care agenda in Pakistan. In her opening remarks, Umme Laila Azhar, Acting Chair of the

NCSW, underlined the urgent need for systemic change. "This is not just a conversation about services—it's about ensuring that every woman is treated with the dignity she deserves, and that her unpaid work is visibly valued and supported," she remarked, drawing from her recent public advocacy for a more rights-centered approach to care.

In his welcoming remarks, Mohamed Yahya, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, stated: "It is an honor to join this dialogue on one of the most critical drivers of gender equality, economic empowerment, and social well-being care. In a transformed care system, we envision societies that truly value care as the cornerstone of human and economic development—where care is recognized as a skilled profession, essential to our society, and acknowledged as a fundamental human right." Kazim Mujtaba, President of the Jazz Consumer Division, highlighted the role of businesses in advancing the care agenda. "The private sector has a responsibility to turn care from a challenge into an opportunity. By investing in care solutions, we not only support women's participation in the workforce but also

strengthen our economy and create more resilient businesses." Ar. Siti Rozaimeriyan Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, Secretary-General of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), emphasized the regional significance of Pakistan's leadership in advancing the care agenda. "Inclusive care systems offer far-reaching benefits that extend beyond national borders. Pakistan's efforts to place care at the center of its development priorities provide an important example for the region. By investing in equitable and sustainable care, we create stronger economies, more cohesive societies, and a shared pathway for progress across Asia." The forum provides a comprehensive platform to examine the multiple dimensions of Pakistan's care economy. Discussions are addressing the national context of the care economy and exploring the economic and social case for greater investment in care. Participants are considering how social protection measures, decent work policies, and innovative public-private partnerships can contribute to building sustainable and inclusive care systems. In addition, the sessions highlight the dual dimensions of unpaid and paid

care work, with particular attention to addressing gendered social norms that limit women's opportunities, and the intersection of care with climate resilience. The agenda also examines national commitments on care and lessons learned from global and regional experiences, with the aim of developing actionable priorities that will inform Pakistan's first Care Economy Roadmap. A key outcome, the forum will produce a policy paper consolidating the insights, recommendations, and priorities identified during the two days. This paper will serve as the foundation for developing Pakistan's first Care Economy Roadmap, guiding future reforms, investments, and partnerships to strengthen care systems nationwide. The two-day multi-stakeholder forum convenes government representatives from different provinces, development partners, civil society, the private sector, and academia to engage in dialogue on advancing Pakistan's care economy. Distinguished speakers include Dr. Sharmila Faruqi, Member of the National Assembly; Jamshed M. Kazi, UN Women Pakistan Country Representative; Sharmeela Rassool, UNICEF

Deputy Representative; Dr. Lubna Shehnaz of PRIDE Consulting; Gulmina Bilal, Chairperson of NAVTTC; Durrreshahwar of the Pakistan United Workers Federation; Muhammad Jahangir of Handicap International; Dr. Dure Nayab, Director of Socioeconomic Insights & Analytics; Humaira Zia Mufti, Secretary of NCSW; Ivo Spaunwen of ILO; and Summaiya Bushra of BOPinc, alongside national policymakers and private sector leaders. The forum will conclude with closing remarks by Honourable Ms. Wajihah Qamar, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training; H.E. Mr. Per Albert Ilsaas, Ambassador of Norway to Pakistan; and Jacqui Ketunuti, Deputy Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan.

This forum builds on UN Women's regional leadership in advancing the care agenda. Through the Asia-Pacific Care Forums in 2023 and 2024 and the Transform Care Investment Initiative launched in 2024 UN Women has emphasized the need for greater investments and partnerships to develop inclusive and resilient care systems.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik meets Ireland's First Ambassador to Pakistan, Ms. Mary O'Neill.

Hoarders exploiting
natural disasters for profit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's business community leaders are questioning whether profiteering cartels have become more powerful than government institutions as flood losses compound an already severe inflation crisis across the country. Shahid Rasheed Butt, former president of ICCI, expressed alarm at price manipulation following recent flood damage to agricultural areas. He stated that essential commodity prices have risen 15-25 percent above pre-flood levels within days, far exceeding actual supply disruptions. State Bank data shows food inflation reached 28.4 percent year-on-year in August, with pulses and vegetables recording the steepest increases. However, market surveys conducted by trade associations reveal coordinated price hikes that bear no correlation to actual crop damage assessments.

Talking to the business community, the business leader said that they are witnessing systematic exploitation of a national emergency. The speed and uniformity of these price increases across different markets suggest organized manipulation rather than

natural supply-demand adjustments. Some officials have confirmed investigations into wheat flour, sugar, and cooking oil distribution networks, but acknowledged limited enforcement capacity against entrenched hoarding operations. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the government's response has proven inadequate despite repeated announcements. The National Price Monitoring Committee has not produced any concrete enforcement measures beyond standard price notifications that traders routinely ignore. Provincial authorities report discovering hoarded stocks worth Rs 2.3 billion during recent raids in Punjab and Sindh. However, penalties imposed remain minimal compared to profit margins gained through artificial price manipulation. Small retailers report being forced to purchase supplies at inflated rates from wholesale networks that appear coordinated in their pricing strategies. This systematic approach suggests organized market manipulation beyond individual opportunism.

Economic analysts point to a dangerous precedent where emergencies become profit opportunities for established cartels. Mr. Butt warned that unchecked profiteering during

disasters undermines both financial stability and public confidence. The shrinking of local markets due to price manipulation in essential goods has not only damaged sales of these products but also taken a toll on manufacturers. This situation calls for empathy and understanding from all stakeholders. Agricultural produce markets show clear evidence of coordinated supply restrictions despite adequate stock levels in adjoining areas. This pattern indicates systematic efforts to create artificial scarcity during vulnerable periods. Some international development partners have also expressed concern about inflation management capabilities. They emphasized that effective price control mechanisms remain essential for economic stability during crisis periods. The current situation demands immediate government intervention. This intervention should include not only strengthened enforcement mechanisms but also transparent supply chain monitoring. Citizens, who are facing the dual pressures of flood recovery and inflated living costs, require protection from exploitation that appears to operate with impunity. Transparency in supply chain monitoring can provide this reassurance.

Minister, FCDO
discuss bilateral
coop in the
edu sector

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajihah Qamar on Wednesday held a meeting with senior officials of the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) at her office in Islamabad. The delegation comprised Mr. Salim Salamah, Education Policy Adviser (FCDO), Mr. Simon Blower, Education Policy Lead, What Works Hub for Global Education (WWHGE), and Ms. Katie Mullen from the Education Policy and Partnerships Team, Girls' Education Department, FCDO. Said a press release on Wednesday. The discussion focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in the education sector, particularly in the areas of girls' education, teacher training, non-formal education, and the use of data and evidence to drive reforms. The delegation also briefed the Minister on FCDO's global initiatives under the What Works Hub for Global Education, aimed at generating and applying research to improve learning outcomes in developing countries.

Wajihah Qamar highlighted Pakistan's priorities under the education reform agenda, including expanding access to quality education, reducing the gender gap, modernizing curricula, and integrating climate change and sustainability into the learning process. She stressed that education is central to Pakistan's long-term development and underlined the government's commitment, under the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, to ensure inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all children. The Minister of State appreciated FCDO's continued partnership in supporting Pakistan's education system through both technical expertise and programmatic support. She noted that evidence-based policymaking is essential to achieving sustainable improvements, and welcomed closer collaboration with WWHGE in this regard.

The visiting officials commended Pakistan's efforts to prioritize education in policy planning and expressed readiness to work closely with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to promote innovative, cost-effective, and scalable interventions, with a strong focus on empowering girls and marginalized communities.—DNA

IRSA
releases
244,900
cusecs
water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 244,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 282,459 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, Tarbela Dam has attained its maximum conservation level of 1550.00 feet, which was 148.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 147,700 cusecs and 147,300 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1233.90 feet, which was 183.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 46,139 cusecs and 9,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 165,226, 169,468, 492,443, and 382,355 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 21,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 64,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

FJWU leads strategic workshop
to elevate Pakistan varsities

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) hosted a landmark 'Capacity Building Workshop' under the Excellence in Higher Education collaborative project, aiming to align Pakistani universities with international academic standards. Led by renowned academic Prof. Dr. Rahat Munir, Head of the Department of Accounting and Corporate Governance at Macquarie Business School, Macquarie University, Australia, and Chairperson of the Chairs of Accounting and Finance (CAFF) Schools across Australia and New Zealand, the workshop centered on strengthening quality assurance, achieving international accreditation, improving university

rankings, and enhancing teaching practices, academic programs, and student services.

Dr. Rahat Munir, widely recognized for his pioneering contributions in curriculum development, innovative teaching methodologies, and industry-academia collaboration, is also a member of the Education Board of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand. He emphasized the urgent need for Pakistani universities to adopt innovative and globally aligned approaches to education and research to meet future demands. He stressed that traditional education systems must evolve, especially in the era of artificial intelligence (AI) and technological advancements, to produce graduates who are competitive at an international level. He urged universities to prepare stu-

dents for future jobs, many of which do not yet exist, calling on Vice Chancellors and faculty to serve as catalysts for transformation. He advocated for a flexible, forward-thinking education system that can adapt to rapidly changing global, economic, and social realities.

The workshop drew senior academic leadership and policymakers, including Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan (HD), Chairperson of the Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC); Ghulam Farid, Secretary of the Higher Education Department (HED) Punjab; Zahida Azher, Additional Secretary HED; Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali (TI), Vice Chancellor of the University of the Punjab; and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Omer Chaudhary, Vice Chancellor of Government College (GC) University Lahore. In her address, Prof. Dr. Bushra

Mirza (TI), Vice Chancellor of FJWU, stressed the importance of moving away from traditional teaching methods toward modern, globally relevant educational approaches. "We must prepare graduates for future jobs, many of which don't exist today. This demands a shift in mindset, with VCs, faculty, and academic leaders driving change," she stated, reaffirming FJWU's commitment to aligning its academic programs with international standards while fostering innovation, creativity, and critical thinking among students. She also highlighted the vital role of financial investment in achieving academic excellence. "If you want universities to generate economic value, you must invest in them, because money generates money, and knowledge generates knowledge," she remarked.

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Whiter BRICS?

THE BRICS coalition – consisting originally of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – has evolved from a loose grouping of emerging economies into a significant geopolitical and economic force in the 21st century. With its recent enlargement to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia, the bloc now encompasses close to half of the world's population and a substantial share of global GDP and energy production. This expansion heralds major shifts in global governance, trade, and international relations, but also comes with a complex matrix of challenges. BRICS has positioned itself as a champion for a more multipolar world, contesting Western-dominated global institutions. Modern multilateral bodies such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank have seen calls for reform to better represent developing countries and address systemic inequalities. BRICS, through mechanisms like the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), champions inclusive governance and financial cooperation, promoting alternatives to Bretton Woods institutions that often marginalize the Global South. The group's inclusive approach based on consensus sees the potential to reform international institutions toward fairness and democracy, but the expanded membership introduces complexities in balancing diverse national interests while preserving unity. With growing intra-BRICS trade, the coalition leverages complementary economic strengths: China's manufacturing, India's IT and service sector, Russia's energy resources, Brazil's agricultural base, and South Africa's mineral wealth. The expanded BRICS+ includes oil powerhouses Saudi Arabia and UAE, enhancing the group's influence over global energy markets. The BRICS countries have also made strides in advocating bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, expanding investments within the bloc, and increasingly exploring trade in national currencies to reduce reliance on the US dollar – a move towards “de-dollarization” that resonates with many members' strategic interests. BRICS has taken collective action on issues such as climate change, public health, and sustainable development. The group actively pursues cooperation on technology transfer, capacity building, and innovation to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its role in vaccine production and pandemic response during COVID-19 underscored BRICS' potential as a critical global problem-solver. The New Development Bank's infrastructure and green financing initiatives further reflect BRICS' commitment to sustainable and equitable growth, especially in emerging economies. BRICS members have distinct political systems, economic development levels, and strategic priorities. China and Russia often emphasize challenging Western hegemony and expanding BRICS' geopolitical clout, sometimes advocating anti-Western stances. India and Brazil tend to favor a more moderate, balanced approach that maintains cooperation with Western nations while pursuing reform. This ideological diversity complicates consensus decision-making, especial-

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ly given BRICS' equal voting system in institutions like the NDB, where economic weight varies dramatically among members. The expansion with countries of differing governance models raises questions about the bloc's cohesion and the practicality of consensus-based leadership as membership grows. BRICS' growing influence has not gone unnoticed by Western powers, with some viewing the coalition as a rival bloc intent on reshaping or supplanting the current global order. Increased US-China tensions and the ongoing Russia-West conflicts inject volatility into the bloc's dynamics. Pressure from the West on some member countries through sanctions or diplomatic coercion creates external stress, challenging BRICS' unity and external engagement. Economic uncertainties, such as trade protectionism, technological disruption, and global financial instabilities, also present challenges. Varying national economic health means that some BRICS members face structural reforms and growth limitations, which could dampen collective momentum. The enlarged BRICS faces the challenge of institutionalizing its cooperative framework – including establishing a permanent secretariat and clear membership criteria. Managing expansion while maintaining effective governance and decision-making mechanisms is critical to ensuring the coalition's functional integrity. Additionally, the need for weighted voting or reform in decision-making may grow more acute as membership rises, particularly to balance China's predominant economic power with that of smaller members. By the mid-2020s, BRICS is expected to solidify its standing as a key actor in global affairs with enhanced economic integration, diplomatic influence, and strategic partnerships. The group's expanded membership provides opportunity for diversified alliances, greater energy market control, and stronger voices in multilateral forums like the G20 and United Nations. Balance internal diversity while forging common goals on reform, sustainable development, and economic collaboration. Foster innovation in financial mechanisms such as the New Development Bank and BRICS Pay system to support trade and development in member currencies. Navigate geopolitical tensions effectively to maintain constructive engagement without alienating significant global partners. Institutionalize frameworks that allow efficient decision-making amidst expansion, possibly adapting consensus models or adopting weighted systems. India's upcoming chairmanship in 2026 and Brazil's current leadership reflect ongoing efforts to steer BRICS toward pragmatic and inclusive agendas, focusing on climate action, food security, and health cooperation. The future of BRICS embodies both promise and complexity. As a unique coalition representing emerging and developing economies, BRICS has the potential to accelerate the transition toward a more balanced and multipolar world order. Its growing economic heft, demographic weight, and institutional innovations position it as a significant global player. However, realizing this potential requires surmounting internal frictions, external geopolitical challenges, and governance maturation. With concerted diplomacy and strategic vision, BRICS can become a catalyst for global reform, equitable growth, and sustainable development, profoundly shaping the 21st-century international system.

Vision 2030 and the Future of Saudi Arabia

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Unveiled in 2016, Vision 2030 constitutes a bold and wide-ranging response to these challenges. It seeks to reduce oil dependency by cultivating dynamic private sectors in tourism, entertainment, technology, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. Key goals include significantly boosting non-oil government revenue, attracting foreign direct investment, privatizing state assets including a portion of Saudi Aramco and fundamentally transforming the Kingdom's societal dynamics. These include promoting a more moderate interpretation of Islam, increasing women's workforce participation and driving rights, and fostering a vibrant cultural scene previously unimaginable under the kingdom's austere social codes

Saudi Arabia stands at a pivotal juncture in its modern history, with its future trajectory shaped by the ambitious, transformative, yet profoundly challenging agenda encapsulated in Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030. This grand blueprint aims to radically overhaul the Kingdom's economic foundations, social fabric, and global standing within a remarkably compressed timeframe. As such, the nation faces a critical question: does Vision 2030 represent a tangible path to sustainable prosperity, or is it an alluring but ultimately unattainable mirage born of necessity yet riddled with internal contradictions and external constraints? For decades, Saudi Arabia's immense wealth and geopolitical clout have been inextricably tied to its vast petroleum reserves. This created a classic rentier state, wherein oil revenues funded a generous social contract providing subsidies, public-sector employment, and social stability in exchange for political quiescence. However, this model has grown increasingly untenable. Volatile global oil prices, demographic pressures particularly with over 60% of the population under 35 demanding meaningful employment climate change accelerating the global pivot toward renewables, and declining long-term oil demand have all underscored the urgency of economic diversification as not merely desirable, but existential. Unveiled in 2016, Vision 2030 constitutes a bold and wide-ranging response to these challenges. It seeks to reduce oil dependency by cultivating dynamic private sectors in tourism, entertainment, technology, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. Key goals include significantly boosting non-oil government revenue, attracting foreign direct investment, privatizing state assets including a portion of Saudi Aramco and fundamentally transforming the Kingdom's societal dynamics. These include promoting a more moderate interpretation of Islam, increasing women's workforce participation and driving rights, and fostering a vibrant cultural scene previously unimaginable under the kingdom's austere social codes. The scale and ambition of Vision 2030 are staggering. Megaprojects such as NEOM, a \$500 billion futuristic city featuring sci-fi elements like THE LINE, aim to place Saudi Arabia at the cutting edge of global innovation. Other projects the Red Sea Project, Amaala, Qiddiya and the revitalization of Diriyah seek to turn the Kingdom into a hub for ultra-luxury tourism, entertainment, and cultural heritage. Parallel to these are efforts to position Saudi Arabia as a regional financial center, a logistics gateway connecting continents, and a burgeoning nucleus for sports, gaming and advanced industries. All these transformations are underpinned by massive investments in education reform, digital infrastructure, and vocational training to equip the youth with skills relevant to the envisioned

economy. Yet, the vision's audacity inevitably invites skepticism. Economically, the transition from a hydrocarbon-dominated model where oil still contributes over 40% of GDP and a majority of export and government revenue requires an unprecedented influx of foreign investment. However, bureaucratic inefficiencies, perceived political risks, and rigid regulatory frameworks have frequently dampened investor confidence. Additionally, cultivating a competitive domestic private sector necessitates a departure from entrenched business norms often characterized by WASTA (personal connections), low productivity, and a preference for public sector employment. Even more paradoxically, many of the grand projects intended to reduce oil dependency are themselves being financed by revenues from oil and the Public Investment Fund (PIF), creating a cyclical dependency that threatens the vision's long-term sustainability. Socially, the transformation has been no less complex. The opening of cinemas, concerts, mixed-gender events, and the empowerment of women in the workforce marks a significant liberalization, especially for a youth-driven society. However, this social openness coexists with severe political repression. Activists including those who campaigned for the very reforms now being celebrated have faced imprisonment and silencing. The authoritarian governance model, with power increasingly concentrated in the hands of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, stifles dissent and curtails freedom of expression, raising questions about whether the liberalization is merely superficial restricted to consumer culture and entertainment rather than a genuine shift toward civic empowerment or participatory governance. On the geopolitical front, Vision 2030 unfolds in a region rife with instability. The protracted war in Yemen, despite recent de-escalation efforts, has inflicted humanitarian catastrophe and damaged Saudi Arabia's global image. Tensions with Iran persist, affecting regional stability and investor sentiment. Moreover, the once-dependable U.S.-Saudi alliance is undergoing a recalibration, with the United States perceived as a less committed security partner. In response, Saudi Arabia has sought to diversify its diplomatic alignments, courting China and Russia while simultaneously promoting regional economic cooperation. This balancing act, however, consumes diplomatic bandwidth and financial resources that might otherwise be directed toward domestic reform. Internally, the rapid pace and top-down nature of reforms risk societal dissonance. The centralization of power under MBS has sidelined traditional consensus-building mechanisms and concentrated decision-making in a narrow elite. Conservative elements, particularly within the

religious establishment, may view rapid cultural shifts as threatening to Islamic identity and social norms. At the same time, the youth bulge eager for economic opportunity could grow disillusioned if promised private-sector employment fails to materialize at the scale and speed needed to absorb hundreds of thousands of job seekers annually. This twin risk of conservative backlash and youth frustration underscores the delicate social tightrope Vision 2030 must walk. Environmental sustainability adds yet another layer of complexity. The megaprojects' water-intensive nature clashes with the kingdom's severe water scarcity, exacerbated by its reliance on energy-intensive desalination and vulnerability to climate change effects like extreme heat and desertification. The lack of robust sustainability protocols or revolutionary green innovations threatens to undermine the ecological viability of these initiatives. Given this complex landscape, the question of whether Vision 2030 is a sustainable blueprint or a spectacular overreach remains unanswered. Tangible progress is evident in several areas: women's empowerment, the entertainment boom, digital infrastructure, and visible urban development. These signal a genuine break from the past and a serious commitment from the top leadership. Yet, major structural impediments persist continued oil dependency, an underdeveloped private sector, authoritarian governance, geopolitical volatility and environmental strain all of which could derail the broader goals of the vision. The ultimate success of Vision 2030 hinges on several interdependent factors. These include consistently attracting and channeling investment into productive, job-generating sectors beyond showcase projects; cultivating a genuine culture of innovation and meritocracy; reforming bureaucratic inertia and dismantling patronage networks; managing the social transition without alienating key segments; and addressing environmental limitations through transformative technology. Crucially, a long-term transition from hyper-centralized governance to institutionalized, transparent, and participatory models of decision-making will be essential to ensure that reform outlasts any single individual. Saudi Arabia's path under Vision 2030 is neither a clear road to prosperity nor an inevitable failure it is a high-stakes gamble at a historic crossroads. The vision represents both a courageous departure from a decaying status quo and a risky endeavor fraught with contradictions. Whether the shimmering promises on the horizon materialize into sustainable transformation or dissolve into the mirage of unmet expectations will ultimately define the kingdom's place in the 21st century. The world watches, as Saudi Arabia attempts to convert spectacle into substance in the crucible of national reinvention.

Why Pakistan must act now to save its youth from drugs

Saifullah Ansar

After joining, he started meeting group members daily. Most of them were much older than him, while he was just 18. Many of them used drugs. Slowly, he began losing interest in his studies and cricket, getting more and more involved with the group. One day, he saw someone from the group smoking cannabis

THIS is the story of my friend. When he was just 17, he was studying in matric class and was a well-known student in his school. He used to top his class and was very intelligent in his studies. His teachers admired him greatly, and he was also active in sports, especially cricket. He was an all-rounder, both a batsman and a bowler, and also the captain of his team. They played hard-ball cricket tournaments all over Pakistan and were recognized as one of the best teams. His life was going very well, and his family was living happily with him. Unfortunately, one day he met the owner of a political group which had more than forty thousand members across Pakistan. The owner invited him to join, and without knowing the consequences, he agreed. That was the turning point in his life. After joining, he started meeting group members daily. Most of them were much older than him, while he was just 18. Many of them used drugs. Slowly, he began losing interest in his studies and cricket, getting more and more involved with the group. One day, he saw someone from the group smoking cannabis. The person looked so happy and relaxed that it caught my friend's attention. The very next day, at a birthday party, another member offered him cannabis. At first, he refused, but under pressure, he tried it for the first time. He felt happy

and relaxed but kept it a secret from his parents. The next day, he asked one of the group members to give him more because he liked the feeling. From then on, he started using cannabis regularly. Since he came from a wealthy family, it was easy for him to afford it, and through the group, it was always available. Within six months, he became fully addicted. Eventually, one of his group friends moved to another city but told him where to buy cannabis. My friend continued using it every day for over a year. Then, one day, his father found cannabis in his pocket. The whole family was shocked and angry. He finally confessed everything. By then, he had already left his studies and cricket, fighting with his parents constantly for money to buy drugs. His parents decided to send him to a rehabilitation center in another city. He stayed there for 10 days, and the doctors declared him fine, but in reality, he wasn't fully recovered. At first, he seemed better, but when his old friend returned from work, they started using cannabis again secretly. His parents thought he was recovering, but he was still addicted. Eventually, his father caught him again, and this time he involved the police, which led to the arrest of his drug-using friend.

Frustrated, his family sought help from an army officer, who suggested sending him to an army rehabilitation center. After a month of waiting, he was admitted and spent 40 days there. Though the living conditions were poor, he met many other addicts and, for the first time, realized how much he had ruined his life and disappointed his parents. Coming from a respectable and educated family, he finally decided to quit. After three painful years of addiction, he managed to leave cannabis behind. However, the cost was huge: he lost his studies, his cricket career, and many good friends. Today, he is slowly rebuilding his life and living in a better way, but those three years were like hell for him and his family. This story shows why the government must take strong steps to stop drugs in the country. The police have a major role to play, but unfortunately, many officers themselves are involved in selling drugs. The government should ensure strict accountability and checks on law enforcement. At the same time, families must keep a close eye on their children, and young people must choose their friends wisely. Society, family, and government together can help stop the spread of drugs.

—The writer is a staff member

Briefs

PM Shehbaz declares climate...

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He said the event culminated in eight and a half billion dollars worth of joint ventures and MOUs. He said Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal will be visiting China on the 26th of this month for the formal launch of CPEC 2.0. He said the CPEC 2.0 will cover cooperation in agriculture and mines and minerals as well as B to B investment and special economic zones. For Karakoram Highway, he said Chinese investment will be eighty-five percent. Shehbaz Sharif also mentioned the MOU signed with the US for investment in mines and minerals. The Prime Minister said Pakistan will improve its relations with the US and give new impetus to the strategic partnership with China.

Ata Tarar will chair newly...

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who had been churning out nefarious material on social media against the security forces, terming it "highly condemnable". Addressing the federal cabinet meeting, the prime minister said it was their responsibility they single out and identify such elements and, with unwavering commitment, root them out. He said such a repugnant attitude towards the armed forces was unbearable and termed it a "fitna" which should be crushed.

Boat carrying 19 flood affectees...

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while the Chenab River is facing medium flood at Trimmu Barrage and a very high flood at Panjnad Barrage. The commission noted that flood levels are continuing to rise, urging authorities and residents in vulnerable areas to remain alert. Meanwhile, Pakistan Navy's relief operation continues in flood affected areas of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pakistan Navy has immediately deployed hovercrafts for the evacuation of people stranded in floodwaters in the districts of Kashmir, Ghotki, Sukkur and Shikarpur. These hovercrafts are capable of operating on land, water and in marshy areas.

Karachi rain death toll rises to six

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Once natural seasonal streams, they are now heavily constricted by urban sprawl, encroachments, and solid waste, turning many drains into open sewers. This blockage reduces their capacity to carry stormwater, causing frequent urban flooding during monsoon downpours. Three more persons died in rain-related incidents in the metropolis today, raising the death toll since yesterday to six, while three were missing, according to rescue services.

Trump issues rare...

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Qatar, in addition to its role in the Gaza negotiations, is home to a huge US airbase and hosted Trump during a Middle East swing earlier this year. The fossil fuel-rich emirate also recently gave the United States a luxury Boeing 747-8 jet for Trump to use as his presidential plane, a move that sparked major ethical questions. In a statement that largely echoed one issued earlier by White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, Trump focused on the possible damage to his efforts to end the war in Gaza. "Unilaterally bombing inside Qatar, a Sovereign Nation and close Ally of the United States, that is working very hard and bravely taking risks with us to broker Peace, does not advance Israel or America's goals," Trump said. OIC has strongly condemned, in the harshest terms, the Israeli aggression that targeted the Qatari capital, Doha, in flagrant violation of international law, the United Nations Charter, and international norms.

Afghanistan thump Hong Kong in AC 2025 opener

Atal, Omarzai's fifties and collective bowling effort hand Afghanistan dominating victory

DNA

ABU DHABI: Sediqullah Atal and Azmatullah Omarzai's fifties and collective bowling effort handed Afghanistan a dominating victory over Hong Kong by 94 runs in the opening match of the ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup 2025 at the Zayed Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. Chasing a daunting 189-run target, Hong Kong could only accumulate 94/9 in their set of 20 overs despite top-order batter Babar Hayat's anchoring knock. Babar waged a lone battle for Hong Kong in the run chase with a cautious 39 off 43 deliveries. Besides him, only skipper Yasim Murtaza could reach double figures, scoring a 26-ball 16. Gulbadin Naib and Fazal-haq Farooqi jointly led Afghanistan's bowling charge, taking two wickets each, while Rashid Khan, Noor Ahmad and Omarzai chipped in with one scalp apiece. Afghanistan captain Rashid's decision to bat first paid dividends as his team's batting unit yielded 188/6 in their allotted 20 overs. The Alatans, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as they lost Rahmanullah Gurbaz (eight) and Ibrahim Zadrn (one) inside three overs with just 26 runs on the board. Following the back-to-back blows, experienced all-rounder Mohammad Nabi joined Atal for a recovering 51-run partnership for the third wicket. Nabi, who was the core aggressor of the crucial stand, fell victim to Kinchit Shah



on the first delivery of the 11th over after scoring 33 off 26 deliveries with the help of three fours and a six. Atal was then involved in a brief 18-run partnership for the fourth wicket with Gulbadin Naib (five) as Shah struck again in his next over to reduce Afghanistan to 95/4 in 13 overs. Coming

out to bat at number six, Omarzai reinstated Afghanistan's dominance by scoring a quickfire half-century. He dominated his 82-run partnership for the fifth wicket with Atal with a 21-ball 53, featuring two fours and five sixes, until Ayush Shukla got rid of him on the fifth delivery of the penultimate

over. Atal, on the other hand, carried his bat all the way through and top scored for Afghanistan with an unbeaten 73 off 52 deliveries, studded with six fours and three sixes. For Hong Kong, Shukla and Shah picked up two wickets each, while Ateeq Iqbal and Ehsan Khan made one scalp apiece.

Football: Sub-par Japan beaten 2-0 by World Cup co-hosts United States

COLUMBUS: Japan were beaten 2-0 away to the United States on Tuesday, ending their two-game friendly series against the 2026 World Cup hosts without scoring a goal. Japan manager Hajime Moriyasu changed his entire starting eleven from their 0-0 draw with Mexico in Oakland, California, on Saturday. Yuto Nagatomo, who turns 39 on Friday, was named captain, but the makeshift side endured a patchy 90 minutes at Lower.com Field in Columbus, Ohio.

"I'm sorry for so many Japanese fans who came over to support, and those who cheered us on in the morning back home," Moriyasu said. "We had some chances, but we'll work to up our quality in front of goal." Kaishu Sano uncharacteristically lost possession

deep inside his own half in the 18th minute, with keeper Keisuke Osako stopping two attempts from Folarin Balogun and another from Alex Zendejas to let him off the hook. Henry Heroki Mochizuki's header off former Inter Milan man Nagatomo was saved by U.S. keeper Matt Freese three minutes later before the hosts went ahead on the half-hour mark. Zendejas expertly volleyed low into the left corner after Max Arfsten skipped past Mochizuki to send in a left-wing cross.

Junya Ito slid in to meet Yuito Suzuki's pass into the box but his attempt was straight at Freese five minutes later, while Joel Chima Fujita's misplaced pass led to a blocked shot from Cristian Pulisic as Japan remained in second gear

heading into the break. Ayumu Seko replaced Nagatomo, who had a knock, as Japan changed to four at the back and his cross from the left set up Koki Ogawa's header that went straight at the keeper, while Pulisic had two shots saved by Osako before setting up the U.S.' second. After driving forward, the Milan attacker played a ball through for Balogun, who took his left-footed shot first time and scored off the foot of the far, right-hand post in the 64th minute.

Ogawa's audacious effort from distance hit the corner of the woodwork in the 70th minute for Japan, while U.S. substitute Jack McGlynn had a deflected effort denied superbly by Osako before seeing his shot come off the underside of bar. - Agencies

England set the standard with Serbia rout: Tuchel

BELGRADE: Thomas Tuchel urged "amazing" England to use their 5-0 demolition of Serbia as the standard they must stick to on the road to the World Cup. Tuchel's side finally delivered the first eye-catching performance of German's reign as Serbia were swatted aside in Belgrade. Goals from Harry Kane, Noni Madueke, Ezri Konsa, Marc Guehi and Marcus Rashford moved England closer to qualifying for next year's World Cup. Three Lions sit top of Group K after five successive victories, with 13 goals scored and none conceded. They need a maximum of five points from their last three games to book their spot at the tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Criticised for a series of lacklustre displays in his first five matches, Tuchel was relieved to see England produce the kind of vibrant show he had promised after succeeding Gareth Southgate. - Agencies

AFC Champions League Elite kicks off

KUALA LUMPUR: The continent's finest clubs will convene to kick off the League Stage of the AFC Champions League Elite (ACL Elite) 2025/26 on 15th September as the quest for glory begins for the new season. The first match day gets underway in the Sharjah Stadium at 5.45 pm as Sharjah FC make their sixth tournament appearance. The UAE side finished second in the league in 2024/25 and also memorably clinched their first Continental silverware by lifting the ACL Two trophy. Their opponents are Qatar's Al Gharafa SC, who exited at the League Stage last season and are recording their 11th involvement after finishing third in their league, on top of winning the domestic cup for an eighth time.

Four-time UAE league winners and 2024/25 third-place finishers Al Wahda FC start their 11th participation and first since 2021 at 8 pm against Al Ittihad Club, who travel to Al Nahyan Stadium in Abu Dhabi for the seventh ACL meeting between these clubs. The Saudi visitors, who won the domestic double in 2024/25, are making their 13th appearance; the two-time winners (2004, 2005) have the better head-to-head record with three wins and two draws. Runners-up in 2015, UAE's Shabab Al Ahli secured a 10th involvement and first since 2022 after winning a domestic double in 2024/25, with the Rashid Stadium in Dubai to host their 8 pm clash against Tractor FC on 16th September. A remarkable unbeaten journey saw Al Ahli Saudi FC seal Continental success in style, and their title defence begins at 9.15 pm at the King Abdullah Sports City Stadium in Jeddah. Making their 14th appearance, the hosts welcome PFC Nasaf, who won the Uzbekistan league for the first time in 2024, to earn their seventh tournament involvement. This will be their fifth ACL encounter, with the Saudi side winning twice and drawing once previously. - Agencies

Jamaica, Curacao and Honduras win in World Cup qualifying

MIAMI: Jamaica beat Trinidad and Tobago 2-0 in World Cup qualifiers on Tuesday to stay top of their CONCACAF (North American) group, while Curacao and Honduras also won. Jamaica's Bailey Cadamarteri opened the scoring in the 36th minute off a headed pass from Greg Leigh and Jon Russell added the second in the 57th minute at Kingston. Jamaica had opened with a 4-0 win at Bermuda in CONCACAF World Cup final qualifying and lead Group B on six points. With regional powers Canada, Mexico and the United States co-hosting the 2026 World Cup, CONCACAF qualifying was changed to a final round featuring three groups of four. The three group winners will qualify automatically for the World Cup and the best two second-placed teams will get a further chance in inter-confederation playoffs.

Trinidad and Tobago, who opened with a goalless draw against Curacao, had goals from Levi Garcia disallowed in the 29th and 63rd minutes by VAR. Curacao went second in Group B on four points as Tyrese Noslin's 75th minute winner off a pass from Tahith Chong gave them a 3-2 win at home to Bermuda. Chong, a midfielder for England's Sheffield United, opened the scoring in the 14th minute and stretched the Curacao lead in the 26th. Kane Crichlow pulled one back in the 35th minute from a Ne-Jai Tucker cross. Djair Parfitt-Williams equalized for Bermuda in the 42nd minute after being put through by Dante Leverock. - Agencies

Portugal edge Hungary in World Cup qualifying thriller

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner won the spot-kick when his shot was handled by Loic Nego, and he squeezed it into the bottom left corner beyond Toth's outstretched fingertips

BUDAPEST: Joao Cancelo slotted home from the edge of the box to snatch Portugal a thrilling 3-2 win at Hungary on Tuesday, sending them top of their 2026 World Cup qualifying group. Cristiano Ronaldo was also on target as Roberto Martinez's side secured their second win from their two opening games against the spirited hosts, for whom Barnabas Varga netted twice in Budapest. Portugal lead Group F on six points from Armenia on three after their win over the Republic of Ireland earlier. "We knew it would be complicated, we made mistakes and allowed transitions," said Bernardo Silva, who levelled for Portugal after Varga opened the scoring.

"It's always difficult to find balance, probably one of the hardest things in football, especially against teams that defend with such a low block. "Above all, it is a young team that is still growing, but the most important thing is the six points, and we took a giant step towards securing qualification for the World Cup." Nations League champions Portugal were high

on confidence after thumping Armenia 5-0 on Saturday and dominated possession. However, it was Hungary who took the lead as Ferencvaros striker Varga found a gap in Portugal's defence and nodded home Zsolt Nagy's cross.

Portugal responded by pouring forward and Hungary goalkeeper Balazs Toth made a stunning save to deny Ronaldo from close range after half an hour. The visitors levelled six minutes later with Manchester City midfielder Silva lashing into the roof of the net after the ball broke his way in the box. Portugal took the lead after 58 minutes through veteran striker Ronaldo, aiming to become the first player to feature at six different World Cup finals.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner won the spot-kick when his shot was handled by Loic Nego, and he squeezed it into the bottom left corner beyond Toth's outstretched fingertips. Ronaldo became the player who has scored the joint-most goals in World Cup qualifying history, level with retired Guatemala international Carlos Ruiz, as he bagged his 39th. Hungary, who last qualified for the World Cup in 1986 and have never beaten Portugal in 15 attempts, equalised with another Varga header from Nego's cross after 84 minutes. Just two minutes later Portugal stole the ball back high up the pitch and Cancelo stroked home to claim the three points. "It's hard to win when you concede two goals," said Martinez. - Agencies

Israel attacks new Gaza tower

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there were forced once again to flee with their belongings. Civil defense teams reported dozens injured, with rescue efforts continuing into the night. "The building collapsed like paper," said Mahmoud al-Khaldi, a survivor who had relocated to the tower after his neighborhood was flattened in earlier strikes. "We have nowhere left to go." The Israeli military confirmed the strike, claiming the tower was being used as a Hamas command center. Hamas denied the allegation, calling it a "blatant attack on civilians." Meanwhile, Qatar has accused Israel of violating its sovereignty after several explosions were reported in Doha's diplomatic district, where Hamas political leaders were holding talks with mediators on a U.S.-backed ceasefire proposal.

Doha strikes; Pakistan calls for...

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the matter before the Council, urging it to treat Israel's actions against Qatar as a grave threat to international peace and security.

- At the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Pakistan – on behalf of the OIC and in coordination with GCC partners – has called for an urgent debate to hold Israel accountable for what he termed a brazen attack on Doha aimed at undermining ongoing ceasefire efforts.
- Pakistan has also welcomed Qatar's decision to host an Extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit in Doha on 15 September, and formally conveyed to the OIC Secretariat its readiness to co-sponsor and co-convene the summit, to ensure a united Arab-Islamic response to Israel's aggression.

Trump, Modi to speak on...

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He said teams from both countries are working to conclude the trade discussions at the earliest.

"I am also looking forward to speaking with President Trump. We will work together to secure a brighter, more prosperous future for both our people," Modi said. Trump last week said India had offered to reduce its tariffs on US goods to zero, adding that the proposal was late and the South Asian country should have lowered its duties years ago. The US president's more upbeat message came after months of roller-coaster talks that have strained US-India ties.

Govt lifts ban on new gas..

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Malik said the ban, imposed in 2021, had forced residents of new housing societies and apartments to rely on LPG cylinders and other fuels. "Definitely, there's the pain of getting your cylinders filled from the market, and then there's the issue of sub-standard cylinders, which often lead to untoward incidents, and sometimes pipes also leak," he explained. He noted that the two gas supply companies had already completed the prerequisites and would start entertaining pending applications once the cabinet's decision was notified.

Sparkling England crush Serbia to ignite Tuchel's reign

Marc Guehi bagged the fourth and Marcus Rashford's penalty completed the rout as a fifth successive qualifying victory cemented England's position on top of Group K

BELGRADE: England demolished Serbia with a 5-0 win in Belgrade on Tuesday as Thomas Tuchel's side finally delivered an eye-catching performance to move within touching distance of World Cup qualification. Harry Kane's 74th goal in 109 England appearances gave the visitors a deserved lead in the first half at the Rajko Mitic Stadium.

In contrast to Kane's status as his country's record goalscorer, Noni Madueke netted for the first time in a senior international when he increased England's advantage moments after his captain's opener. Ezri Konsa also scored his maiden England goal in the second half before Serbia captain Nikola Milenkovic was sent off. Marc Guehi bagged the fourth and Marcus Rashford's penalty completed the rout as a fifth successive qualifying victory cemented England's position on top of Group K.

They are seven points ahead of second-placed Albania and hold an eight-point lead over third-placed Serbia, who have a game in hand. England need five points from their final three matches to secure a place at the World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico next year. "We had an excellent week from start to finish. We've just proved what I've seen every day in this camp and this makes me very happy," Tuchel said.

"We played with a lot of intensity, a lot of teamwork and we showed our quality. It's good to watch." Although England had made an 100 percent start to the qualifying campaign under Tuchel, their previous performances had been devoid of inspiration and lacking a clear identity. Dour wins over Andorra, Latvia and Albania, alongside a dismal friendly loss to Senegal, had raised questions about Tuchel's ability to win England's first

major trophy since the 1966 World Cup. But Tuchel had described the meeting with Serbia as "proof of concept" and his blueprint looked far more convincing after the most cohesive performance of his six-match reign. "We've only had three weeks of training and that's normally half a pre-season. It takes time and in between there are weeks of pause," Tuchel said. "The players did excellent. The credit goes to them. That's the bar." The statement victory came after Tuchel made four changes from the listless win against Andorra on Saturday, with Konsa, Morgan Rogers, Anthony Gordon and Timo Livramento replacing Rashford, Eberechi Eze, Myles Lewis-Skelly and Dan Burn.

Serbia set up with a cautious five-man defence and Kane ensured England's territorial dominance was rewarded in the 33rd minute. Timing his run to meet Declan Rice's outswinging corner, Kane

found space to guide a clinical header into the corner of the net from 12 yards. Tuchel's men doubled their lead two minutes later with a blistering break. Elliot Anderson's pass was deftly flicked on by Rogers to send Madueke sprinting clear of the Serbia defence. The Arsenal winger caressed a composed finish over Djordje Petrovic from 10 yards for his fifth goal involvement in nine international appearances. With England finally playing with the eye-catching style he had made his mission statement, Tuchel pumped his fists in a jig of delight on the touchline.

A Serbia fan tried to rattle England by shining a green laser pen into the eyes of Konsa and Reece James, prompting a plea from the stadium announcer to stop the distraction after the game was briefly halted. Serbia were hit with a partial stadium closure after supporters were guilty of bad behaviour, includ-

ing "discrimination and racist abuse" against Andorra in June. Riot police also entered the stands in the second half after Serbia fans chanted inflammatory political slogans. England were unfazed and Konsa exacted revenge in the 52nd minute. Gordon's shot was parried by Petrovic and Guehi deflected it towards Konsa, who had the simple task of tapping home from close-range. Tottenham defender Djed Spence came off the bench in the closing stages to become the first Muslim to represent England. Milenkovic was sent off with 18 minutes left after hauling down Kane. Guehi grabbed England's fourth goal in the 75th minute when he poked home from Rice's free-kick. Capping a feelgood evening for Tuchel, Rashford converted a 90th minute penalty after Ollie Watkins was fouled by Strahinja Erakovic. - Agencies

Briefs

ICCI determined to support businesses in adopting int'l standards

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Wednesday emphasized the urgent need for Pakistan to adopt digital technologies, automation, and advanced engineering solutions in order to remain competitive in the fast-paced global economy. They said that embracing innovation is no longer optional but a necessity for the country's industries to achieve sustainable development, attract investment, and boost exports, said a press release. ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi said that global markets are being reshaped by technology and Pakistan cannot afford to lag behind. He stressed that local industries must adopt automation and engineering solutions to enhance productivity, reduce wastage, and cut down costs of doing business.

He assured that ICCI would continue to advocate for policies that encourage digital transformation and would support the business community in adopting modern tools to remain aligned with international standards. He highlighted that advanced engineering solutions and digital technologies are the foundation of industrial competitiveness in the 21st century. He stressed that Pakistan must focus on developing human capital with the skills required for Industry 4.0, artificial intelligence, and robotics.—APP

PSX extends bullish run, gains 457 points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index extended its bullish momentum on Wednesday, gaining 457.27 points, a positive change of 0.29 percent, to close at 157,020.80 points against 156,563.53 points on the previous trading day. A total of 996,270,293 shares were traded during the day compared to 1,068,521,605 shares the last trading day, while the value of shares stood at Rs 52.727 billion against Rs 55.190 billion previously. As many as 486 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 226 of them recorded gains, 227 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 33 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 75,546,108 shares at Rs 1.56 per share, Bank of Punjab with 72,460,270 shares at Rs 18.68 per share, and K-Electric Limited with 61,348,128 shares at Rs 5.60 per share. PIA Holding Company LimitedB witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 1,009.50 per share price, closing at Rs 25,666.00, followed by Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 62.11 rise in its per share price to close at Rs 9,577.11. On the other hand, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 118.27 per share, closing at Rs 32,198.98, followed by Bhanero Textile Mills Limited with Rs 54.26 decline to close at Rs 945.74.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.60 against the previous day's closing Rs 281.61. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.5 and Rs 282.8, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.43 to close at Rs 329.47 against the last day's closing of Rs 330.90, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 1.90, whereas a decrease of 96 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 381.02 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 381.98. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged, and closed at Rs 76.67 and Rs 75.06, respectively.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Türkiye's Minister of National Defense Yaşar Güler at 16th Session of the Türkiye-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission (JEC), where both sides signed the Protocol of the 16th JEC.

Pakistan reaffirms commitment to SME uplift

The SAPM highlighted that SMEs contribute nearly 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developing economies, and their strengthening is essential for job creation, innovation, and poverty reduction

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Wednesday said that Pakistan was committed to transforming Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) into engines of sustainable growth and drivers of an inclusive industrial revolution. "Under the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan is committed to transforming SMEs into engines of sustainable growth and drivers of an inclusive industrial revolution", he emphasized during the first virtual session and the 8th official meeting of the D-8 governmental bodies on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), said a news release. The session was also attended by the Secretary of Industries and Production Saif

Anjum, and the CEO of SMEDA Suqrat Aman. The SAPM highlighted that SMEs contribute nearly 40 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developing economies, and their strengthening is essential for job creation, innovation, and poverty reduction. Haroon said "SMEs are the backbone of our economy and the foundation for regional economic integration. Pakistan's SMEs, particularly in textiles, surgical goods, IT, and sports sectors, are globally recognized, and we are determined to enhance their competitiveness," He said limited financing, technology gaps, and market access remain key challenges. Through collective efforts, we can convert these barriers into opportunities. "Pakistan is committed to aligning its SME policies with international stand-

ards, ensuring inclusivity, and engaging all stakeholders in the process," he added. Meanwhile, Saif Anjum underlined that the D-8 cooperation framework provides member states with the platform to participate in global value chains, paving the way for stronger regional collaboration and industrial growth. The 8th meeting reaffirmed the role of SMEs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and agreed to enhance financing access, digital transformation, environmentally friendly practices, and youth and women empowerment within member states. Pakistan remains steadfast in its resolve to advance regional economic diplomacy and promote SMEs as the central pillar of development and global competitiveness. The Developing-8 Organization for Eco-

nommic Cooperation (D-8), established in 1997, comprises Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Türkiye. The organization works to enhance global economic positioning, expand trade opportunities, and improve living standards through collaboration in sectors including agriculture, energy, industry, tourism, and SME development. Since the creation of the D-8 SME Governmental Bodies in 2010, the grouping has advanced policies on financing, e-commerce, technology transfer, industrial parks, and SME networking. The recent launch of the D-8 SME Center in Abuja, Nigeria (2025) is a milestone, serving as a hub for innovation, digital trade, and capacity-building across member states.—APP

Flash floods in Indonesia leave at least

DENPASAR, Indonesia: Indonesian rescuers recovered the bodies of at least 11 people while 13 people were missing Wednesday after flash floods struck two provinces of the island nation, authorities said. Torrential rains beginning Monday caused flooding and landslides in East Nusa Tenggara province and on the tourist island of Bali. Three members of a family were found dead after their house was swept away and five people were missing Wednesday in the Nagekeo district of East Nusa Tenggara, officials said. In Bali, rescuers retrieved eight bodies from several areas and eight residents were missing Wednesday, according to Muhammad Iqbal Simatupang, the police chief in Bali's provincial capital of Denpasar. Rain has caused rivers to burst their banks, tearing through nine cities and districts in Bali. Mud, rocks and trees tumbled onto mountainside hamlets and rising rivers submerged at least 112 neighborhoods and resulted in several landslides, Bali's Disaster Mitigation Agency said in a statement. Four people were in a building that collapsed and was swept away in the Kumbasari market area of South Denpasar, said Nyoman Sidakarya, the head of Bali's Search and Rescue Agency. Videos released by the National Search and Rescue Agency showed cars floating in muddy waters while soldiers and rescuers in rubber boats helped children and older people who were forced onto the roofs of flooded homes and buildings. Severe flooding inundated thousands of homes and buildings in residential areas and tourist spots. Authorities have cut electricity and water, prompting hotels, restaurants, hospitals and other public facilities to use generators, Bali Gov. Wayan Koster said. There have been landslides in 18 neighborhoods of Karangasem, Gianyar and Badung districts and swept through at least 15 shops and houses and damages several roads and bridges, he said "This disaster also caused material losses for traders and tourism businesses," Koster said, adding that more than 800 people were in temporary shelters after floodwater reached up to 2.5 meters (8 feet) in places. National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said flash floods in Nagekeo swept away villagers and vehicles passing through devastated villages and triggered a landslide that blocked three roads, killing at least three villagers and four people were missing.—DNA

China's foreign trade sustains stable growth despite external headwinds

BEIJING: Total goods imports and exports in yuan-denominated terms increased 3.5 percent year on year in August, marking the third consecutive month that both exports and imports achieved simultaneous growth, official data showed Wednesday. During the January-August period, China's goods trade also expanded 3.5 percent year on year, according to the General Administration of Customs (GAC). Exports led the overall expansion during the January-August period, surging 6.9 percent year on year, while imports registered a slight decrease of 1.2 percent. In U.S. dollar terms, the country's exports and imports of goods amounted to 321.81 billion U.S. dollars and 219.48 billion U.S. dollars, respectively, in August. For the first eight months, the figures were 2,452 trillion U.S. dollars and 1,666 trillion U.S. dollars. During the January-August period, ASEAN remained China's largest trading partner, with total bilateral trade surging 9.7 percent to 4.93 trillion yuan (about 686.8 billion U.S. dollars), accounting for 16.7 percent of the country's total foreign trade. It was followed by the European Union, with trade rising 4.3 percent. China has remained ASEAN's largest trading

partner for 16 consecutive years, while ASEAN has been China's top trading partner for five consecutive years. Data also highlighted a 5.4 percent increase in trade with Belt and Road countries to 15.3 trillion yuan, while trade with the United States, China's third-largest trading partner, fell 13.5 percent in the first eight months of this year. Private enterprises demonstrated significant dynamism as the main driver of trade, with their import and export values growing 7.4 percent to 16.89 trillion yuan, accounting for 57.1 percent of the nation's total, 2.1 percentage points higher than the same period last year. China's foreign trade continued to undergo a structural shift as exports of mechanical and electrical (M&E) products grew 9.2 percent, accounting for 60.2 percent of total exports, driven by strong growth in integrated circuits and automobiles, while labor-intensive products saw a 1.5 percent decline. China's exports of complete vehicles are expected to hit the 7 million unit mark in 2025, with commercial vehicle exports set to surpass 1 million units for the first time and new energy vehicle exports poised for steady growth amid a more balanced overseas market distribution, according to a forecast by the China Chamber of

Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products (CCCME) in early September. Complete vehicles and auto parts collectively remain the largest category of M&E exports, accounting for 10 percent of the total M&E export value, according to the CCCME. The trade performance came amid significant uncertainties in global economic and trade development, with multiple international organizations noting that tariff barriers have substantially increased global trade costs. China's commerce ministry has pledged to expand high-standard opening up, as the world's largest goods trader addresses uncertainties with high-quality development. Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's Department of Statistics and Analysis, said that China's goods trade has maintained its stable growth trajectory despite facing a severe and complex external environment. Lyu added that monthly exports have now grown for six consecutive months as enterprises continuously adapt to international demand with high-quality supply, while the recovery in domestic production and consumption has driven a month-on-month improvement in the cumulative import growth rate.—DNA

China to work with Pakistan to implement outcome of Tianjin Summit: Envoy

First, old and new friends gathered in Tianjin. More than 20 foreign heads of state and government and 10 heads of international organizations attended the summit

ISLAMABAD: China will work with Pakistan to accelerate the implementation of the outcomes of the Tianjin Summit, carry forward the Shanghai Spirit and pool the strength of the SCO with concrete actions. This aims at building a closer SCO community with a shared future and make new contributions to the development and growth of the Global South and the prosperity and development of regional countries. This was stated by Ambassador Jiang Zaidong at a media interaction held here at Chinese Embassy, INP reported. China believes that Pakistan played an active and positive in the successful conducting of recently held SCO's Summit and achieving its objectives. He said, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif attended all the activities of the Summit and made solid contribution developing the SCO as a strong platform as well as giving boost to Sino-Pak bilateral ties. Ambassador Jiang Zaidong took relevant questions about the SCO, including the President Xi Jinping Global Governance Initiative. He To a question, he said, "Chinese President Xi Jinping while addressing SCO Plus" Meeting in Tianjin had pro-

posed the Global Governance Initiative (GGI), calling on countries to work in concert for a more just and equitable global governance system. The GGI marks the fourth landmark global initiative proposed by Xi over the past several years, following the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative. Xi highlighted five principles of the GGI – adhering to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, advocating the people-centered approach, and focusing on taking real actions." The ambassador also talked about the grand military parade held in Beijing on September 3 commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. The purpose of the parade was to remember history, honor fallen heroes, cherish peace, and create a better future. This marked the complete victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. It was a historic turning point for the Chinese nation emerging from the grave crises in modern

times to embark on the journey toward great rejuvenation; it was also a major turning point in the course of world history. On the occasion, Counselor Wang Shengjie gave a briefing about PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China, SCO Tianjin Summit and the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. PM's Special Representative on China Zafar Uddin Mahmood shared his personal comments on the summit and the PM's visit." Replying to questions, the Ambassador further said, "This was the fifth time that China had hosted the SCO summit. It brought the "China Year" of the SCO since China assumed the presidency in July last year to a grand finale. It was a gathering of unity, friendship and fruitful outcomes, with distinctive features and many highlights. Personally I'd like to share following three aspects: First, old and new friends gathered in Tianjin. More than 20 foreign heads of state and government and 10 heads of international organizations attended the summit.—APP

Pakistan assumes Chair of SCO-RATS

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday assumed the Chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) for 2025-26.

"This is a reflection of the confidence of SCO member states in Pakistan's dedicated efforts and contributions towards regional peace and security, particularly in combating terrorism," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

In its capacity as the chair of SCO-RATS, Pakistan will work towards fostering regional cooperation against terrorism, in line with shared priorities, guided by the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, equality, and shared responsibility.

It will also host events and activities across key domains – including cyber counterterrorism, information operations, border security, countering terrorist financing, and capacity-building – to deepen collaboration.—APP

Pakistan, Japan renew resolve to enhance bilateral coop

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Japan renewed their resolve to strengthening the longstanding economic and diplomatic partnership as the Ministry of Economic Affairs hosted the 9th Session of the Japan-Pakistan High-Level Economic Policy Dialogue (JPHLEPD) here. According to press release issued by Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Pakistani delegation in the session was led by Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Kazim Niaz while the Japanese delegation was headed by, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan, AKAHORI Takeshi.

Both sides shared proposals to deepen bilateral ties, focusing on trade, investment, infrastructure development, and sustainable growth—reflecting both nations shared commitment to fostering economic prosperity and regional stability. Secretary, EAD reiterated that Japan remains a key trade partner, with bilateral trade standing at \$1.54 billion in FY 2024 – 25.

Pakistan is actively promoting its products at key Japanese trade exhibitions and facilitating Japanese business delegations at events like FoodAg and TEXPO. Key proposals included signing Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) on sanitary and phytosanitary standards, establishing Japanese sourcing offices in Pakistan, launching JICA-supported compliance awareness programs, and enhancing SME participation in Japanese trade shows.

Pakistan side focus on skilled human capital development and labor mobility. In line with Japan's Specified Skilled Workers (SSW) and Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), Pakistan side proposed the establishment of a Center of Excellence for Japanese Language Training with JICA's technical support.—APP

UAE President, Qatari Emir affirm solidarity against Israel's attack

DUBAI: UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed met with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha on Wednesday to discuss the recent Israeli attack on Qatari territory, state news agency WAM reported. During the meeting at the Emiri Diwan, Sheikh Mohamed reaffirmed the UAE's solidarity with Qatar, stressing support for all measures taken by Doha to safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and people. He described the attack as a violation of international law that threatens regional stability and peace prospects, while praising Sheikh Tamim's efforts to promote peace in the region. The UAE leader was accompanied by a high-level delegation including senior members of the ruling family and top officials.—APP

Briefs

UAE prepares aid ship for Afghanistan

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates is stepping up humanitarian efforts to support the Afghan people in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck the country's eastern regions. The Joint Operations Command at the Ministry of Defence is preparing a humanitarian aid ship loaded with thousands of tonnes of food, shelter materials and medical supplies, in line with the directives of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The ship is being prepared in coordination with several UAE charitable and humanitarian organisations, reflecting the country's collective national effort to provide urgent relief to Afghanistan. The Joint Operations Command said the initiative underscores the UAE's long-standing commitment to supporting disaster-stricken communities and its leading role in humanitarian and relief work at both regional and international levels. – APP

'World's \$2.7 trillion military spending dwarfs investment in peace'

UNITED NATIONS: Global military spending reached a record of \$2.7 trillion in 2024 amid intensifying wars and rising geopolitical tensions worldwide, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned. "The world is spending far more on waging war than in building peace," he said at a press briefing on Tuesday for his new report on the threat posed by the steady rise in military expenditure. Spending on security needs increased across all five global regions during 2024, marking the steepest year-on-year rise for at least the last three decades. Compared to the \$2.7 trillion directed to military budgets, the world could eliminate extreme poverty for just under \$300 billion. "A more secure world begins by investing at least as much in fighting poverty as we do in fighting wars," said Mr. Guterres. The alarming amount spent on arms-related costs last year alone is 750 times the 2024 UN regular budget. It also equates to almost 13 times the development assistance provided by the OECD's development assistance committee in 2024, indicating a stark trade-off between military expenditure and sustainable development. – APP

Putin 'testing the West', Kyiv says

KYIV: Russia's leader is escalating his war on Ukraine and testing the West, Kyiv said Wednesday, after drones violating Polish airspace were shot down. The statement came shortly after Poland scrambled aircraft alongside allies to shoot down "hostile objects" violating its airspace. "Russian drones flying into Poland during the massive attack on Ukraine show that (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's sense of impunity keeps growing because he was not properly punished for his previous crimes," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga wrote on X. "Putin just keeps escalating, expanding his war, and testing the West," Sybiga said. "The longer he faces no strength in response, the more aggressive he gets." "A weak response now will provoke Russia even more – and then Russian missiles and drones will fly even further into Europe," he added. The incursion into Polish airspace came as Russia unleashed a barrage of strikes across Ukraine, including in the western city of Lviv, around 50 miles (80 kilometres) from the Polish border. Russian drones and missiles have entered the airspace of NATO members – including Poland – several times during Russia's three-and-a-half-year war, but a NATO country has never attempted to shoot them down. – Agencies

Philippines, Pakistan eye joint path on climate resilience, human capital

The Ambassador highlighted that there is a strong alignment between Pakistan's development agenda and the Philippines' 2023–2028 Development Plan, creating natural areas for cooperation across multiple sectors

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

IN an exclusive conversation with Daily Islamabad Post, CENTRELINE magazine, and the Diplomatic News Agency, H.E. Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez, Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan, laid out a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening Pakistan's engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The first part of the interview was published on September 9, 2025. The Ambassador highlighted that there is a strong alignment between Pakistan's development agenda and the Philippines' 2023–2028 Development Plan, creating natural areas for cooperation across multiple sectors. Infrastructure and energy stand out as priorities, with both countries investing heavily in sustainable projects and renewable energy. Collaborative opportunities exist in clean energy, smart grids, and infrastructure technology. Similarly, in the fields of industry and commerce, Pakistan's port modernization and development of industrial zones align closely with the Philippines' focus on logistics and manufacturing. Shared interests in textiles, garments, and maritime services offer clear pathways for trade and joint ventures. Dr. Fernandez pointed to the growing role of ICT and innovation, noting that Pakistan's advances in artificial intelligence and semiconductors complement the Philippines' digital transformation drive. This opens doors for cooperation in cybersecurity, fintech, and digital upskilling. Agriculture and food security also emerged as a shared priority, with Pakistan's investments in seed certification and traceability systems aligning well with the Philippines' efforts to modernize its agricultural sector. Such complementarities, he explained, could lead to cooperative ventures in food processing, agricultural technology, and supply chain integration. Climate resilience featured prominently in the Ambassador's vision. Both countries, he stressed, remain highly vulnerable to climate change, and initiatives such as Pakistan's eco-tourism and resilience funds mirror Philippine goals in disaster preparedness and sustainable development. Joint learning and advocacy, therefore, could strengthen resilience at the regional level. Human capital development, especially skills training in AI, data science, and women's economic empowerment, is an



other area where both countries can grow together through knowledge-sharing and capacity-building. Beyond economic and development cooperation, the Ambassador highlighted steady progress in cultural and academic exchanges. The Philippine Embassy in Islamabad continues to organize cultural showcases and national day events to strengthen community engagement. Institutions like the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), with its ASEAN Corner and regular roundtables, have created platforms for academic dialogue and policy exchange. Embassy-led field visits, engagements with universities, and interactions with business groups have kept people-to-people connections alive. Although there is no large-scale bilateral scholarship program yet, Pakistani students already study in the Philippines, supported by university agreements, ASEAN-driven exchanges, and ad-hoc scholarships. With the right support, Dr. Fernandez observed, these initiatives could expand into structured exchange programs and joint scholarships. Tourism was identified as another key pillar in building stronger ties. The Philippines, with its world-renowned beaches, eco-tourism destinations, and rich



cultural heritage, is a natural attraction for Pakistani travelers. The Embassy continues to actively promote tourism through cultural showcases and campaigns while coordinating with authorities in Manila to explore ways to improve connectivity. Proposals under consideration include direct flights, simplified visa processes, and curated travel packages tailored to Pakistani tourists. Dr. Fernandez also underscored barriers that currently limit trade and investment between the two countries. These include low market awareness, non-tariff barriers, and complexities in complying with sanitary and phytosanitary standards in agriculture. Halal certification remains a particular gap, as formal mutual recognition is yet to be achieved. Logistics and customs constraints further raise costs and reduce efficiency. To address these challenges, the Ambassador recommended more trade fairs, business forums, mutual recognition of standards, and fast-tracking single-window systems. Leveraging ASEAN's connectivity frameworks such as the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) would also help streamline cooperation.

On the subject of regional connectivity, the Ambassador noted that ASEAN has placed integration at the core of its strategy. He emphasized that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could play a complementary role if aligned with ASEAN's broader goals. With projects like Gwadar Port offering potential transshipment hubs for South and Southeast Asia, CPEC has the capacity to create new energy and logistics links. However, he cautioned that success would depend on transparency, sustainability, and the ability to navigate complex political and geographic realities. For CPEC to support ASEAN's objectives, it must promote inclusivity, openness, and shared prosperity. In conclusion, Dr. Fernandez described Pakistan-ASEAN engagement as a "strategic path to deeper ties." He stressed that through shared knowledge, investment, and innovation, both Pakistan and the Philippines can build stronger foundations for cooperation. Whether in trade, agriculture, energy, or people-to-people exchanges, the opportunities are vast—and with mutual commitment, this partnership can significantly contribute to regional integration and resilience.

UN Charter 'My North Star', says new UNGA president

The new UNGA chief acknowledged the grim realities facing millions across the globe – from children starving in Gaza and Afghan girls barred from school – to families in Ukraine hiding from missile attacks, and Pacific Islanders watching their homes swallowed by the sea



UNITED NATIONS: As the UN General Assembly opened its 80th session its new President Annalena Baerbock called on member states to unite in addressing global crises – from war and poverty to climate change – taking her oath on the original 1945 Charter and pledging to lead with courage and inclusiveness. This will be "no ordinary session," she pledged, with the multilateral system beset by overlapping crises and heightened disunity. A former foreign minister of Germany, Ms. Baerbock becomes only the fifth woman in history to preside over the General Assembly, which now has 193 members. In a symbolic gesture linking past to present, she swore

her oath on the UN's founding Charter from the San Francisco Conference in 1945 – and accepted the Assembly's ornate gavel from her predecessor, Philemon Yang of Cameroon. The Charter itself, preserved by the US National Archives, has returned to UN Headquarters for the first time in decades. Now on display through September, the 1945 document is more than a historical artifact – it is a living reminder of the collective pledge to build peace, uphold human rights and pursue shared values and goals through multilateral cooperation. The gavel carries its own storied weight. A gift from Iceland, it is larger and more ornate than the ones used in UN conference rooms. The symbol of order in the "parliament of the world," it is used to open and close meetings, adopt resolutions, and, at times, bring the Assembly to silence. In her address, Ms. Baerbock said she would be guided by only one thing – the Charter of the United Nations. "It will be my North Star," she said, adding that she will always act with the belief that "we are truly better together."

At the same time, the new UNGA chief acknowledged the grim realities facing millions across the globe – from children starving in Gaza and Afghan girls barred from school – to families in Ukraine hiding from missile attacks, and Pacific Islanders watching their homes swallowed by the sea. "Our world is in pain, indeed," she told delegates in the iconic General Assembly Hall. "But imagine how much more pain there would be without the United Nations." Ms. Baerbock underscored the UN's vital role in humanitarian assistance, citing the millions who rely on agencies such as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and WHO. – Agencies

KP Governor meets newly appointed US Consul General in Peshawar



DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with the newly appointed US Consul General Thomas Eckert at the Governor House on Wednesday. Governor Kundi congratulated Eckert on his posting in Peshawar and discussed matters of mutual interest, people-to-people ties, and enhancing cooperation in various sectors. Highlighting the province's potential, the Governor briefed the US diplomat on investment opportunities in KP's natural resources. He said Pakistan and the US share a long history of bilateral diplomatic relations and ap-

preciated America's development partnership in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Kundi urged the US to increase its support for youth in merged districts, especially through investment in education, sports, and other fields. He noted that KP's youth possess exceptional talent and need opportunities to excel. The Governor also underlined the challenges of terrorism and climate change facing the province, stressing the need to develop the agricultural sector, particularly in southern districts where millions of acres of barren land can be made cultivable. The US Consul General expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality and reaffirmed Washington's commitment to expand cooperation and partnership projects in the region.

Nepal army patrols after deadly protests oust PM

KATHMANDU: Nepali soldiers patrolled the streets of Kathmandu on Wednesday, seeking to restore order after protesters set parliament ablaze and forced the prime minister to quit in the worst violence to hit the Himalayan nation in two decades. Protests had begun Monday in the Nepali capital against the government's ban on social media and over corruption, but escalated into an outpouring of rage nationwide with government buildings set on fire after a deadly crackdown claimed at least 19 lives. The rapid descent into chaos shocked many, and Nepal's military warned against "activities that could lead the country into unrest and instability" in the country of 30 million people. Smouldering plumes of smoke rose from the government buildings, residences of politicians, supermarkets and other buildings targeted by protesters, an AFP reporter said Wednesday. Streets were littered with carcasses of burnt vehicles and tyres. "It is quiet today, the army is on the streets in all places", one soldier inspecting cars at a makeshift street checkpoint said, who could not be named as he was not authorised to speak to reporters. Gangs on Tuesday had attacked and set fire to the house of KP Sharma Oli, the 73-year-old, four-time prime minister and leader of the Communist Party. He later quit to allow "steps towards a political solution". His whereabouts are not known. Nepali Army chief, General Ashok Raj Sigdel, has appealed for talks, in a video message issued late Tuesday. "To provide the nation with a peaceful resolution, we urge all groups involved in the protest to call it off and engage in dialogue", he said. The International Crisis Group called it a "major inflection point in the country's uneasy experience with democratic rule". – APP

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