



Islamabad POST

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US keen to cement relations with Pakistan: Rubio

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President Zardari briefed about Chinese tech

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Mohsin Naqvi pays tributes to Capt. Hasan

Detailed News On Page-07



TTP terrorism

Islamabad to convey tough message to Taliban govt

TTP acquiring money, training in terrorism and weapons from India and enjoys safe havens in Afghanistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq Khan, will visit Kabul early next week with a stern warning from Pakistan for Afghanistan regarding the facilitation of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The News reported on Sunday, Sadiq, as per the diplomatic sources, will raise the issue of Kabul's assistance to the TTP and the provision of safe havens for them on Afghan soil. The envoy has been visiting Kabul frequently in recent months as part of shuttle diplomacy to impress upon the Taliban administration not to assist the TTP since this outlawed group is causing bloodshed in Pakistan. It is acquiring huge money, training of terrorism and weapons from India. Pakistan has been providing strong evidence to Taliban interim government on this count. The visit comes against the backdrop of the martyrdom of 19 soldiers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during separate operations from September 10 to 13, wherein at least 45 terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy Fitna al-Khawarij were killed,

Continued on Page 06

Internal, external forces plotting against Pakistan

Warns that any foreign or domestic efforts to destabilize the country's peace and sovereignty would be harshly dealt with

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warned on Sunday that any foreign or domestic efforts to destabilize the country's peace and sovereignty would be harshly dealt with, further asserting that PTI's association with external enemies would bring about their defeat.

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CHENGDU: President Asif Ali Zardari, visited the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), China's flagship aerospace and defence conglomerate engaged in the design and production of a wide range of military and civilian aircraft. Aseefa Bhutto and Bilawal Bhutto were also present on the occasion. – DNA

Pakistan, China to continue collaboration

On his visit to AVIC, president says J-10 and JF-17 greatly strengthened Pakistan Air Force

DNA

BEIJING: President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday reaffirmed that Pakistan and China would continue to expand collaboration in defence production and aviation, further deepening their all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. He made these remarks during his visit to Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) – China's flagship aerospace and defence conglomerate engaged in the design and production of a wide range of military and civilian aircraft.

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Floods devastation

Shehbaz unveils relief package, waives power bills

Commercial and industrial electricity bills postponed in flood-affected regions

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday announced a relief package for flood victims, saying that the recent rains and flooding had caused severe human and material losses.

In a televised message to the nation, the premier said the devastation had been widespread, and the government was fully aware of the difficulties being faced by the people. "Helping the flood victims is our duty," the premier stressed, adding that instructions had been issued to electricity distribution companies to take immediate measures.

Under the relief package, one month's electricity bills of residential consumers in flood-affected areas have been waived. For commercial and industrial consumers,

the collection of August bills has been postponed. The federal government will bear the cost of the waived bills, while those who had already paid will be refunded in their next billing cycle, PM Shehbaz noted. PM Shehbaz added that the losses in the agricultural, commercial, and industrial sectors were also being assessed. He vowed that he would not rest until every displaced person was rehabilitated and able to return home. The premier said that additional relief measures will be taken if the assessment reveals losses beyond a certain threshold. He said power distribution companies have been directed to act promptly on these instructions. PM Shehbaz also reaffirmed his commitment to the complete rehabilitation of flood-affected areas.

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India outclass Pakistan in Asia Cup T20 match

Pakistan batsmen failed to impress; bowlers performance also disappointing

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI, SEPT 14: India defeated Pakistan by seven wickets by easily chasing a 128-run target in the Asia Cup 2025 clash at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. A collective bowling effort, followed by Abhishek Sharma's quickfire 31-run knock, propelled India to thump Pakistan by seven wickets in the sixth match of the ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup 2025 here at

the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Chasing a modest 129-run target, India comfortably knocked the winning runs for the loss of three wickets and 25 balls to spare. India got off to a blazing start to the pursuit despite Shubman Gill's dismissal in the second over as Abhishek set the tone with a blistering 31 off a mere 13 deliveries, studied with four fours and two sixes before falling victim to Saim Ayub in the fourth over.

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Briefs

Monsoon 11th spell set to strike Punjab

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab issued an alert on Sunday regarding the 11th monsoon spell, warning of potential flooding in rivers and streams and advising citizens to stay alert and cooperate with the relevant authorities. Exclusive with media statements, the Director General (DG) of PDMA Punjab urged both citizens and relevant departments to remain on high alert as the 11th monsoon spell approaches, adding, the importance of preparedness to prevent any potential damages caused by flooding. The DG further stated that all commissioners and deputy commissioners across the province have been directed to stay vigilant and monitor the situation closely, adding, these officials have been instructed to ensure that necessary measures are taken to safeguard communities from potential risks.

KP PDMA forecasts rain from Sept 15

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a high alert in light of rain forecast in the province from September 15-19. The PDMA has issued instructions to district administrations across the province to remain alert in case of emergencies. "Rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Dir (Upper and Lower), Chitral (Upper and Lower), Swat, Kohistan (Upper and Lower), Kolai Pallas, Shangla, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Mohmand, Kohat, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, Hangu, Karak and North and South Waziristan from September 16-19 with occasional gaps," a weather advisory read.

Dar, Rubio resolve to boost Pak-US ties

Both leaders express satisfaction over trajectory of Islamabad-Washington ties over telephone call, says Foreign Office

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio have reaffirmed their resolve to bolster Pakistan-US ties and strengthen bilateral relations across multifaceted areas of cooperation. Secretary of State Rubio, as per the Foreign Office, held a call with DPM Dar wherein the two leaders expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-US ties and discussed recent regional and international developments. The development comes against the backdrop of improving diplomatic relations between Islamabad and Washington – especially following the armed conflict between Pakistan and India in May, which ended after President Donald Trump brokered a ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. DPM Dar, back in July, had met Rubio, where the latter praised Pakistan's sacrifices in the war on terror.

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Ishaq Dar arrives in Doha

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has arrived in Doha to lead Pakistan's delegation to the Ministerial Meeting convened ahead of the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit on Israel's attack against Qatar. Upon his arrival, the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister was received by Pakistan's Ambassador to Qatar, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the OIC, and senior officials of the Qatari Government. Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met today with his Egyptian counterpart, Foreign Minister Dr. Badr Abdelatty.

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Zardari in China: strategic diplomacy or political foresight?

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



PRESIDENT Asif Ali Zardari, co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and one of the country's most seasoned politicians, has embarked on a rare and strategically important 10-day visit to China. The unusually long duration of the trip itself makes it distinctive, since heads of state generally do not undertake such extended visits. This signals that both Beijing and Islamabad attach exceptional importance to this engagement. In many ways, Zardari's visit is not just ceremonial diplomacy but a calculated move within the broader canvas of Pakistan-China relations, particularly in the context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its second phase, CPEC-II. For years, we have been highlighting the undeniable fact that China has enormous stakes in Pakistan. CPEC, launched under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is perhaps the most ambitious infrastructure and connectivity project in Pakistan's history. It has brought roads, energy projects, ports, and industrial zones to a country whose successive governments had failed to prioritize infrastructure development. Without CPEC, Pakistan's road network and energy sector would be far weaker. Whatever tangible development we see today is largely because of Chinese investment and planning, not due to the vision of our ruling elites who, more often than not, focused on filling their own coffers instead of the welfare of the people.

Now, with CPEC-II expected to be launched in the near future, China is carefully recalibrating its approach towards Pakistan's domestic political landscape. Unlike the past, when Beijing leaned too heavily on one political party, China now seems determined to broaden its outreach to all major stakeholders. History has shown that China's earlier strategy of leaning primarily on the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) carried serious risks. During the PML-N government, relations were smooth, and CPEC advanced at a rapid pace. However, the dynamics changed dramatically when the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) under Imran Khan came into power in 2018. The PTI leadership was openly skeptical of several Chinese projects. They believed that the agreements were clouded by corruption and inflated costs, with allegations of kickbacks and non-transparent deals. Consequently, Imran Khan's government ordered a comprehensive audit of CPEC projects. While it is true that anomalies were discovered, China's immediate reaction was to halt progress on almost all projects. The atmosphere grew tense. The then Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Sun Weidong, reportedly took nearly two months before deciding whether to pay a courtesy visit to Imran Khan and congratulate him on becoming Prime Minister. The delay was symbolic, reflecting China's dissatisfaction with the PTI government's approach. For a time, the momentum of CPEC came to a standstill. With the PML-N's return to power, efforts were made to mend fences. The leadership of the party worked hard to restore Beijing's confidence. These attempts have largely borne fruit, and today, Pakistan-China relations once again appear to be on a strong trajectory. According to reports, CPEC-II is now poised to take off. However, the Chinese leadership has also

learned a crucial lesson: over-reliance on a single political party is a flawed strategy in Pakistan's volatile political environment. Pakistan's politics are unpredictable. Parties that appear to have been pushed to the margins often stage surprise comebacks. Thus, engaging with all major political forces is the only way for China to secure long-term stability for its investments. It is in this backdrop that the invitation to President Asif Ali Zardari becomes highly significant. By inviting Zardari on a 10-day trip, China has signaled its intent to cultivate closer ties with the PPP, which has substantial influence in Sindh. Beijing appears to be preparing for all possible political outcomes in Pakistan. If the PML-N government weakens or falls, the PPP could once again become a dominant player. Therefore, investing in a strong working relationship with Zardari makes strategic sense for China. Zardari himself is a pragmatic leader with vast experience in international diplomacy. His extended engagement in China is likely to cover a wide array of issues—from CPEC-II projects to broader political cooperation, security collaboration, and people-to-people ties. While strengthening ties with the PPP is wise, China must not stop there. If it is truly committed to safeguarding its long-term interests, it needs to extend similar outreach to the PTI as well. Despite the imprisonment of many of its leaders and the immense challenges it faces, PTI remains the most popular political force in Pakistan. Ignoring PTI would be short-sighted. Pakistan's political history is full of surprises. Parties and leaders often rise from what seemed like political oblivion. This unpredictability is why an all-inclusive approach is essential for Beijing. Working with only one or two parties exposes China to the risk of sudden policy reversals when governments change. By building bridges

with the entire spectrum of political stakeholders—PML-N, PPP, and PTI alike—China can ensure that its strategic projects like CPEC remain insulated from domestic political turbulence. Beyond the immediate political calculations, Zardari's visit also underscores the depth of Pakistan-China relations. For Pakistan, China is more than just a development partner—it is the country's most dependable ally on the global stage. At a time when Pakistan faces economic crises, security challenges, and shifting regional dynamics, Chinese support has been indispensable. However, the relationship should not be viewed through a transactional lens alone. Pakistan must also shoulder responsibility by ensuring transparency, efficiency, and good governance in all projects. Corruption, mismanagement, and political infighting have often undermined the full potential of CPEC. President Asif Ali Zardari's extended visit to China is more than a diplomatic courtesy—it is part of a carefully crafted strategy by Beijing to diversify its engagement across Pakistan's political spectrum. The visit reflects both opportunity and responsibility. For China, it offers a chance to secure its investments and strengthen trust. For Pakistan, it provides another opening to rebuild credibility and demonstrate political maturity. The future of Pakistan-China relations lies in inclusivity. By reaching out to all major political players—including the PTI—China can shield its strategic partnership from domestic upheavals. For Pakistan, the lesson is equally clear: unless we rise above petty politics and corruption, even our closest friends cannot deliver miracles. Zardari's China visit may well mark the beginning of a new, more balanced phase in the Pakistan-China relationship—one that acknowledges the reality of Pakistan's complex political landscape and the necessity of working inclusively for shared prosperity.

UN FAO delegation, Secretary Tourism talk on Pak's first tea tourism venture

Dr. Samad emphasized that the project would reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported tea, generate employment opportunities for local communities, and add a distinctive new dimension to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism portfolio

PESHAWAR: At a formal meeting with a delegation from UN FAO Pakistan, Secretary Culture, Tourism, Archaeology and Museums, Dr. Abdul Samad, said the provincial government is working on an innovative model of Tea Tourism to unlock this potential. The delegation included Ms. Kiyal, Head of UN FAO; Mr. John Snell, FAO International Tea Consultant; Mujeeb ur Rehman; and Dr. Khurshid, Tea Consultant, who met the Secretary at his office here. Dr Samad said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is set to pioneer tea-based tourism in Pakistan as the province takes steps to transform its scenic tea-growing regions into vibrant hubs of eco-tourism and agri-tourism. Despite spending billions annually on tea imports, Pakistan holds vast potential for domestic tea cultivation, particularly in the northern districts of Shinkiyari (Mansehra), Shangla,

Upper Swat, and Upper Dir, where the climate and soil are ideally suited for tea plantations. During the discussion, Ms. Kiyal and Mr. Snell informed the Secretary about the golden opportunities in Pakistan's tea sector, ranging from production and marketing to linking tea cultivation with eco-tourism ventures. Dr. Abdul Samad explained that eco-friendly huts and guesthouses would be established at tea garden sites in Shinkiyari and other districts, providing visitors with comfortable accommodation as well as the unique opportunity to engage in tea plucking and processing. He said this initiative would not only enhance the visitor experience but also open new avenues to promote Pakistan's tea industry at national and international levels. He added that guided tours through lush green plantations, cultural evenings showcasing local traditions, crafts

and cuisine, and educational visits for students and researchers focusing on sustainable agriculture would form part of the tea tourism model. Dr. Samad emphasized that the project would reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported tea, generate employment opportunities for local communities, and add a distinctive new dimension to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism portfolio. He further highlighted that it would empower local residents by engaging them in hospitality, guiding, and small-scale tea-based industries, while promoting environmentally sustainable practices. Concluding the meeting, Dr. Samad stated that the Shinkiyari Tea Gardens would serve as the pilot project, paving the way for expansion into other suitable districts and positioning Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a national trailblazer in tea tourism.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displayed bananas at his stall to attract customers at Sunday weekly bazaar sector G-10, in the Federal Capital.

HRCP condemns eviction of transgender persons

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) issued a condemnation on Sunday after it was reported that an 11-member committee of elders had declared that all transgender persons would be expelled from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swabi district. "The HRCP strongly condemns the reported decision by community elders in Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to form a committee aimed at expelling transgender persons from the district. Such actions are unconstitutional, discriminatory and amount to incitement to violence against an already marginalised community," the HRCP said in a statement on X. It added that "no citizen can be deprived of the right to reside, work or earn a livelihood anywhere in Pakistan on the basis of gender identity". The human rights body called on the provincial and district authorities to "immediately ensure the safety and dignity of transgender persons in Swabi and uphold their fundamental rights under the Constitution and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018". The committee of elders in question comprises the tehsil president of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl, Maulana Abdul Samad Haqqani and others. From the committee, Maulana Samad has said that they want transgender persons to leave the district peacefully and earn their livelihoods elsewhere "because as long as they live here.—APP

Residents suffer as Gori Town roads deteriorate

The authorities must prioritize road maintenance and repair to alleviate the suffering of the residents and promote economic development in the area. By doing so, they can ensure the safety and well-being of the residents, improve traffic flow, and enhance the overall quality of life in Gori Town

ISLAMABAD: The residents of Gori Town are facing immense difficulties due to the deplorable condition of the roads in their locality. Despite numerous requests to the concerned authorities, the roads continue to deteriorate, causing inconvenience, damage to vehicles, and safety concerns. The roads in Gori Town are riddled with potholes, cracks, and uneven surfaces, making navigation a daunting task. Locals have reported frequent accidents and near-misses, particularly during rainy seasons when the roads become slippery and visibility is reduced. The poor state of the roads is also affecting the local economy, as traders and businesses struggle to transport goods and services efficiently. Residents have repeatedly reached out to the authorities, requesting immediate action to repair the roads. However, their pleas have fallen on deaf ears, leaving them frustrated and helpless. A local resident Muhammad Pervaiz said "We need better roads to ensure our safety and facilitate economic growth as it's disheartening to see our requests being ignored, and we were forced to navigate treacherous roads daily." He said the roads in Gori Town are a nightmare adding that they were tired of navigating through potholes and uneven surfaces. He said residents request from the authorities for the maintenance of poor state of the roads and the lack of response to their concerns. "We are fed up with the authorities' lack of response to our concerns as we need better roads for our safety and convenience", he stated. A commuter Wasi Ahmed said the poor road conditions are causing frequent accidents and damage to their vehicles. He said the lack of maintenance and repair work on these roads has led to severe traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. He said the poor road conditions caused a 2-hour delay in his commute home. He added that commuters are forced to navigate through hazardous roads, which can cause damage to their vehicles and lead to financial losses. He said the residents of Gori Town are eagerly awaiting a positive response from the authorities and a solution to their long-standing problem. The residents are urging the authorities to take immediate action to address this issue and provide relief to the community. The authorities must prioritize road maintenance and repair to alleviate the suffering of the residents and promote economic development in the area. By doing so, they can ensure the safety and well-being of the residents, improve traffic flow, and enhance the overall quality of life in Gori Town.—DNA

Flood-hit farmers battle fodder crisis as prices skyrocket

ISLAMABAD: The flood-hit farmers in many areas of the country are facing a growing crisis — not just of water, but of hunger. While floodwaters have receded in many areas, the damage lingers. Stagnant water has destroyed green fields, leaving thousands of cattle without fodder and pushing prices to record highs. Pakistan's livestock — including buffaloes, cows, goats, and sheep — rely on several key types of fodder. These include green fodder crops like maize (makai), sorghum (jowar), barseem (Egyptian clover), and lucerne (alfalfa); dry fodder such as wheat straw (bhusa) and rice husk; and concentrated feed like wanda (a mix of grains, oilcakes, minerals, and molasses). These were either swept away by floods or remain inaccessible due to waterlogging and broken supply chains. Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told Parliament that the disaster displaced 2.1 million people, killed nearly 1,000, damaged over 9,000 homes, and led to the death of more than 7,000 livestock. Now, farmers struggle to feed the animals they managed to save. Voices from the Fields In Jhang, farmer Imran stood by his starving cattle. "The floods took my crops, my fodder, my peace of mind. My cattle may die before help arrives," he said. Tasawar Abbas from the same area lost half his buffaloes. "The calves drowned. The survivors may now die of hunger," he said. Khalid Bajwa from Sialkot saw his rice and fodder fields destroyed. "Wheat straw and wanda are double the price. How do I feed my cattle when I've lost everything?" Rai Faisal Farooq of Al-Khidmat Foundation brought fodder to Jhang — bought at double the rate. "Wanda that cost Rs 2,000 now costs Rs 4,200. I collected money from schoolchildren, but it's never enough," he said. Fareed Maghiana added: "Silage now sells for Rs 1,700 instead of Rs 700. Wheat straw has doubled too. Green fodder is gone." Warehouse owners admit prices will rise further. "We are businessmen. Stocks are low and demand is high," said Amir Hayat of Jhang. Elderly Sughran Bibi wept as she recalled her buffalo dying of hunger after surviving the flood. "Her milk was my daily bread. Now I have nothing." In Sialkot, volunteer Faisal said farmers were paying Rs 1,150 for a small bag of silage. "Animals are collapsing. We're trying to help, but costs are rising fast." Yousaf Haider of Al-Khidmat Foundation said they've fed over 1,000 animals, but demand is growing daily. "Without continuous supply, animals will die." A Crisis Far From Over Despite NGO help, the need is far greater. Hoarding and profiteering continue. Experts warn that without fodder subsidies, livestock deaths will rise — deepening farmers' losses. Veterinary doctor Sadiq Umar warned of disease outbreaks like FMD, HS, and Anthrax, worsened by water exposure and starvation. "Weakness, low milk production, and death are looming threats."

ICT Police raiding team ambushed

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Noon police station team came under sudden gunfire when suspects ambushed a raiding party escorting two arrested men for further investigation. An official told APP on Sunday that the team was taking arrested accused Zubair and Sajjad for identification of their accomplices when armed assailants, hiding along the route, opened indiscriminate fire on the police.

He said the officers, protected by bulletproof jackets and safety measures, remained unharmed in the incident. However, both arrested accused were caught in their accomplices' fire. Accused Zubair later succumbed to his injuries at PIMS Hospital, while Sajjad sustained a bullet wound in his leg and is stated to be out of danger. He added that the accused were on physical remand in case No. 438/25 registered at Noon police station. On August 25, 2025, they had allegedly shot and killed a bakery owner during a robbery. Police have already arrested their third accomplice, Arshad, recovering the motorcycle used in crimes, along with weapons and ammunition. The accused had previous criminal records in Islamabad and Karachi involving multiple heinous cases.—APP

Court Notice

In the Court of Shagufa Sabir, Civil Judge 1st Class Jhelum, Suit For Dissolution of Marriage Basis of Khulah

Case title:

Zoya Rani etc vs Mohsin Anwar Son of Muhammad Buta r/o House No. A-403 Baba Karam Shah s mly Mahalla Jhelum (Currently residing at Jindan Meat Shop Al Satwa Bazaar Dubai UAE) As there is not possible to call the defendant through Summons in the instant suit so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the court on 29.09.2025 at 08:00 AM, otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

Chauontra's dark fame: A village where crime never sleeps

While Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar often dominate crime headlines, it is the rural outskirts of Rawalpindi, along the increasingly infamous Chakri Road, where a small police station, Thana Chauontra, has emerged as one of Pakistan's most persistent crime hotspots. Originally established in 1960 to serve peaceful farming villages, Chauontra has transformed into a hub of land mafias, drug networks, and armed violence. While crime in urban slums like Lyari or FR Peshawar has seen phases of control, Chauontra's violent reputation has endured for over decades. The area has witnessed some of Rawalpindi's worst violent incidents. In July 2020, a land dispute in

Mial village escalated into a massacre: a proclaimed offender and his gunmen killed nine people, including women and children, within minutes. The trial concluded only in April 2024, when five men were sentenced to death, a verdict widely seen as overdue. Chauontra's crime pattern fits into broader district data. Between 2020 and 2024, Rawalpindi saw nearly 1,500 homicides. While 3,300+ suspects were arrested, over 1,200 remain at large, and many murder cases are still pending. In February 2025, a police raid to arrest two proclaimed offenders turned into a shootout. Two Elite Force commandos were injured; the suspects fled. An FIR

under the Anti-Terrorism Act followed, highlighting the paramilitary-level threat. The roots of Chauontra's descent lie in urban expansion and skyrocketing property values. As Rawalpindi's city limits pushed outward, so did criminal interest. Locals trace the turning point to the late 1990s, when armed land-grabbing networks, some allegedly with political protection, entered the scene. "Back in the 70s, people didn't even lock their doors," recalls Muhammad Iqbal, 78. "Now, people don't leave their houses after dark." The land mafia now dominates Chauontra's criminal ecosystem, shielded by wealth and, often, political ties. A string of raids and recoveries show how

deeply embedded they are: In August 2019, seven suspects were caught in Rajar with Kalashnikovs, M-16s, and hundreds of rounds. In September 2022, a raid in Sangral and Khingar netted six gangsters linked to illegal housing. In December 2022, 83 suspects were arrested across Chakri and Chauontra, with weapons seized. In November 2023, a woman was killed in a land dispute gunfight in Sangral; three others were injured. A teenage girl in Khengar was wounded by a stray bullet from aerial firing tied to illegal development. In early 2023, then SHO Inspector Rana Zulfiqar was dismissed for allegedly protecting land mafias, exposing internal

corruption. Residents describe a climate of fear and silence. "Evening life has died here," says Abdul Latif, a shopkeeper. "People shut their businesses early. No one feels safe." Women and children are especially vulnerable. "I don't let my daughters go to school alone," says Sajida Bibi, a mother of four. "Every week, we hear about some kidnapping or assault." Even the young feel unsafe. "My grandfather remembers a peaceful Chauontra," says Ali, 19. "But I've only known fear. We pray my father returns safe from Rawalpindi every night." Despite arrests and raids, police admit they are ill-equipped to deal with the scale of violence.—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


Sept18/Chile National Day

Sept21/Malta Independence Day

Sept23/Saudi Arabia National Day

Airlines

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Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122


& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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PIA Flight Info.....114


PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi..5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4


RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43


CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Isphanyar joins Pathfinder Group’s Interfaith Harmony Advisory Council

Appreciating the gesture, Mr. Sehgal remarked that these works would serve as valuable reference material for PIHI, guiding its future programmes and outreach initiatives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Isphanyar Bhandara has been appointed as a member of the Advisory Council of the Pathfinder Group’s Interfaith Harmony Initiative (PIHI), a platform dedicated to promoting dialogue, respect, and cooperation among Pakistan’s diverse religious communities.

At the inaugural session of the Advisory Council meeting held yesterday, Mr. Bhandara reaffirmed that Pakistan’s Constitution guarantees the rights of minorities. However, he stressed that the real challenge lies in the enforcement of those protections. He observed that most injustices occur not in policy rooms, but in everyday life at the grassroots level, underscoring the importance of public awareness and education in fostering interfaith harmony.

On the occasion, Bhandara presented to Mr. Ikram Sehgal, Co-Chairman of Pathfinder Group, a collection of books he had commissioned, including *Gems and Jewels: The Religions of Pakistan and Kalasha: Their Life & Tradition*. Appreciating the gesture, Mr. Sehgal remarked that these works would serve as valuable reference material for PIHI, guiding its future programmes and outreach initiatives.

COMSTECH launches 3rd OIC youth forum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With the world grappling with climate change, rising populations, and mounting food insecurity, the Coordinator General of OIC-COM-STECH, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, on Saturday opened the 3rd OIC Youth Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology at North South University (NSU), Dhaka. The landmark two-day event brings together policymakers, scientists, and youth leaders from across the Muslim world to explore biotechnology as a game-changing solution for sustainable agriculture and global food security.

The opening ceremony was attended by distinguished dignitaries, including Chief Guest Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, Advisor to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Bangladesh; Mr. M.A. Kashem, Member, Board of Trustees,

NSU; Mr. Aziz Al Kaiser, Chairman, Board of Trustees, NSU; Mr. Benajir Ahmed, Member, Board of Trustees; Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, Assistant Director-General, IOFS; and Prof. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, who chaired the session. In his keynote address, Prof. Choudhary recalled that the Youth Forum was envisioned as a platform for young scientists across OIC member states to connect, innovate, and collaborate. He highlighted the success of earlier editions in Islamabad and Kazakhstan, and emphasized that the Dhaka forum focuses on agricultural biotechnology and genome editing technologies—key tools in combating food insecurity and climate change.

Prof. Choudhary dedicated this year’s forum to the people of Gaza, who continue to face hunger and deprivation, underscoring the moral urgency of scientific solutions to food scarcity. He urged youth participants to seize

the opportunity, engage actively in debates, and forge collaborations. “Youth are a transformative force for our societies. Their engagement is vital in advancing responsible, ethical, and impactful biotechnology,” he stressed. Acknowledging Bangladesh’s growing partnership with COMSTECH, he cited the COMSTECH-Bangladesh Scholarship Program, which has enabled several young scholars to pursue higher studies and research in Pakistan and other OIC countries.

The forum’s inaugural session concluded with a group photo and networking, reflecting the spirit of collaboration and innovation.

Over the next two days, technical sessions will feature experts from Turkey, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and other countries, providing a dynamic platform for knowledge-sharing and international cooperation in agricultural biotechnology.

DG PILAC calls for strong media engagement

ISLAMABAD: The Director General of the Punjab Institute of Language, Art & Culture (PILAC) Sunday reaffirmed the government’s commitment to protecting the Punjabi language and its rich cultural heritage, stressing the need for media awareness to promote and preserve this culture, particularly among the younger generation. In a recent exclusive conversation with a state news channel, the Director General (DG) emphasized the vital importance of preserving and promoting the Punjabi language. She discussed how language plays a crucial role in connecting communities and safeguarding cultural heritage, adding, Punjab government under CM leadership remains committed to ensuring that the Punjabi language not only survives but thrives in contemporary society. In this regard, initiatives such as the establishment of a modern auditorium and an art gallery within the Punjab Institute of Language, Art, and Culture (PILAC) are noteworthy achievements aimed at fostering a deeper appreciation for the cultural richness of Punjab, she highlighted. Additionally, the DG further mentioned the significant progress made by PILAC in digitizing over 18,000 Punjabi books, making them more accessible to the public, adding, this digitization project is a vital step toward preserving the language in the digital age, ensuring that future generations have easy access to literature and educational resources in Punjabi. Alongside this, she said the department has launched an audiobook initiative specifically for children, offering an innovative way to engage young minds in learning the language through modern technology. These efforts reflect a forward-thinking approach to language preservation and cultural promotion. The DG also pointed out the various seminars and workshops organized by PILAC that aim to raise awareness and encourage active participation in preserving Punjabi as a living language.—DNA

Dental hygiene crucial for overall health: Dentists

ISLAMABAD: As the seasons change and months go by, maintaining good dental hygiene becomes increasingly crucial for overall health and well-being. According to the dentists, Regular dental visits are essential for preventing oral health issues. Neglecting oral care routines can lead to discomfort, pain, and embarrassment, compromising one’s overall well-being. A well know Dentist Dr Arhsad said “Maintaining good dental hygiene is essential for a healthy life and poor oral health has been linked to various systemic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory infections. Regular brushing, flossing, and dental check-ups can help prevent these issues. He said many people underestimate the importance of dental hygiene, but it’s crucial for maintaining healthy teeth and gums saying that Plaque buildup can lead to cavities

and gum disease if left unchecked. “It’s surprising how many people neglect their dental health, only to face serious problems later on,” he added. He recommend visiting the dentist every six months for a routine check-up and cleaning adding that regular dental check-ups can help identify oral health issues early on, allowing for prompt treatment and prevention of more severe problems. By prioritizing dental hygiene, individuals can maintain a healthy smile and overall well-being,he stated. Another dentist Dr Ali said “Dental hygiene is not just about brushing and flossing; it’s about maintaining a healthy lifestyle”. He stated that by incorporating simple steps into your daily routine and making regular dental visits, you can prevent a lifetime of oral diseases. He further emphasized that good dental hygiene habits should start from a young age. “Parents should

teach their children the importance of brushing and flossing regularly, and schedule regular dental check-ups to ensure their teeth and gums remain healthy.” Neglecting dental hygiene can lead o a range of problems, including tooth decay, gum disease, and bad breath.

He said to maintain good dental hygiene, individuals should brush their teeth at least twice a day, floss regularly, and visit their dentist for routine check-ups. By following these simple steps, individuals can prevent oral health issues and maintain a healthy smile. Dental health is an integral part of overall health, and it’s essential to prioritize it and by doing so, individuals can prevent a range of problems and maintain a healthy, confident smile. By prioritizing dental hygiene and making regular dental visits, individuals can ensure their teeth and gums remain healthy for years to come. —DNA

New parking facility at Pak Secretariat opened

ISLAMABAD: In line with the direction of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the newly constructed parking facility at the Pak Secretariat has been opened for employees of government offices and general public. The primary objective of this initiative is to provide a permanent solution to the long-standing parking problems faced by employees of the most important Government offices in the Federal Capital, Islamabad and general public visiting from afar. According to details, the parking area at the Pak Secretariat spans approximately 133,729 square feet and has the capacity to accommodate a large number of vehicles in the new parking area. The completion of this parking facility will benefit not only the employees of the Secretariat but also personnel working in nearby Government and Semi-Government offices as well as the general public. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that this project is an important part of efforts to improve civic facilities in the Capital City of Islamabad and to develop Islamabad into an well planned, beautiful, and public-friendly city. He mentioned that resolving a fundamental issue like parking will not only reduce traffic and parking problems but will also prevent the wastage of citizens’ valuable time and energy.—DNA

AIOU extends convocation registration deadline to Sep 30

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) extended the registration deadline for its 2025 convocation to September 30, in order to facilitate maximum graduates for the historic event.Vice Chancellor (VC) of AIOU, Prof. Dr Mahmood, also approved a 50% special concession in registration fees for students with disabilities so that they could also be part of this memorable event, said a press release on Sunday. Furthermore, PhD degree holders and medalists would be allowed to bring one guest along with them, he added. He focused that only those students who completed their degrees between autumn 2022 and 2024 should be eligible for the upcoming mega event, He urged all eligible graduates to ensure their participation in this historic occasion by completing their registration on time.—APP

SHO honoured for swift rescue of abducted trader

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police Inspector General Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi awarded SHO Bhara Kahu Chaudhry Rafaqat Gujar with a certificate of appreciation and a cash prize for swiftly rescuing a kidnapped trader from the clutches of abductors. An official told on Sunday that a few days ago, local trader Nadeem Aslam was abducted by unidentified kidnappers from the Bhara Kahu area. Upon receiving the report, SHO Rafaqat Gujar, along with his team, immediately launched an operation. Using advanced technology and timely strategy, the police traced the victim in a short span of time and recovered him safely during a successful raid. The official added that the police’s professionalism and bravery ensured that no untoward incident occurred during the rescue. At a ceremony held at Police Headquarters, IGP Rizvi lauded SHO Rafaqat Gujar’s performance, calling it a reflection of ICT Police’s commitment to protecting the lives and property of citizens.—APP

Pak’s future intrinsically linked to strength of democracy: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the International Day of Democracy, National Assembly, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq paid tribute to Pakistan’s unwavering democratic resolve, parliamentary continuity, and sustained public participation. He stated that democracy is the embodiment of people’s power, collective wisdom, and the key to national development and prosperity. He emphasized that this day serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by political workers, leaders, and journalists who struggled tirelessly for the restoration and preservation of democracy. Speaker remarked that Pakistan was founded as a result of a democratic struggle, and the Constitution of Pakistan ensures every citizen’s right to equality, religious freedom, freedom of expression, and participatory politics. He highlighted that Islam also teaches consultation, mutual consensus, and public participation, values upon which democratic governance and public representation are firmly established. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq asserted that Parliament is the supreme forum reflecting the will of the people. Through legislation, public representation, and parliamentary oversight, Parliament transforms public aspirations into reality. He stated that parliamentary supremacy, full adherence to the Constitution, institutional harmony, and public welfare are essential pillars of democratic stability. Referring to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s historic speech of 11 August, Speaker NA reiterated that every citizen has the right to religious freedom and that the state has no concern with a citizen’s religion, caste, or creed. —APP

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Briefs

Flooding
fuels
inflationary
pressure
across Pak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's central bank is facing a new inflationary threat that interest rate hikes cannot contain, which is climate-driven crop failures. As extreme weather events devastate food supplies, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) confronts a policy blind spot; monetary tools cannot manage supply-side shocks. Millions of farmers have been displaced or financially ruined by floods. Yet recovery efforts remain fragmented, swinging between short-term subsidies and emergency imports without a long-term climate-inflation strategy. "Pakistan has reached a critical juncture where climate adaptation and inflation management must urgently converge," said Omar Butt, President of the Pakistan Business Network. He warned that without immediate and cohesive action, inflation will remain elevated and food insecurity will worsen.

Butt recalled that the 2022 floods destroyed over two million acres of farmland. Three years later, a similar devastating event has struck again, costing billions of dollars. The Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25 shows major crops contracted 13.5%, shaving 0.6 percentage points off GDP growth. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone, over 57,000 acres were affected and thousands of livestock killed, Omar Butt said.

Cartels in the sugar, flour, and cooking oil sectors exploit such crises by hoarding and market manipulation, causing more inflation than the floods themselves. Weak regulation allows artificial shortages and price spikes, trapping consumers in prolonged high-cost cycles. Pakistan's inflation had dropped to a three-year low of 6.9% in September 2024, raising hopes for monetary easing. But analysts now expect the SBP to hold its policy rate at 11% as flood-driven disruptions threaten to reverse the trend.

Pakistani
student blends
aerospace
innovation

ISLAMABAD: Rana Shahid, a 2023 PhD candidate at China's Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (NUAA) draw attention both for his research on solar-powered aircraft design and for his growing presence as a musician – showing that science and creativity can thrive together. The Pakistani student recently impressed audiences at the semi-finals of the Asia New Singer competition in Nanjing with a performance mixing Urdu and English lyrics, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. His musical talent has made him a familiar figure at university events, where he often shares Pakistani musical traditions with international students. As vice president of the university's guitar club, he is also learning Chinese songs and has already mastered the popular ballad Qing Hua. He is now working on his own Chinese-language composition, which he hopes to release soon. Alongside his artistic pursuits, Shahid is engaged in innovative research on designing small aircraft powered by solar cells for uses such as delivery services and short-distance transport. —APP

Thai envoy hosts reception
for APIA Secretary General

The luncheon concluded on a positive note, with participants reaffirming their commitment to deepening ASEAN's engagement with Pakistan and supporting inclusive regional dialogue through multilateral cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Rongvudhi Virabutr, Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan and current Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI), hosted a luncheon in honour of Ar. Siti Rozaimeryanty Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, Secretary General of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), on the occasion of her visit to Islamabad. Ar. Siti Rozaimeryanty was in Islamabad to participate in a high-level event organized by UN Women Pakistan. The luncheon, held on the sidelines of her visit, brought together the Heads of Mission of ASEAN Member States based in Islamabad and Mr. Jamsheed Kazi, Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan.

The event served as an opportunity to strengthen ties between AIPA, ASEAN Member States, and Pakistan, particularly in the context of parliamentary cooperation, gender equality, and regional development. Discussions centered around enhancing collaboration between AIPA and ASEAN diplomatic missions in Islamabad, with a focus on shared priorities such as women's empowerment, inclusive governance, and inter-parliamentary dialogue. In his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Virabutr highlighted the important role AIPA



plays in promoting parliamentary diplomacy within the ASEAN region and beyond. He expressed appreciation for H.E. Ar. Siti Rozaimeryanty's efforts in fostering cooperation among ASEAN parliaments and extending engagement with external partners

like Pakistan. H.E. Ar. Siti Rozaimeryanty acknowledged the warm hospitality and underscored AIPA's commitment to promoting partnerships with stakeholders in the region, including through collaboration with international organizations such as

UN Women. The luncheon concluded on a positive note, with participants reaffirming their commitment to deepening ASEAN's engagement with Pakistan and supporting inclusive regional dialogue through multilateral cooperation.

China offers help as
monsoon floods kill
nearly 1,000 in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China has offered support to Pakistan in dealing with flood-hit areas, with Beijing's top diplomat in Islamabad expressing condolences over the nearly 1,000 people killed during this year's monsoon season. "China stands with Pakistan in mitigating the impacts of floods and enhancing resilience to climate challenges," said Shi Yuanqiang, the Chinese chargé d'affaires, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Saturday. Since June 26, heavy monsoon rains, cloudbursts and flash floods have killed at least 956 people and injured more than 1,060, according to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The disaster has affected more than 5.8 million people na-

tionwide, including 4.2 million in Punjab province. Around 2.4 million people have been evacuated, with nearly 94,000 taking shelter in 1,630 relief camps.

Authorities said the rains have damaged 8,481 homes – including 2,216 destroyed – and killed more than 6,500 livestock. On Friday, Shi led a Chinese Embassy delegation to the National Emergencies Operations Center at NDMA headquarters, where NDMA Chairman Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik briefed him on relief and response efforts. These included coordination with provincial governments and disaster management authorities, as well as evacuations under the Prime Minister's Relief Assistance programme. Officials also highlighted the centre's disaster early warning systems, risk communication measures, anticipatory actions and simulation exercises aimed at aligning with global best practices.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Philippines Dr. Emmanuel Fernandez and his wife hosted dinner for Editor Daily Islamabad/CNETRELINE and senior photo journalist Shahid Raju. DNA

Thousands of Pakistanis to benefit from
new TVET agreements with China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of Pakistani students and professionals are set to benefit from a series of landmark agreements signed between Pakistan's National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) and leading Chinese institutions during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China. NAVTTTC has released complete details of the MoUs that were finalized at the second Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference, aim to modernize Pakistan's technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector across multiple disciplines, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. NAVTTTC said the MoUs cover engineering, healthcare, agriculture, information technology, and digital skills, and will introduce Chinese curriculum standards, dual diploma programs, and digital education platforms in Pakistan. Training bases, joint colleges, and cultural exchange initiatives will create new opportunities for Pakistan's youth to access global markets and employment. Under the agreement with Gansu Vocational College of Nonferrous Metallurgy, Pakistan will

host the "Baillie Workshop" Overseas Engineering Technology College, while a China-Pakistan International Education Digital Platform and overseas training base will support student mobility and academic collaboration. Healthcare education will be strengthened through partnerships with Sichuan Vocational College of Health & Rehabilitation and Pingxiang Health Vocational College, including a "Chinese + Vocational Skills Training Base," a new international college, and updated curricula in nursing and rehabilitation technology. Guangzhou Polytechnic University will expand cooperation in software technology with Pakistan's National University of Technology, while Wuhan Technical College of Communications will provide training for more than 30 Pakistani professionals and host international cultural exchange events. Agriculture-focused agreements include Jiangxi Agricultural Engineering Vocational College, which will introduce programs in medicinal herb cultivation and herbal education, and Xinjiang Agricultural Vocational & Technical University, which will set up an Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Academy offering veterinary and animal husbandry training.

Pak's exports to
China grow in
August despite
overall decline

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports to China rose 2% in August to \$158 million, even as the country's overall shipments fell sharply and the trade deficit widened, provisional data from the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) showed. In the first two months of the fiscal year (July-August), exports to China climbed 7% to \$331 million, making it Pakistan's third-largest buyer after the United States and the United Kingdom, according to Gwadar Pro on Sunday. Overall exports dropped 12.5% year-on-year to \$2.42 billion in August, while imports rose 6.4% to \$5.29 billion. That pushed trade deficit to \$2.87 billion, up 30% from a year earlier. For July-August, the deficit widened 29% to \$6.01 billion. China also remained Pakistan's top source of imports, with inbound shipments rising 33% to \$2.99 billion in the first two months. Beijing thus remained both Pakistan's biggest market for growth and its largest supplier of goods. Despite the downturn, some categories bound for global and Chinese markets showed resilience. Textiles and leather, Pakistan's mainstay sector, earned \$3.39 billion during July-August, up 10% from last year. Bed linen, men's apparel, cotton yarn and women's garments led the way, while cement and dates also posted strong growth. Rice exports, however, fell by nearly a third. Regionally, exports to Asia dropped 11% in the first two months, though China bucked the trend with steady growth. Economists say Beijing's demand for Pakistani textiles, raw materials and food products is providing a crucial cushion as traditional markets in Europe and America record declines. "China's consistent demand has become a vital anchor for Pakistan's exports," economist Subhan Ahmad told Gwadar Pro. "As other markets slow, our trade with Beijing is helping sustain industrial activity and providing exporters with a reliable outlet." —DNA

Pakistani
nursing
students
to receive
scholarships

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan TVET-Industrial Centre of Excellence (CPTICE) has announced the launch of the Sino-Pak "Guijiang Workshop," which will provide 25 annual scholarships for Pakistani nursing students. The Pakistan Guijiang Workshop, initiated in September 2024 under CPTICE, will send its first batch of students to China's Guizhou Nursing Vocational College next fall for a one-year study programme, Gwadar Pro reported quoting a statement of CPTICE. Upon completion, students will receive diplomas recognised in both China and Pakistan. The unveiling ceremony featured addresses by Jiang Zhixia, president of Guizhou Nursing Vocational College, and Mansoor Jamal Butt, group head director of Fatima Memorial Hospital (FMH). Separately, Lahore's Saida Waheed FMH College of Nursing said on Friday that, in collaboration with TANG International and Guizhou Nursing Vocational College, it held a ceremony marking the launch of the CNA (2+1) Joint Programme alongside the opening of the Pakistan-Guizhou Workshop for short-term nursing training. —APP

Chinese, Pakistani
institutions to
collaborate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan (AWKUM) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Chenshan Botanical Garden in Shanghai to strengthen academic and research collaboration, promote joint initiatives, and enhance mutual learning opportunities in agriculture and botanical sciences. According to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Sunday, the MoU was signed by Dr. Fazal Said, an Associate Professor in the Department of Agriculture at AWKUM. He is currently attending the International Training Program on Botanical Garden Management and Development, being held in Shanghai from Sept. 1-20, 2025. Said, one of two agricultural experts from Pakistan attending the training, told Gwadar Pro on Friday that the program brings together experts and academics from across the globe to exchange knowledge and best practices in botanical garden management, sustainable development, and conservation. The program is sponsored by the Chenshan Botanical Garden and the International Association of Botanical Gardens.

RCCI calls for 3% policy rate cut

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has called on the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to implement a substantial reduction in the policy rate – by at least 3 percentage points – in the upcoming Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting scheduled for Monday, September 15. RCCI President Usman Shaukat emphasized that while the central bank has halved the policy rate to 11% since June 2024, further monetary easing is both timely and essential. "With inflation projected to average around 6%



in the current fiscal year, there

is considerable room for an additional 300 basis point cut," he stated. Mr. Shaukat stressed that Pakistan urgently needs a more competitive interest rate environment to stimulate industrial activity, attract investment, and enhance the country's regional economic standing. "Bringing Pakistan's interest rates in line with those of neighboring economies is critical to lowering the cost of doing business – especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which remain disproportionately affected by high borrowing costs," he said. He also referenced a recent visit by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to the Chamber

House, during which the Minister hinted at the potential for a policy rate cut later this year, citing easing inflation and improving macroeconomic indicators. "The time for decisive action is now. A meaningful rate cut would not only provide urgent relief to businesses, but also restore investor confidence and create a more competitive environment for industry and exports," Mr. Shaukat added. The RCCI reiterated its long-standing call for comprehensive monetary and structural reforms aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth, safeguarding jobs, and strengthening Pakistan's industrial base.

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Russian-Ukraine war: will there be peace?

THE path to a lasting peace in Ukraine is a complex and highly charged issue, with multiple powerful players vying for influence. As the conflict grinds on, the desire for a resolution grows, but the terms of that resolution remain fiercely contested. The current landscape suggests that any eventual peace deal will not be a simple victory for one side, but a delicate and perhaps uncomfortable compromise, a “win-win” in the sense that it provides a way forward for all, even if no party gets everything it wants.

At the center of this diplomatic vortex is a U.S. President, Donald Trump, who has publicly and repeatedly expressed his desire to broker a peace deal. This ambition is not merely about foreign policy; it is deeply intertwined with his personal desire for global recognition, particularly the Nobel Peace Prize. He has a history of claiming credit for de-escalating international tensions, even when those claims are disputed. His administration has asserted that he played a pivotal role in brokering a peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, claims that have been challenged by officials in those countries. This pattern of seeking high-profile diplomatic victories, regardless of the nuanced reality, provides a lens through which to view his approach to Ukraine. However, bringing peace to Ukraine is a far more difficult undertaking than any of the regional disputes Trump has previously engaged with. The stakes are existential for Ukraine, and the geopolitical interests of Russia, the United States, and the European Union are deeply entrenched. On one side, you have the European Union, which has been a steadfast supporter of Ukraine. European leaders have consistently emphasized their commitment to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, providing significant financial and military aid. They have also been a driving force behind sanctions on Russia. For the EU, a peace deal that compromises Ukraine’s independence or rewards Russian aggression is unacceptable. They are giving President Trump a tough time by insisting on a strong, unified front and pushing for terms that truly punish Russia and protect Ukraine. They have, in some instances, taken the lead in proposing additional sanctions and security guarantees for Ukraine, even as the U.S. under Trump has been seen as wavering in its commitment.

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On the other side is Russia, led by Vladimir Putin. Russia’s terms for peace have been maximalist and unyielding. Putin has demanded that any deal recognize the territories it has annexed, and he has insisted on Ukraine’s “demilitarization” and “denazification,” which many observers interpret as a demand for a complete surrender of Ukraine’s national identity and sovereignty. Russia has little incentive to compromise from a position of strength, and it has used its military and economic leverage to make its demands clear. Putin is a shrewd negotiator who is unlikely to be swayed by mere talk; he will only respond to concrete pressure. Given these opposing forces, a peace deal is not likely to be a simple affair. It will not be on Ukraine’s terms alone. Ukraine, a once beautiful country, has been utterly ravaged by war, much like Lebanon and Syria before it. The destruction is immense, and the human cost is immeasurable. While they have fought heroically to defend their nation, the reality of the devastation means that a complete military victory is a long shot. They will likely be under immense pressure to make concessions for the sake of ending the bloodshed and starting the process of rebuilding. The ultimate deal, therefore, may well be a bitter pill for all to swallow. It might involve a ceasefire line that effectively cedes some territory to Russia, even if that is a non-starter for Ukraine in public. There may be a need for complex security guarantees for Ukraine that fall short of full NATO membership but are strong enough to deter future Russian aggression, perhaps involving a “coalition of the willing” from European nations. Economic aid will be a massive component, with the frozen assets of Russia potentially playing a crucial role in funding Ukraine’s reconstruction. It is here that a “win-win” situation, in its most cynical sense, could emerge. For Trump, a signed deal, regardless of its true substance, is a “win” that he can use to burnish his image as a global peacemaker and pursue his Nobel aspirations. For Putin, it’s a “win” if he secures territorial gains and forces the West to engage with him as an equal. For the EU, it’s a “win” if the fighting stops and a more stable, albeit imperfect, security architecture is put in place, allowing them to focus on their own economic and political priorities. For Ukraine, the “win” is simply the cessation of a brutal war and the chance to begin rebuilding, even if it means sacrificing some of what it has lost. This is the likely future. Not a triumphant end to the war, but a pragmatic, messy, and hard-fought truce. It will be a testament to the brutal truth that war is never a solution, and that peace, when it finally comes, often arrives with a heavy price tag and a complicated set of compromises that leave no one fully satisfied, but everyone with a path forward.

Netanyahu; Hitler Reborn

Qamar Bashir



Gaza City, Khan Younis, Rafah, Jenin, Nablus — these names once stood for vibrant communities. Now, they are synonymous with devastation. Satellite images reveal entire blocks leveled. The death toll has climbed into the tens of thousands, with thousands of children among the victims. Malnutrition and disease spread through overcrowded shelters where water is scarce and medicine nonexistent. Israel claims it is fighting terrorism, but its bombs fall on bakeries, schools, mosques, and even Christian churches. If Hamas were the sole target, why are children starving? Why are doctors performing surgeries...

THE Holocaust remains one of history’s darkest chapters — a crime against humanity that rightly haunts the conscience of the world. Denying or minimizing it is itself a crime in many countries, because it represented the systematic attempt to wipe out an entire people. Every year in France, I attended commemorations at the Grand Mosque of Paris where stories were told of the mosque’s imam and caretaker risking their lives to hide Jewish families from Nazi persecution. These events reminded us that, at their best, Muslims welcomed Jews with open hearts, offering them land, orchards, homes, and safety when they had none. It is against this moral backdrop that we must examine Israel’s current actions in Gaza and the West Bank. Just as the Holocaust was condemned as barbaric and inhuman, the wholesale destruction of Palestinian life and society today demands the same universal condemnation. To call one crime against humanity intolerable while excusing another is hypocrisy that cannot stand. Since its inception, Israel has rarely known peace with its neighbors. Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and now Qatar — the list of countries drawn into conflict with Israel is long. Even nations without direct borders with Israel have found themselves entangled in disputes. Israel insists that it is the “chosen people” reclaiming land promised by God. Yet, year after year, as its military might grows with U.S. backing, Israel expands its borders, seizes more Palestinian land, and drives more families into exile. What was once a narrow strip of conflict has become a permanent state of war. The world is witnessing the steady annihilation of Gaza and the West Bank. Entire neighborhoods are being reduced to rubble, hospitals flattened, churches and schools destroyed, and journalists deliberately targeted. Two U.S. senators recently returned from Gaza and the West Bank and confirmed what Palestinians have long said: this is not simply a war on Hamas. This is a war on an entire people — on civilians, children, women, the elderly, and all who remain in their ancestral homeland. Gaza City, Khan Younis, Rafah, Jenin, Nablus — these names once stood for vibrant communities. Now, they are synonymous with devastation. Satellite images reveal entire blocks leveled. The death toll has climbed into the tens of

thousands, with thousands of children among the victims. Malnutrition and disease spread through overcrowded shelters where water is scarce and medicine nonexistent. Israel claims it is fighting terrorism, but its bombs fall on bakeries, schools, mosques, and even Christian churches. If Hamas were the sole target, why are children starving? Why are doctors performing surgeries without anesthesia? Why are journalists wearing press vests still being killed? These are not accidents; they are the deliberate use of overwhelming force to erase a population and make life unlivable for those who survive. The recent Israeli strike in Doha, Qatar, marks another dangerous escalation. Qatar hosts one of the largest U.S. military bases in the region, yet even that did not shield it from Israeli aggression. By striking Doha, Israel not only violated Qatari sovereignty but also humiliated its American ally, whose intelligence and military coordination made the attack possible. The strike killed civilians of multiple nationalities and sent a chilling message: no country is beyond Israel’s reach. European leaders, including the President of the European Commission, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and the Prime Minister of Spain, have condemned this blatant violation of sovereignty. Yet condemnation alone carries no consequence. As long as the United States shields Israel diplomatically and financially, sanctions, embargoes, and accountability measures remain empty threats. Israel’s obsession with Iran further exposes its expansionist ambitions. Netanyahu and his allies have spent years warning of an Iranian nuclear bomb, yet no credible evidence has ever proven Iran was building one. Even if it had, many nations possess nuclear weapons without being attacked. Iran, unlike others, has never committed acts of terrorism on American soil. Its people have suffered sanctions, isolation, and threats because Israel insists on framing it as an existential menace. When Israeli and American defense officials congratulated each other after striking Iran’s facilities, they did so without proof, without justification, and without remorse. Once again, the goal was not security but dominance — to weaken a regional rival and preserve Israel’s military superiority at any cost. The pattern is clear. Israel wages war after war, reduces entire cities to

rubble, kills civilians by the tens of thousands, and yet faces no real consequences. The United States, its closest ally, provides diplomatic cover at the United Nations, blocks accountability at the International Criminal Court, and funds its military with billions annually. Israel acts with impunity because it believes itself untouchable — a nation beyond the law. But history teaches us that crimes against humanity cannot be excused by claims of divine promise or national security. The Holocaust was condemned as barbaric because it sought to erase a people. Today, the world watches as Palestinians face the same erasure, and silence is complicity. To compare Israel’s current actions with the Holocaust is not to diminish the suffering of Jews in Europe. On the contrary, it is to insist on moral consistency. If we rightly condemn the Nazis for slaughtering millions, then we must also condemn the slaughter of Palestinians. Crimes against humanity are crimes, no matter the perpetrator, no matter the victim. Israel’s leaders claim divine right to occupy and expand. But religion cannot excuse barbarism. Military might cannot justify the starvation of children. Political alliances cannot erase the moral stain of mass displacement. If the Holocaust was humanity’s warning that “never again” should such atrocities occur, then Gaza and the West Bank are humanity’s test — a test we are failing. The Holocaust remains an undeniable crime, a stain on history. But today, Israel’s destruction of Gaza and the West Bank echoes that same barbarity. To call one wrong while excusing the other is hypocrisy that corrodes the very idea of human rights. Whether the victims are Jewish, Muslim, Christian, or any other faith, their humanity is equal. Their suffering is equal. Their right to live free from annihilation is equal. Israel must be held accountable for its actions, just as the Nazis were. International law, global conscience, and simple human decency demand it. If we fail to condemn Israel’s crimes with the same force as we condemn the Holocaust, then “never again” becomes meaningless words. The world owes Palestinians — and itself — better.

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

Qatar: A Beacon of Reconciliation in a World of Conflict

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The Yemeni conflict too witnessed Doha’s involvement in its earlier phases, though Qatar’s diplomatic crisis of 2017 temporarily curtailed its role. That crisis, where Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt imposed a blockade on Qatar, was itself a test of resilience. Isolated and pressured, Qatar turned to its own independent...

IN the contemporary world, where mistrust and hostility often eclipse the possibility of reconciliation, Qatar has steadily carved out a place for itself as a dove of peace. Despite being a small state geographically, its influence in global diplomacy has far exceeded its size. Through a mixture of strategic neutrality, resourceful statecraft, and a willingness to engage where others hesitate, Qatar has emerged as a mediator in conflicts that have engulfed regions and tested the patience of the international community. Yet, in a cruel twist of irony, the very capital that symbolizes dialogue and conciliation—Doha—found itself struck by Israeli aggression, casting a dark shadow on the city that has repeatedly hosted the fragile hopes of peace. The foundations of Qatar’s diplomatic role lie in its readiness to converse with all sides, whether friends or foes, and to lend its resources for reconciliation rather than destruction. In Lebanon, at the brink of civil war in 2008, Qatar brought bitter rivals together in Doha and brokered an agreement that saved the nation from descending into chaos. The Doha Agreement gave Hezbollah representation in government while ensuring calm in the streets of Beirut. It was a rare moment where both Washington and Tehran—otherwise worlds apart—praised the same outcome, acknowledging Qatar’s ability to act as a trusted bridge. Similarly, Qatar has long been a significant mediator in the never-ending conflict between Israel and Hamas. At times when the world community turned away from Gaza, Qatar stepped forward, not only offering financial assistance to sustain hospitals, electricity, and infrastructure but also mediating ceasefires and prisoner exchanges. In 2012, Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani visited Gaza, an unprecedented step for a head of state, signaling Doha’s commitment to humanitarian uplift. During the brutal Israel-Hamas conflict of 2023, Qatar again stood at the center, facilitating negotiations that

led to a ceasefire in January 2025. Hostage exchanges, humanitarian corridors, and a framework for further talks bore the imprint of Doha’s patient diplomacy. Yet, tragically, instead of respecting this role, Israel chose to strike at Doha, the very city that had time and again opened its arms to host negotiations in pursuit of calm. Qatar’s dove-like pursuit of peace has not been confined to the Levant. In Sudan and Darfur, Doha played a pivotal role in mediation during the 2010s, pushing for dialogue where civil conflict had sown despair. In Afghanistan, Qatar provided neutral ground for talks between the United States and the Taliban, culminating in the Doha Agreement of 2020. That accord, while controversial, set the path for U.S. troop withdrawal and underscored the trust placed in Qatar to host negotiations that few others could facilitate. The Yemeni conflict too witnessed Doha’s involvement in its earlier phases, though Qatar’s diplomatic crisis of 2017 temporarily curtailed its role. That crisis, where Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt imposed a blockade on Qatar, was itself a test of resilience. Isolated and pressured, Qatar turned to its own independent policies, strengthened ties with Turkey and Iran, and weathered the storm until reconciliation was achieved in 2021. Remarkably, instead of retreating, Doha emerged from the ordeal more determined to pursue its independent foreign policy and its mediatory role in the region. In Syria, where war ravaged entire cities, Qatar worked to evacuate civilians from besieged towns such as Madaya in 2017, securing safe passage for thousands. In Libya and in the Horn of Africa, it also sought to temper disputes, at times clashing with the interests of fellow Gulf states but always guided by its conviction that dialogue was preferable to confrontation. Even in obscure disputes such as the border quarrel between Eritrea and Djibouti, Qatar lent its hand, proving that no conflict was too small for its attention.

This pattern of engagement has won Doha both praise and criticism. Yet, no fair observer can deny that Qatar’s repeated interventions have alleviated suffering, extended truces, and at least momentarily stilled the drums of war. Its humanitarian support, its insistence on the necessity of dialogue, and its diplomatic agility have made it a trusted interlocutor between adversaries who cannot sit together otherwise. Therefore, when Israeli attacks struck Doha, it was not merely an assault on a capital city but on the very symbol of mediation and reconciliation. It was an affront to the global community’s reliance on Qatar as a neutral stage for peace. Such an act runs contrary to the values of diplomacy and to the faint but vital hope that even in the Middle East’s darkest conflicts, there exists a place where adversaries might, however reluctantly, speak. Qatar’s story demonstrates that small states, through vision and perseverance, can exercise disproportionate influence for peace. Its willingness to keep channels open with all—whether Iran, the U.S., Hamas, or Hezbollah—has proven invaluable in times of crisis. In this role, Doha has not sought domination but understanding; not power, but peace. That is why Qatar today deserves to be recognized not as a mere mediator of convenience but as a dove of peace whose wings span conflicts across continents. The attack on Doha, far from diminishing this role, should instead reinforce the global community’s resolve to protect and preserve such avenues of dialogue. For without spaces like Doha, the world risks descending into a future where war silences conversation, and blood drowns the voice of reason. Qatar has shown that peace, however fragile, is possible. It has earned its place in history not through conquest but through conciliation, not through aggression but through understanding. In times when humanity desperately seeks reconciliation, Qatar’s role as a dove of peace shines ever brighter.

Briefs

Islamabad to convey tough message to Taliban govt

FROM PAGE 01
the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) had said in a statement on Saturday. The martyrdoms prompted a strong response from Islamabad, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif demanding that Kabul choose between siding with terrorists or standing with Pakistan and warned there would be zero tolerance for ambiguity on the issue. PM Shehbaz, during his Banu visit on Saturday, made it clear that anyone speaking in favour of foreign elements or acting as their facilitator would be treated as their "instrument and would be answered in the same language they understood". Afghan nationals are involved in terrorist incidents in Pakistan, he said, adding that illegal Afghan residents would soon be expelled.

Internal, external forces plotting...

FROM PAGE 01
In an exclusive chat with a local news channel, Khawaja Asif probed into the identities of those controlling PTI founder's social media accounts and their connection to the foreign conspiracies allegedly leading the party toward its disappointment. He asserted that these attempts would ultimately fail, as Pakistan's armed forces continue to achieve decisive victories on all fronts. Asif lauded the military's unyielding determination in protecting Pakistan's sovereignty, pointing out that despite both external and internal adversities, the armed forces remain steadfast in neutralizing every attempt to disrupt national stability. In response to a query, he labeled Bannu as a hotbed of terrorism and criticized PTI for failing to condemn it or honor the martyrs of the armed forces.

India outclass Pakistan in Asia Cup...

FROM PAGE 01
With the scoreboard reading 41/2 in 3.4 overs, Tilak Varma joined captain Suryakumar Yadav in the middle and the duo retained the momentum in India's favour by putting together 56 runs for the third wicket until Saim struck again, dismissing the left-handed batter in the 13th over. Varma struck two fours and a six on his way to a run-a-ball 31. His dismissal, however, did not hinder India's progress as Suryakumar guided them comfortably over the line with an unbeaten 47 off 37 deliveries, featuring five fours and a six – his highest individual score against Pakistan in T20Is. Saim remained the solitary wicket-taker for Pakistan, making three scalps for 35 runs in his four overs.

Pakistan, China to continue...

FROM PAGE 01
His visit came on the 128th day since the ceasefire with India – brokered by the United States following four-day armed conflict in the wake of terrorist attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's (IIO-JK) Pahalgam area. His visit also marked a historic first, as no foreign head of state had previously visited the AVIC complex. During the visit to AVIC, the president was accompanied by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, First Lady Aseefa Bhutto, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalid Hashmi and China's Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, who is travelling with the president throughout the visit. He said the J-10 and JF-17 had greatly strengthened Pakistan Air Force, a fact clearly demonstrated during Ma'rake-e-Haq and Operation Bunyan-um-Marsos – launched against Indian aggression.

Call for Legal Reform

Murree community unites to end child marriage

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, originally enacted in 1929, currently sets the minimum age of marriage at 16 for girls and 18 for boys

DNA

MURREE: As part of the ongoing project "Reduce Early Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality," supported by the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad, an awareness session was held in Murree to advocate for the amendment of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2015 (Punjab). The proposed change calls for raising the minimum legal age of marriage for girls from 16 to 18 years. Organized in collaboration with the Hill Fruit Research Sub-Station, Sunny Bank, Murree, the session was part of the second phase of the Avocado Festival. It brought together more than 30 participants from diverse backgrounds, all of whom unanimously supported the proposed legal amendment by raising their hands during the session. The discussion focused not only on legal reform but also on the broader protection of girls' and women's rights—particularly in disaster situations—and the

urgent need to safeguard their legal identities during such crises. Participants explored how recurring climate-related disasters, especially monsoon floods, have heightened the risks for girls in vulnerable communities. When identity documents such as national ID cards are lost or destroyed, access to essential services, protection, and legal safeguards is severely restricted. Under economic pressure and social insecurity, some families resort to marrying off young daughters, a practice that has led to the emergence of so-called "monsoon brides." These are girls pushed into early marriage during or after flood disasters—a practice that undermines their rights to health, education, and personal development. Project Manager Nabeela Aslam led the session and presented an overview of child marriage laws across Pakistan. She noted that while Sindh and the Islamabad Capital Territory have already legislated 18 as the minimum marriage age for both girls and boys—with strict penalties

for violators including parents, family members, nikah khawans, and marriage registrars—Punjab still operates under a nearly century-old legal framework. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, originally enacted in 1929, currently sets the minimum age of marriage at 16 for girls and 18 for boys. Ms. Aslam explained that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah played a pivotal role in shaping the original legislation. However, in light of recent advancements in child protection and a Lahore High Court ruling, urgent reform is now required. The court declared the age disparity unconstitutional and directed the Punjab government to align the law with national and international standards by setting 18 years as the minimum age for both girls and boys, verified through national identity cards. Participants raised pressing concerns during the discussion, such as how a young, uneducated girl can realistically be expected to shoulder adult responsibilities in traditional family settings. The session

emphasized that early and forced marriage is not merely a cultural tradition or a survival strategy in crises—it is a human rights violation that disproportionately impacts girls, particularly in disaster-affected and economically marginalized areas. The session concluded with a collective commitment among participants to advocate for legislative reform and broader public education. There was unanimous agreement that safeguarding girls' rights, particularly in times of crisis, must be a national priority. Raising the legal age of marriage to 18 is a vital step toward ending harmful practices and ensuring no girl is left behind—especially in the face of escalating climate-related challenges. Local folk singer Ali Sher presented a moving song urging the audience to support girls' education. His performance highlighted education as the foundation of personal empowerment for girls and a critical driver of development for both communities and the country as a whole.

Pak committed to enhance ties with Africa: Amb Hamid Asghar



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan valued its partnership with Africa, a region of immense potential and opportunity and will make further efforts to enhance ties with the continent, Ambassador Hamid Ali Asghar, Additional Foreign Secretary for Africa said at a grand diplomatic reception hosted at his residence here.

He said, "Through the Engage Africa Policy, we are committed to expanding cooperation in trade, investment, education, and technology." The dinner brought together the ambassadors of Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Kenya, Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia, along with senior civil and military officials, Honorary Consuls, parliamentarians, business lead-

ers, and media professionals. Notable participants included MNA Isphanyar M. Bhandara, former federal minister Daniyal Aziz, Federal Secretary Joudat Ayaz, former Secretary Arif Azim, former PTV MD Mubasher Tauqir, Shahab Zaheer, Director PEL, Major General Zia, Adnan Cheema, Parvez Khan, UD Afridi, Tariq Saleem, Senator Walid Iqbal, AJK Minister Faisal Rathor, Honorary

Consul General of Ghana Omar Shahid Butt and senior journalist Faisal Zahid Malik and Malik Manzoor Ahmed among others. The event was hosted in a warm, friendly manner and was a unique diplomatic occasion, symbolizing Pakistan's deep-rooted relations with Africa and its commitment to building stronger ties of people to people friendship and cooperation around the globe.

Asia Cup 2025: SL defeat Bangladesh by 6 wickets

ABU DHABI: Bangladesh managed to put up 139 for five in their allotted overs despite a shaky start, as their middle order salvaged the innings against Sri Lanka in the fifth match of the ongoing ACC Men's Asia Cup 2025 at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium, Abu Dhabi on Saturday. Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka's decision to field first proved beneficial as Bangladesh could accumulate 139/5 in their allotted 20 overs. The Tigers got off to a disastrous start to their innings as they lost both their openers, Tanzid Hasan and Parvez Hossain Emon, both duck and thus had been reduced to 2/0 in 1.4 overs. Bangladesh lost another wicket inside the batting powerplay when Towhid Hridoy (eight) got run out in the fifth over while attempting to run a couple. Following the early stutter, Bangladesh captain Litton Das attempted to launch a recovery with a sensible knock until falling victim to Wanindu Hasaranga in the 10th over. He scored 28 off 26 deliveries with the help of four boundaries. With Bangladesh reeling at 53/5 in 9.5 overs, middle-order batter Jaker Ali and Shamim Hossain registered a gutsy sixth-wicket partnership, adding 86 runs in 61 deliveries. Shamim remained the top scorer for Sri Lanka with a 34-ball 42, laced with three fours and a six, closely followed by Jaker, who made 41 from as many deliveries with the help of two boundaries. Hasaranga was the standout bowler for Sri Lanka, taking two wickets for just 25 runs in his two overs, while Dushmantha Chameera and Nuwan Thushara chipped in with one scalp apiece. Earlier, Sri Lanka won the toss and elected to bowl first against Bangladesh. **Playing XIs:** Sri Lanka: Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis (wk), Kamil Mishara, Kusal Perera, Charith Asalanka (c), Kamindu Mendis, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dushmantha Chameera, Binura Fernando and Nuwan Thushara. **Bangladesh:** Tanzid Hasan, Parvez Hossain Emon, Litton Das (c & wk), Towhid Hridoy, Shamim Hossain, Jaker Ali, Mahedi Hasan, Tanzim Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Shoriful Islam and Mustafizur Rahman. – APP

Ishaq Dar arrives in Doha

FROM PAGE 01

They condemned illegal Israeli strikes on #Qatar and other Muslim nations, terming them blatant violations of sovereignty and international law. Both reaffirmed their unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and stressed the urgent need for unity across the Muslim Ummah.

Dar, Rubio resolve to boost Pak-US ties

FROM PAGE 01

The meeting was held at the delegation level, with senior officials from both sides in attendance. The two sides discussed a broad range of issues, including bilateral ties, prospects for enhanced cooperation in trade, economy, investment, counter-terrorism, and regional peace. Soon after the meeting, the two countries announced reaching a trade agreement, which aimed at boosting bilateral trade, improving market access, attracting investment, and strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Shehbaz unveils relief package, waives...

FROM PAGE 01

The premier assured the public that he will not rest until every individual impacted by the floods is fully rehabilitated. The ongoing flash floods have killed at least 972 people so far, according to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority. The floods have destroyed crops, livestock and homes across Punjab province and are now pushing into Sindh, threatening fresh food inflation and deeper hardship in the cash-strapped South Asian nation. Relief Commissioner Nabeel Javed said that more than 4,500 villages were inundated along the Ravi, Sutlej, and Chenab rivers in Punjab.

New Nepal PM vows to 'end... corruption'

FROM PAGE 01

group is demanding its end of corruption, good governance and economic equality," she added. "You and I have to be determined to fulfil that." The 73-year-old former chief justice held a minute's silence on Sunday for those killed in the unrest, before meetings began in the key government complex of Singha Durbar – where several buildings were set on fire during mass protests on Tuesday. At least 72 people were killed in two days of protests, and 191 injured, the government's chief secretary Eaknarayan Aryal said Sunday, increasing an earlier toll of 51. It was the worst unrest since the end of a decade-long civil war and the abolition of the monarchy in 2008.

Veteran sports journalist passes away

DNA

KARACHI: Veteran sports journalist Syed Muhammad Sufi has passed away in Karachi on Sunday. According to Geo News, where he was a sports editor, Sufi was 80 and died after a prolonged illness. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), among others, expressed grief and sorrow over Sufi's death in a condolence message. "The PCB management, along with its staff, extends heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family and prays that the Almighty grants the departed soul eternal peace and gives strength to the family and loved ones to bear this irreparable loss." Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah also expressed grief over Sufi's death in a statement. Former cricketer Shahid Afridi also condoled his death, remembering him as a "man of fine personality". He posted on X that Sufi had always been vocal for the betterment and promotion of the game and the betterment of players. "Personally, he was always very supportive of me. His death marks the end of a great chapter in sports journalism in Pakistan," he added, praying for the veteran journalist.

Punjab Squash Complex nears inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Provincial Minister for Sports and Labour Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar announced on Sunday that after two decades of delays, the state-of-the-art Squash Complex will soon be completed and inaugurated, owing to the proactive leadership of the Chief Minister, who is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for both girls and boys in sports and empowering a new generation of athletes. In exclusive conversation with a local news channel, he explained that the delayed 'Squash Complex' is finally nearing completion and is expected to be inaugurated next month, providing a major opportunity for sports development in the region. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is set to officially open the facility, which promises to boost squash and support athletes at all levels, he mentioned. Punjab Minister Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar further shed light on two key initiatives spearheaded by the Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, aimed at fostering a vibrant sports culture in the region. He began by discussing the "CM Punjab Pink Games," an event specifically designed to promote sports for women. This initiative is a significant step towards empowering women by providing them a platform to showcase their athletic talents and break traditional barriers, ensuring

that women have equal opportunities in the sporting arena. Malik Faisal further elaborated on the "Khelta Punjab" initiative, a comprehensive program launched by CM Maryam Nawaz to promote sports and nurture talent from the grassroots level to the international stage. This initiative spans a wide array of modern and traditional sports, making sure that both genders are equally represented. "Khelta Punjab" is not just about competition but also aims to build a strong sports infrastructure, encourage community involvement and ensure that young athletes receive the necessary support to succeed in their respective fields, he added. Minister also said one of the key components of "Khelta Punjab" is the "CM Summer Games," which brings together athletes from across the province in various sports competitions. The summer games provide an opportunity for young athletes to shine, with the best among them being groomed for national and international competitions. Through these initiatives, CM Maryam Nawaz is not only ensuring the development of sports in Punjab but also fostering a spirit of inclusive and equality, where every athlete, regardless of gender, has an equal chance to succeed, he added. – Agencies

U14 Basketball Squad Shortlisted for Samaranch Cup in China

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has taken a significant step in promoting basketball at the grassroots level by shortlisting the national Under 14 boys' basketball squad for the upcoming 2025 Samaranch Cup Asian Basketball Masters Invitational Tournament in China. The two-day trials, held at the Pakistan Sports Complex saw participation from more than 50 young players from across the country. After rigorous evaluation, 16 players were shortlisted for the national training camp. A four-member selection committee, chaired by Khalid Bashir, Secretary General PBBF, and comprising Riaz Malik (former international player and national coach), Col. (R) Shujaat Ali Rana, and Imran Afzal, supervised the trials. Senior basketball administrators including PBBF President Brig. Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor, Senior Vice President Intiaz Rafi Butt, President Federal Basketball Association Ejaz Rafi Butt, General Secretary Karachi Division Basketball Association M. Yaqoob Qadry, and Secretary General Islamabad Olympic Association Rizwan ul Haq Razi were present at the event. The trials were coordinated by PBBF Associate Secretary Ouj E Zahoor. Parents turned out in large numbers to cheer on their children, creating an encouraging and enthusiastic atmosphere. Officials described the overwhelming response as a positive sign of the sport's growing popularity in Pakistan. "This is a milestone for Pakistan basketball. International participation at such a young age will boost the players' confidence and experience,

and help raise the overall standard of the game in the country," said Khalid Bashir, who also expressed gratitude to DG Pakistan Sports Board

Yasir Ahmed Pirzada, the Chinese Government, and the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan for their support in making this opportunity possible.

The shortlisted players will now attend a training camp, after which the final squad for the China tour will be announced.



Briefs

**Romania
says Russian
drone
breached its
airspace**

BUCHAREST: Romania's defense ministry said Saturday that the country's airspace had been breached by a drone during a Russian attack on infrastructure in neighboring Ukraine. The incident came after Poland denounced the intrusion of Russian drones into its airspace this week, calling on Moscow to avoid further "provocations." NATO member Romania has had several drone fragments crash on its soil since Moscow invaded Ukraine, especially as Russia has stepped up attacks on Ukrainian ports. The country scrambled two F-16 fighter jets late on Saturday to monitor the situation following strikes on Ukraine, said a defense ministry statement. The jets "detected a drone in national airspace" and tracked it until "it disappeared from the radar" near the village of Chilia Veche, it added.—APP

**Reforms
vital to
unlock Pak's
untapped
economic
potential**

LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Coordinator Saif Ur Rehman has stressed that Pakistan must dismantle barriers within its economic system to unlock vast growth potential and effectively compete in the global market. Addressing a seminar on "Unlocking Growth Potentials" here on Sunday, he said that despite holding considerable economic promise, Pakistan continues to lag behind regional peers on several socio-economic indicators. The country's unpredictable and complex policy landscape, he noted, has weakened its competitiveness and limited investments in human capital development. "To achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, Pakistan needs to systematically remove structural barriers built into its business and economic climate," he asserted. He underlined the need for comprehensive reforms, including right-sizing, regulatory simplification through a "guillotine" approach, transparency via digitisation, and fostering professionalism and competition. Saif Ur Rehman emphasized that the economy must move away from dependence on subsidies, patronage, guaranteed returns, and prolonged tariff protection. He urged family businesses to adopt professional management, multinational firms to focus on exports, and all sectors to diversify products and markets. Reflecting on Pakistan's economic history, he said that while the country has seen periods of progress, it has failed to sustain long-term momentum due to deep-rooted structural hurdles and high costs of doing business. Outdated colonial-era regulations, short-term planning, and heavy reliance on taxing sectors meant to drive investment.—APP

**Qatar real
estate sales
reach \$108m
in early Sep**

JEDDAH: Qatar's real estate market saw a notable increase in early September, with sale contracts totaling 394.35 million Qatari riyals (\$108 million) over the five-day period from Aug. 31 to Sept. 4, official data showed. This represents an 18.5 percent rise compared with 333 million riyals recorded the previous week, from Aug. 24 to 28, according to the Ministry of Justice. The ministry's weekly bulletin shows that 124.5 million riyals of the total sales during this period were for residential units. The surge in real estate activity highlights Qatar's continuing market dynamism, driven by both end-users and investors seeking opportunities across residential and mixed-use properties. The bulletin noted that "the properties traded for sale include vacant land, houses, residential buildings, mixed-use commercial-residential buildings, commercial-residential complexes, shops, commercial buildings, and residential units." —APP

Navi, Talal paid tribute to martyred captain Taimoor Hassan

The Federal Secretary Interior, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Inspector General of Islamabad Police, and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad were also present on the occasion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry visited the residence of Shaheed Captain Taimoor Hassan. They met his father, Brigadier Hassan Abbas, and his would-be father-in-law. Both ministers conveyed their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and offered Fateha for the elevation of the martyr's ranks. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi commended the courage of Captain Taimoor's family and said, "The grief of losing a young and only son cannot be described in words. We salute your patience and bravery." Talal Chaudhry said, "Captain Taimoor Shaheed will always remain alive in our hearts." Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also saw the awards and certificates received by Shaheed Captain Taimoor Hassan. Brigadier Hassan Abbas said, "My son was a trust from Allah Almighty, and Allah has taken back His trust. Everyone has to return to their Lord — those who return with dignity are the successful ones." Captain Taimoor Hassan's wedding was scheduled three days after his martyrdom. The Federal Secretary Interior, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Inspector General of Islamabad Police, and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad were also present on the occasion.



RAWLPINDI: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister of State Talal Chaudhry visited the residence of martyred Captain Taimoor Hassan. They met his father, Brigadier Hassan Abbas, and his future father-in-law, offering heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and praying for the departed soul. Minister Naqvi praised the courage and resilience of Captain Taimur's family.—DNA

Indonesia leader in damage control, installs loyalists after protests

JAKARTA: In removing Indonesia's finance minister and U-turning on protester demands, the leader of Southeast Asia's biggest economy is scrambling to restore public trust while seizing a chance to install loyalists after deadly riots last month, experts say. Demonstrations that were sparked by low wages, unemployment and anger over lawmakers' lavish perks grew after footage spread of a paramilitary police vehicle running over a delivery motorcycle driver. The ensuing riots, which rights groups say left at least 10 dead and hundreds detained, were the biggest of Prabowo Subianto's presidency and the ex-general is now calling on the public to restore their confidence in his government. He vowed tough action on the officers who ran over 21-year-old Affan Kurniawan, backtracked on lawmaker housing allowances, and on Monday removed five ministers, including respected finance minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati. "We can read this as damage control after the wave of public anger, especially at... the misdirected budget efficiency," Rani Septyarini, a researcher at the Center of Economic and Law Studies, told AFP. Prabowo has focused on expensive social mega-projects funded by widespread budget cuts that already roused protesters in February. His flagship policies include a free meal programme and a new sovereign wealth fund. But his new finance chief Purbaya Yudi Sadewa said Wednesday he would inject an unprecedented \$12 billion into the economy to spur growth and calm simmering public anger. "Prabowo sees this problem as something that needs to be anticipated seriously," said Airlangga Pribadi Kusman, political analyst at Airlangga University. "He wants to prevent further social damage. Prabowo surged to victory in last year's election and maintained a high approval rating of more than 80 percent 100 days after entering office in October, according to polls. But the protests turned increasingly angry against the country's political elite, with mobs burning buildings and looting politicians' homes. "This shows that the public has a real, legitimate problem with this administration," said Airlangga Yet the Indonesian leader has used the reshuffle to replace officials linked to popular predecessor Joko Widodo, more commonly known as Jokowi, with his own people. Sri Mulyani served for eight years under Jokowi, while new finance minister Purbaya is close to key government economic adviser Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan — an ex-military colleague of Prabowo. "Prabowo is using the moment to slowly consolidate his political power by erasing Jokowi's influence," said Virdika Rizky Utama, a political researcher at think tank PARA Syndicate. State Secretary Prasetyo Hadi said on Monday the replacements were the right people for the job. The presidential palace did not respond to an AFP comment request. To win back public trust, experts say Prabowo — former son-in-law of late dictator Suharto — needs to address an expanding wealth gap and weakening democracy in a nation long known for dynastic politics which only emerged from autocracy in the 1990s. "What we need is the determination from the president, a political will, and real progress," said Airlangga. But in installing loyalists to oversee budget and security, Prabowo appears to be trying to uphold his flagship programmes, rather than change course. "Putting trust in people who are well-known becomes key to securing (his) policies," said Wasisto Raharjo Jati, political analyst at the National Research and Innovation Agency, who added those hired were from Prabowo's "closest circles". —APP

Saudi banks' July profit rises 7% to \$2.2b

RIYADH: Saudi banks' aggregate profit before zakat and tax reached SR8.24 billion (\$2.2 billion) in July, marking a 7 percent increase compared to the same month last year. Latest data from the Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA, show that this robust monthly showing lifted cumulative profits for January to July to about SR59.24 billion, an 18 percent rise over the same period in 2024, highlighting the sector's strong growth trajectory. Regionally, performance mirrors the broader Gulf Cooperation Council upswing. In its September report, Kamco Invest said GCC-listed banks' net profit hit a record \$16.2 billion in the second quarter, powered by broad-based revenue gains and a lower cost-to-income ratio that more than offset higher impairments, underscoring robust fundamentals and a healthy project pipeline across the region. In Saudi Arabia, lenders also operate with one of the GCC's highest loan-to-deposit ratios, at 94.3 percent, reflecting credit demand that outpaces deposit growth. A major driver of Saudi banks' earnings is soaring corporate lending, as the Kingdom's lenders finance megaprojects and businesses aligned with Vision 2030's diversification plan. Total outstanding bank credit hit SR3.2 trillion in July, up 15.21 percent year on year. Notably, business loans grew 22.5 percent to SR1.8 trillion, now comprising about 56.23 percent of total lending, up from roughly 53.46 percent a year ago. Such growth underscores Saudi banks' critical role in propelling the Kingdom's economic diversification, funding everything from mega-projects and infrastructure to housing and small businesses. —APP

Spain PM 'proud' of Pro Palestinian protests at Vuelta

Thousands took part in a pro-Palestinian march in Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city in what organizers said was the largest rally of its kind since the war in Gaza began between Israel and Hamas

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Sunday said pro-Palestinian protests that have rocked the Vuelta a Espana filled him with "pride" as large demonstrations await the race's final stage in Madrid. The protests, which have targeted the Israel-Premier Tech team over the devastating war in Gaza, have disrupted several stages of one of cycling's three grand tours and cast doubt on whether the 21-day race could be completed. The activism has forced some stages to be shortened and occasionally caused crashes as demonstrators burst onto the course, prompting criticism for threatening rider safety and harming Spain's image. In his first public comments on the debate, Sanchez expressed his "recognition and full respect for the athletes, but also our admiration for a people like Spain's which mobilizes for just causes, like Palestine." "Spain today shines as an example and as a source of pride, an example to an international community where it sees Spain taking a step forward in the defense of human rights," he told a Socialist party gathering in Malaga. Several members of the leftist government have publicly supported the movement in a country where support for the Palestinian cause is strong. The authorities have ramped up security for Sunday's final stage in Madrid, which was slightly shortened and will see 1,100 police officers deploy in the Spanish capital. Protesters briefly breached reinforced security and attempted to block the road during the penultimate stage in the Guadarrama mountains outside Madrid on Saturday, forcing cyclists to swerve around them. The leader of the conservative opposition Popular Party, Alberto Nunez Feijoo, lashed out on X at the protest, which he said "gave such a shameful image." "Instead of ministers encouraging it, the government should condemn, denounce and prevent it," he added. Meanwhile, Thousands took part in a pro-Palestinian march in Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, on Saturday, in what organizers said was the largest rally of its kind since the war in Gaza began between Israel and Hamas. Some 50,000 attended the March for Humanity rally in central Auckland on Saturday morning, the Aotearoa for Palestine group said. New Zealand police estimated the attendance at 20,000. Aotearoa for Palestine spokesperson Arama Rata said it was New Zealand's largest march in support of Palestinians since the conflict broke out in Gaza, when Israel started an offensive in retaliation for a cross-border attack that killed about 1,200 people in October 2023. Palestinian authorities have said that more than 64,000 people have been killed in the conflict in Gaza, while humanitarian organizations say a shortage of food is leading to widespread starvation. Many in Saturday's protest crowd carried Palestinian flags and banners with slogans including "Don't normalize genocide" and "Grow a spine, stand with Palestine," public broadcaster Radio New Zealand reported.—Agencies

How Saudi-France diplomatic initiative moved Palestine one step closer to statehood

DUBAI: In a landmark vote on Friday, 142 nations backed a Saudi-French declaration at the UN General Assembly calling for an independent Palestinian state, signaling that Riyadh's diplomatic push is mobilizing unprecedented global consensus for a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict. The vote to adopt the "New York Declaration," which calls for a two-state solution without Hamas involvement, is the latest step in mounting international pressure on Israel to end its war in Gaza, which has killed more than 64,000 people, according to local health officials, injured tens of thousands, and created famine conditions amid a worsening humanitarian catastrophe. French President Emmanuel Macron said the UN General Assembly's adoption of the declaration shows that the international community is "charting an irreversible path towards peace in the Middle East." "Another future is possible. Two peoples, two states: Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security," he wrote in a post on X on Friday. The Saudi Foreign Ministry welcomed the adoption of the declaration and said it "confirms the international consensus on moving forward toward a peaceful future in which the Palestinian people obtain their legitimate right to establish an independent state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital." The "New York Declaration," the outcome of an international conference organized by Saudi Arabia and France in July at UN headquarters, called for a Gaza

ceasefire, the release of all hostages, Hamas' disarmament and the transfer of its weapons to the Palestinian Authority under international supervision, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. It also addressed normalization between Israel and the Arab countries and proposed the deployment of a "temporary international stabilization mission" to Palestine, under the mandate of the UN Security Council, to support the Palestinian civilian population and the transfer of security responsibilities to the PA. The vote now paves the way for a one-day UN conference on the two-state solution, co-chaired by Riyadh and Paris on Sept. 22, where a number of states including France, the UK, Canada, Belgium, and Australia promised to formally recognize the state of Palestine. Formally known as "The New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution," the resolution passed on Friday with overwhelming support, with 142 countries voting in favor. Only 10, including Israel and its key ally the US, voted against, while 12 nations abstained. The declaration, which embodied Saudi Arabia's intensifying global efforts to push for a Palestinian state, was already endorsed by the Arab League and co-signed in July by 17 UN member states, including several Arab countries. Friday's outcome was condemned by the US and Israel. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Oren Marmorstein denounced the declaration's adoption as "disgraceful," saying his country "utterly rejects" it and calling the

UN General Assembly "a political circus detached from reality." Similarly, Morgan Ortugas, US deputy special envoy to the Middle East, condemned the UNGA's action as "another misguided and ill-timed publicity stunt" that rewards Hamas and undermines diplomatic efforts to end the war in Gaza. She added that disarming Hamas and releasing hostages is the key to ending the war. Hamas has said it will not agree to disarm unless a sovereign Palestinian state is established. The growing calls for Palestinian statehood come as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has continued to escalate the conflict. On Tuesday, he authorized airstrikes on Hamas targets in Qatar during a meeting weighing a US ceasefire proposal — a move which was widely condemned in the Middle East and beyond for undermining peace efforts and violating Qatar's sovereignty. Under his command, Israel has been pressing ahead with a major military offensive in Gaza City despite international outrage. On Thursday, a day before the UN vote, he vowed "there will be no Palestinian state" as he signed an agreement to push ahead with the controversial E1 settlement expansion plan that will split the West Bank, further undermining the potential for a Palestinian state. Analysts warned that while the UN's adoption of the declaration may not bring immediate changes on the ground without concrete international action, it underscores a strategic diplomatic defeat for Israel, even as it claims military victories.—Agencies

At least 193 passengers killed in two boats

KINSHASA, Congo: Two separate boat accidents this week in northwestern Congo killed at least 193 people dead and left scores missing, authorities and state media reported Friday. The accidents happened on Wednesday and Thursday, about 150 kilometers apart in the Equateur province. One boat with nearly 500 passengers caught fire and capsized Thursday evening along the Congo River in the province's Lukolela territory, Congo's humanitarian affairs ministry said in a report. The report said 209 survivors were rescued following the accident, involving a whaleboat near the village of Malange in Lukolela territory. A day earlier, a motorized boat capsized in the Basankusu territory of the province, killing at least 86 people, most of them students, state media reported. Several people were missing, but the reports did not give a figure of how many.

It was not immediately clear what caused either accident or whether rescue operations were continuing Friday evening. State media attributed Wednesday's accident to "improper loading and night navigation," citing reports from the scene. Images that appeared to be from the scene showed villagers gathered around bodies as they mourned.—APP

Serbia's opposing camps hold parallel rallies, reflecting deep political crisis

BELGRADE: Anti-government protesters and supporters of President Aleksandar Vucic held parallel rallies throughout Serbia on Saturday, reflecting a deep political crisis in the Balkan country following more than 10 months of protests against the populist government. Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party recently started organizing its own demonstrations to counter persistent student-led protests that have challenged the president's firm grip on power in Serbia. No major incidents were reported at the rallies held in a number of cities and towns with police separating the two camps. Brief scuffles erupted in the capital, Belgrade, when riot police pushed away anti-government protesters as Vucic joined his supporters in a show of confidence. Vucic said that "people want to live normally, they don't want to be harassed and want to be free." Vucic has refused a student demand to call an early parliamentary election. He has instead stepped up a crackdown on the protests, which have drawn hundreds of thousands of people in the past months. More than 100 university professors have been dismissed, while police have faced accusations of brutality against peaceful demonstrators. Vucic has accused student-led protesters of being "terrorists" who are working against their country under orders from the West. He hasn't offered any evidence for such claims.—APP

Blast on Russian railway kills two

MOSCOW: An explosive device detonated on a section of railway in Russia's western Oryol region Saturday, killing two people and wounding another, the region's governor said. The incident took place as officials conducted an inspection of the track, he said. "Unfortunately, two people were killed and one was injured," governor Andrei Klychkov wrote on Telegram. He did not give the identity of those killed, but the governor of the neighboring Kursk region said they were officers of Russia's national guard. Russia's railway network has been repeatedly rocked by derailments, blasts and fires that authorities blame on Ukrainian sabotage. Kyiv does not typically claim responsibility but often cheers such attacks on, arguing Russia uses its train network to deliver troops and fuel to its forces fighting in Ukraine.—APP

Briefs

Israeli strikes kill 25 Palestinians across Gaza

NEWS DESK

GAZA: At least 25 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza since dawn, according to hospital sources cited by Al Jazeera. Medical officials said four people were killed and 25 others wounded when Israeli fire struck near an aid distribution centre north of Rafah. In Gaza City's Tal al-Hawa neighbourhood, Al-Quds Hospital reported five fatalities and multiple injuries from Israeli air raids. In central Gaza, al-Aqsa Hospital confirmed that six Palestinians died after Israeli forces hit a tent sheltering displaced families in Deir el-Balah. Meanwhile, at least one person was killed and several others wounded in an Israeli strike on a car near al-Shifa Hospital earlier today. Reports also noted artillery shelling and gunfire in eastern Gaza City, while Israeli naval boats bombarded western neighbourhoods. In the south, demolition of buildings has been reported in the eastern and northeastern parts of Khan Younis.

Petrol, diesel likely to rise from Sept 16

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum prices are expected to increase from September 16, 2025, for the next fortnight, driven by surging global oil markets and ongoing geopolitical tensions. According to official estimates, the price of petrol is expected to increase by Rs1.54 per litre, pushing the new rate to Rs266.15 from the current Rs264.61 – a rise of 0.6%. High-speed diesel (HSD), a key fuel for transport and agriculture, is projected to climb by Rs4.79 per litre, raising its price from Rs269.99 to Rs274.78 – an increase of 1.8%. Similarly, kerosene is expected to become costlier by Rs3.06 per litre, taking the new rate to Rs179.87. Light diesel oil (LDO), primarily used in industrial machinery, may rise by Rs3.68 per litre, reaching Rs163.44, a 2.3% hike. On September 1, the federal government cut high-speed diesel (HSD) prices by Rs3 per litre, while keeping petrol rates unchanged for the next fortnight. The upward trend in domestic fuel prices reflects developments in global markets, where supply disruptions and diplomatic strains have driven crude oil higher. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has flared up again after Ukrainian drone attacks on Russia's Primorsk port – a major crude and product export hub on the Baltic Sea – disrupting flows and adding pressure to markets.

Pak invites global crypto exchanges to apply for local licences

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has invited international cryptocurrency exchanges and virtual asset firms to apply for licences to operate in its domestic market. The Pakistan Virtual Asset Regulatory Authority (PVARA), created under the Virtual Assets Ordinance 2025, has issued a call for expressions of interest from global virtual asset service providers (VASPs) to expand into the South Asian nation. The move comes as the country seeks to align its oversight framework with standards set by the Financial Action Task Force, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and looks to regulate its large pool of digital asset users. Pakistan's crypto market is estimated to have more than 40 million users with an annual trading volume exceeding \$300 billion, making it among the most active frontier markets for digital assets.

Rubio begins Israel visit in aftermath of Qatar strike

Bakri Diab, who fled western Gaza City for the south, said Israeli strikes continued there as well. “All the occupation has done is force people to crowd into places with no basic services and no safety,” said the 35-year-old father of four. Gaza's civil defence agency said 32 people were killed by Israeli fire on Saturday

JERUSALEM: Top US diplomat Marco Rubio begins a visit to Israel, after expressing the Trump administration's unwavering support for its ally in the war with Hamas following a strike in Qatar that drew broad criticism of Israel. The trip is taking place after President Donald Trump rebuked Israel over the unprecedented attack against Hamas leaders meeting in an upscale neighbourhood of Doha on Tuesday. It marked Israel's first such strike against US ally Qatar and has put renewed strain on diplomatic efforts to bring about a truce in war-ravaged Gaza. Before departing for the region on Saturday, Rubio told reporters that while Trump was “not happy” about the strike, it was “not going to change the nature of our relationship with the Israelis”. But he added that the United States and Israel were “going to have to talk about” its impact on truce efforts. Trump has chided Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the attack, which targeted Hamas leaders gathering to discuss a new ceasefire proposal put forward by the United States. Netanyahu has defended the operation, saying on Saturday that killing senior Hamas officials would remove the “main obstacle” to ending the war. The talk of a ceasefire, still out of reach after months of failed negotiations, came as Israel has been intensifying its campaign in the Gaza Strip. In recent days, it has ramped up efforts to seize control of Gaza City, the territory's largest urban area, telling residents to evacuate and blowing up nu-



merous high-rise buildings it said were being used by Hamas. While thousands of people have evacuated the city, according to the Israeli military and Hamas, many more remain. As of late August, the UN estimated that around one million people were living in the city and its surrounding areas, where it has declared a famine it blamed on Israeli aid restrictions. Bakri Diab, who fled western Gaza City for the south, said Israeli strikes continued there as well. “All the occupation

has done is force people to crowd into places with no basic services and no safety,” said the 35-year-old father of four. Gaza's civil defence agency said 32 people were killed by Israeli fire on Saturday. Media restrictions in Gaza and difficulties in accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify the details provided by the civil defence agency or the Israeli military. Netanyahu and his government have defied international criticism throughout the nearly two-year war, but it continued to mount this week. On Friday, the UN General Assembly voted to back a revival of the two-state solution, in open defiance of Israeli opposition. Israeli allies Britain and France, alongside several other Western nations, are set to recognise Palestinian statehood at a UN gathering this month out of exasperation at Israel's conduct of the Gaza war and in the occupied West Bank. London and Paris, joined by Berlin, also called for an immediate halt to Israel's offensive in Gaza City. Nevertheless, Israel retains the backing of its most powerful ally and biggest arms supplier, the United States. Ahead of Rubio's visit, State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said the diplomatic chief would show “our commitment to fight anti-Israel actions including unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state that rewards Hamas terrorism”. “He will also emphasise our shared goals: ensuring Hamas never rules over Gaza again and bringing all the hostages home.”

Sudan government pushes back on peace plan

KHARTOUM: Sudan's army-aligned government pushed back on Saturday against a new peace proposal put forward by four influential foreign powers, rejecting any suggestion that it be excluded from the country's post-war political transition. On Friday, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt jointly called for a humanitarian truce in Sudan's more than two-year war, followed by a permanent ceasefire and a transition toward civilian rule – but suggested that no warring party should be part of that transition. Responding in a statement from the foreign ministry, Khartoum said it welcomed efforts to end the war, but would not accept “interventions that do not respect the sovereignty of the Sudanese state and its legitimate institutions, which are supported by the Sudanese people, and its right to defend its people and its land”. Sudan's institutions are currently under the control of the army, which has been at war with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023. In May, the army formed a new civilian-led government “to complete the tasks of transition” and “cleanse all of Sudan” of the RSF. In its statement, the foreign ministry said “the Sudanese people alone have the right to determine how they are governed through national consensus”, as led by the transitional government. The plan put forward by the four foreign powers, often referred to as the Quad, had proposed a three-month humanitarian truce, followed

by a permanent ceasefire and a nine-month transition toward a civilian-led government. “Sudan's future governance is for the Sudanese people to decide through an inclusive and transparent transition process, not controlled by any warring party,” Friday's statement read. In its response, Sudan rejected “any attempt to equate it with a racist terrorist militia that recruits foreign mercenaries from across the world to destroy and erase the Sudanese identity” – a clear reference to the RSF, which has been accused of receiving support from foreign fighters funded by the UAE. Abu Dhabi denies such allegations. On Friday, the Quad also rejected any role in Sudan's transition for “violent extremist groups” linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, which ruled until 2019 and has reemerged during the conflict in support of the army. That same day, the US imposed sanctions on Sudan's finance minister Gebreil Ibrahim, who leads an armed group fighting alongside the army in Darfur. Sanctions were also placed on the Baraa Ibn Malik Brigade, an Islamist militia likewise engaged in combat in support of the army. In response, Ibrahim's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) dismissed the sanctions on Saturday as “of no real value and represent an unjust action lacking legal foundation or objective justification”. The conflict in Sudan has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions and created what the United Nations has called one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. – Agencies

Pak Ambassador inaugurates Digital Pakistan Pavilion

“CIFTIS is a truly win-win platform,” he said, encouraging more Pakistani enterprises to seize the opportunity to expand their global footprint

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, inaugurated here the Digital Pakistan Pavilion at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS), marking a significant step in showcasing the nation's IT capabilities on a global stage, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. The pavilion, featuring 15 leading Pakistani tech firms, aims to forge strategic partnerships and highlight Pakistan's role as an emerging player in the digital economy. This year, 15 leading Pakistani IT and services companies are participating in CIFTIS under the Pakistan Pavilion, including Digital Softs, Microlinks Private Limited, Shajim Engineering Services & Technology, OBHost, Noor Ahmed

Ecommerce Solutions, Zile Technologies, Izla Technologies, QBS Co Pvt Ltd, Trio Communication, Innovative Hub, Software Craft Pvt Ltd, ByteSole Private Ltd, World Gemstones Pvt Ltd, MK Technology, Sherdl IT Services Pvt Ltd, and Sepia Solutions. Speaking at the inauguration, Ambassador Hashmi underscored Pakistan's commitment to leveraging the digital economy as a driver of inclusive growth. “Digital technology is not just about innovation; it is a great connector, enabling people-to-people ties and bringing technologies within reach of developing countries at affordable prices,” he remarked. Pakistan is pursuing digital transformation across three key streams - education and research, business-to-business cooperation, and cross-cutting innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence, smart cities, quantum computing, Internet of Things, and green technologies. The envoy emphasized that strategic partnerships, including collaboration with China's IBI Group, are vital to empowering Pakistan's SMEs and traditional industries such as textiles, agriculture, and manufacturing with digital tools to compete globally. Ambassador Hashmi further highlighted that CIFTIS provides Pakistani firms a unique opportunity to explore business processing outsourcing, e-commerce, and fintech partnerships, while strengthening digital connectivity between Pakistan and China.

President Zardari travels by high-speed train in China

DNA

MIANYANG: President Asif Ali Zardari today travelled from Chengdu to



Mianyang by a high-speed train, covering the journey in around half an hour. During the journey the President was briefed on the train's operations, service, safety systems and environmen-

tal advantages. Officials highlighted that China now operates the world's largest high-speed rail network of over 45,000 km of dedicated track, carrying more than 2 billion passengers annually. With trains running at up to 350 km/h, the network links almost all major Chinese cities. China has built a standardised, dedicated passenger system that has become a model of modern connectivity. The President praised China's achievements in sustainable and resilient transport, including pollution-free electric propulsion and earthquake early-warning technologies, describing them as a marvel of railway engineering. He noted that such innovations offer valuable lessons for other countries including Pakistan. The President was accompanied by Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Mr Khalil Hashmi, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr Jiang Zaidong, who is travelling with the President throughout his visit, and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla. On arrival, the President was received by Mr Wu Hao, Vice Mayor of Mianyang.

US, Chinese officials to launch talks in Spain

CENTRELINE REPORT

MADRID: US and Chinese officials meet in Madrid on Sunday to hash over longstanding trade irritants, a looming divestiture deadline for Chinese short video app TikTok and demands by Washington that G7 and European allies impose tariffs on China to halt its purchases of Russian oil. The talks in the Spanish capital mark the fourth time in four months that US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jameson Greer have met with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in European cities to try to keep a fractured US-China trade relationship from collapsing under President Donald Trump's tariffs. The three officials, along with China's top trade negotiator, Li Chenggang, last met in Stockholm in July, where they agreed in principle to extend for 90 days a trade truce that sharply reduced triple-digit retaliatory tariffs on both sides and restarted the flow of rare-earth minerals from China to the US. Trump has approved the extension of current US tariff rates on Chinese goods, totalling about 55%, until November 10. Trade experts said there was little likelihood of a substantial breakthrough in the talks hosted by Spain's Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who has sought to improve ties with Beijing in recent years. The most likely result of the Madrid talks is seen as another extension of a deadline for the popular TikTok app's Chinese owner, ByteDance, to divest its US operations by September 17 or face a US shutdown. A source familiar with the Trump administration's discussions on TikTok's future said that a deal was not expected, but that the deadline would be extended for a fourth time since Trump took office in January. Trump last month launched a TikTok account. TikTok has not been discussed in previous rounds of US-China trade talks in Geneva, London and Stockholm. But the source said the issue's public inclusion as an agenda item on the Treasury's announcement of the talks gives the Trump administration political cover for another extension, which may annoy both Republicans and Democrats in Congress who mandated TikTok's sale to a US entity to reduce national security risks. – Agencies

Charlie Kirk's allies warn Americans

DNA

NEW YORK: After the fatal shooting of right-wing influencer Charlie Kirk, US Republicans have a warning for Americans: Mourn him respectfully or suffer the consequences. Over the past several days, Democratic and Republican leaders have widely condemned the murder of Kirk, a 31-year-old activist and Trump world celebrity known for his hard-right views and pugnacious debating style.

A smattering of commentators – including ordinary people joking about and sometimes celebrating Kirk's death to lawmakers and pundits dwelling on his history of bigoted rhetoric – has also surfaced, only to be targeted in organised campaigns.

At least 15 people have been fired or suspended from their jobs after discussing the killing online, according to a Reuters tally based on interviews, public statements and local press reports. The total includes journalists, academic workers and teachers. On Friday, a junior Nasdaq employee was fired over her posts related to Kirk.

Others have been subjected to torrents of online abuse or seen their offices flooded with calls demanding they be fired, part of a surge in right-wing rage that has followed the killing.

Some Republicans want to go further still and have proposed deporting Kirk's critics from the United States, suing them into penury or banning them from social media for life. “Prepare to have your whole future professional aspirations ruined if you are sick enough to celebrate his death”.

Finance Minister visits flood-hit areas

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Sunday visited the flood-stricken areas of district Toba Tek Singh, including Mal Fatyana Bridge. According to press release issued by the Finance Ministry, during the visit, the minister interacted with the local media and highlighted the ongoing relief and rescue efforts in the area. He said that the government was making all-out efforts to deal with the aftermath of the floods that had ravaged different parts of the country, the press release added. – APP

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