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Pakistan to forge closer realtions with Iran: PM

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PM meets Qatari Emir

Pakistan reaffirms support to Qatar

The Emir of Qatar expressed appreciation for the prime minister's participation in the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit as well as for his visit to Doha on September 12 to express solidarity with Qatar at this difficult time

CENTRELINE REPORT / DNA

DOHA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, where he expressed Pakistan's full support and solidarity with Qatar during this difficult time. He called the Israeli attack on September 9 a clear violation of Qatar's sovereignty and a serious breach of international law. In the "warm and cordial meeting" held on Monday, on the sidelines of Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit, convened in Doha following Israel's recent attack on Qatar, the prime minister reiterated Pakistan's strongest condemnation of the Israeli strike on a residential area in Doha, that led to the loss of precious lives and injured several others. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff were also present in the meeting. Recalling his recent meeting with the Emir during his visit to Doha last week, Prime Minister Shehbaz emphasized, once again, that Pakistan and Qatar's fraternal ties were historic, longstanding and abiding and they would grow stronger in the coming days. He stressed that Israel's aggression in the Middle East must be stopped immediately, and unity within the Ummah was vitally important, in the face of repeated Israeli provocations. In this regard, he deeply appreciated Qatar's decision to convene the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit in Doha. The prime minister further recalled that at Qatar's request, Pakistan had sought an emergency session of the UN Security Council to discuss the deteriorating situation in the Middle East. The Emir of Qatar expressed appreciation for the prime minister's participation in the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit as well as for his visit to Doha on September 12 to express solidarity with Qatar at this difficult time. Both leaders agreed to remain in close contact in view of the unfolding situation in the region.

PM Shehbaz likely to meet President Donald Trump

COAS Field Marshal Asim Munir to also attend meeting backed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, say sources

DNA

WASHINGTON: In what is being viewed as a significant diplomatic development for Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is likely to hold a meeting with United States President Donald Trump on September 25, sources said on Tuesday. The insiders said that the meeting, expected on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, will also be attended by Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir. The huddle — taking place with the consultation, support, and endorsement of Qatar and Saudi Arabia — will, according to sources, have a wide-ranging agenda from floods in Pakistan to the repercussions of the Israeli attack on Qatar. Pakistan-India situation is also likely to be discussed during the high-level meeting, the sources added. Diplomatic sources told this correspondent that Riyadh and Doha are supportive of this Shehbaz-Trump meeting. However, Pakistan's embassy has refrained from commenting or denying the possible meeting.

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US issues fresh Iran-related sanctions

New Iran-related sanctions target multiple individuals and entities

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US has issued a fresh round Iran-related sanctions targeting individuals and entities that Washington says finance Tehran's military, including some in Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates, the US Treasury Department said on Tuesday. Those targeted have helped coordinate funds transfers, including from the sale of Iranian oil, that benefit Iran's military force, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC)- Quds Force and its Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAF), Treasury said.

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SHANGHAI: President Asif Ali Zardari with First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in a meeting with Shanghai CPC Secretary Chen Jining. — DNA

To occupy Gaza

Israel intensifies attacks in Gaza City after US support

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Monday backed Israel's new offensive on Gaza City and its goal of eradicating Hamas, casting doubt on whether diplomacy would work to end nearly two years of war

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Israel heavily bombed Gaza City on Tuesday, witnesses told AFP, after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio backed Israel's offensive in the devastated Palestinian territory. "There is heavy, relentless bombing on Gaza City, and the danger keeps increasing," witness Ahmed Ghazal said, adding that homes had been destroyed and residents were trapped under the rubble. Gaza civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that "bombing is still ongoing heavily across Gaza City, and the number of deaths and injuries continues to rise". US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Monday backed Israel's new offensive on Gaza City and its goal of eradicating Hamas, casting doubt on whether diplomacy would work to end nearly two years of war.

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Qatar, US set to seal enhanced defence pact, says Rubio

NEWS DESK

DOHA: Qatar and the United States are on the verge of finalising an enhanced defence cooperation agreement, said top US diplomat Marco Rubio who was on his way to Doha from Tel Aviv on Tuesday after Israel's attack on Hamas political leaders in Qatar last week drew widespread condemnation. Rubio called for Qatar to continue its role as a mediator between Israel and Hamas to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza war, saying there was "a very

Continued on Page 06

Rehman moves intra-court appeal IHC orders PTA Chairman removal

Head of regulatory body to be appointed on temporary basis, reads Justice Babar Sattar's judgement

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday ordered the removal of Major General (ret'd) Hafeez Ur Rehman from his post as the chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA). The 99-page judgement issued by Justice Babar Sattar, provides for the appointment of the head of regulatory authority's head on temporary basis. In his verdict, Justice Sattar stated the appointment of the PTA

chairman was not legally valid, adding that a senior member of the PTA should be appointed as the chairman temporarily. The court observed that the recruitment process for the post "lacked integrity" and suffered from "malafide in law". "The subsequent steps taken by the federal government in filling the post of Member (Administration) pursuant to the impugned advertisement are not sustainable in the eyes of law and are of no legal effect," read the judgment.

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Briefs

Justice Tariq stopped from judicial work

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad High Court (IHC) bench, led by Chief Justice (CJ) Sardar Mohammad Sarfraz Dogar and comprising Justice Mohammad Azam Khan, barred Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri from carrying out judicial work until the Supreme Judicial Council's (SJC) decision on the matter of his allegedly fake degree. A complaint pertaining to Justice Jahangiri's allegedly fake degree was submitted to the SJC last year in July while a petition challenging his appointment was filed in the IHC earlier this year. The matter centres on a letter that began circulating last year on social media, purportedly from the University of Karachi's controller of examinations, regarding the judge's law degree.

PIA posts pre-tax profit

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) posted a pre-tax profit in the first half of 2025, which a company source said is its first such for the period in about two decades, ahead of a planned sale of the national carrier later this year. PIA, part of PIA Holding Company, recorded a pre-tax profit of Rs11.5 billion in the six months to June, compared with the same period in 2024 when it remained in a loss before taxes and only managed a rare annual profit through deferred tax adjustments. Net profit for the current half year stood at Rs6.8 billion. The disclosure comes as Islamabad presses ahead with a fresh attempt to privatise the airline, a key condition under Pakistan's \$7 billion IMF bailout. A company source said it was the state-run airline's first such profit since 2004.

Handshake snub controversy

'Morally bankrupt nation': Tarar slams India

Info Minister Attaullah Tarar censures India for trying to save itself from embarrassment after military defeat in May

SAIFULLAH ANSAR



ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday assailed India for bringing politics into sports after Indian cricket team players refused to shake hands with their Pakistani counterparts in their recent Asia Cup 2025 match. "A nation which is morally bankrupt and which has no values will always resort to this kind of theatrics in sports when you [India] can't win in the military field," Tarar said while speaking at an event organised by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). "They're trying to politicise cricket," the minister remarked, terming the New Delhi's move as a failed attempt to save itself from

embarrassment after military defeat against Pakistan in the May conflict, where its jets were shot down and Pakistan's response to cross-border attacks prompted it to request a ceasefire. Tarar's remarks refer to the ongoing controversy which arose after Pakistan and India captains avoided handshake at the toss during their September 14 Asia Cup 2025 fixture, an omission reportedly directed by match referee Andy Pycroft. The same was repeated towards the end of the match, when the players of the opposing teams shake hands as per cricketing tradition, where the Indian team skipped the customary post-match handshake. While the Indian players congratulated each other at the dugout after the match, they refrained from acknowledging or shaking hands with the Pakistani team. Pakistan's players lined up expecting the customary handshake, only to see the Indian team retreat and close the dressing room doors. India's victorious captain,

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Pak envoy to Australia meets Dar

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate to Australia, Irfan Shaukat, paid a farewell courtesy call on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar before departing for Canberra to assume his new responsibilities. The Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister appreciated Mr. Shaukat's dedicated and professional contributions as his Chief of Staff for the past year and a half, during key diplomatic and critical moments. Extending best wishes for his tenure in Australia, Senator Ishaq Dar urged the High Commissioner-designate

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Imran refuses to name who runs his social media accounts

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Former prime minister Imran Khan refused to name those who operate his social-media accounts, saying, "if I tell, they will be kidnapped," Geo News has learnt. Khan, who has been in jail since August 2023, made the remarks during an on-site cyber crime's team investigation at Adiala Jail, people familiar with the matter told Geo News. A special three-member team from the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) led,

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'World must act to stop Israel', says Ishaq Dar

DPM Dar says condemnation alone will not deter Israel's atrocities, urges UNSC reforms to ensure justice, regional peace

NEWS DESK / DNA

DOHA: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has said that mere condemnation of Israeli attacks is no longer enough and that the international community must now adopt a clear plan of action to halt Israel's aggression. In an interview with Arab media, Dar said the world must "stop Israel in its tracks" and warned that its attacks on Lebanon, Syria, and now Qatar were unacceptable and in violation of international law. "Pakistan strongly condemns the strike on Qatar... it is an attack on the sovereignty of a brotherly country," he said. Israel attempted to kill the political leaders of Hamas with an airstrike in Qatar last week, escalating its military action in the Middle East. The strike was widely condemned in the Middle East and beyond as an act that could further escalate tensions in a region already on edge. Dar said Pakistan had actively supported Qatar after the strike and, along with Somalia, called for an

emergency session of the UN Security Council. He welcomed Qatar's decision to convene the Arab-Islamic emergency summit in Doha, describing it as a significant and timely initiative. The deputy prime minister said that the people of Gaza were in extreme distress and that it was time to ensure an unconditional ceasefire. He said Israel's provocations made it clear that it did not want peace in the region, adding that Muslim unity was now needed more than ever. He urged the United Nations to introduce long-overdue reforms in the Security Council so that it could fulfill its responsibility to resolve disputes like Palestine and Kashmir. "The Security Council must take meaningful action and not remain a silent spectator," he said. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned Israel's attack on Doha, terming it a reckless and provocative act aimed at sabotaging peace efforts in the Middle East, and called for the creation of an Arab-Islamic task force to counter Israel's expansion-



ist ambitions. The prime minister said the Israeli assault on Qatar was a flagrant violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, stressing that Pakistan stood in full solidarity with its Qatari brothers and sisters. It may be noted that PM Shehbaz and DPM Dar, along with other delegation members, visited Doha to attend

the Arab-Islamic Summit on Monday. Dar reiterated that Pakistan had always supported peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and believed that negotiations were the best way forward — provided there was sincerity and seriousness from all sides. He stressed that Pakistan remained committed to completely eliminating terrorism from its soil and had made the highest sacrifices in this fight. "It is surprising that the country most affected by terrorism is still blamed by India," he said. Dar reaffirmed that Pakistan seeks friendly ties with all its neighbours, including India, but warned that sovereignty would never be compromised. "No one will be allowed to violate Pakistan's independence or integrity," he said. On water issues, Dar cautioned that future wars would be fought over water and reminded that under the Indus Waters Treaty, India could not unilaterally suspend or revoke water distribution. "Pakistan has made it clear that any attempt to stop water will be considered a

declaration of war," he warned. Dar also underlined that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear power, equipped with a strong military and modern weapons, and will stand firmly with the Muslim Ummah in the face of any threat. The two nuclear-armed neighbours, engaged in a four-day military conflict earlier this year, which nearly escalated into a full-blown war. In April, a terrorist attack took place in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, and India blamed Pakistan for the attack — allegations that Islamabad denies. Following that, India launched an attack on Pakistan, branded as "Operation Sindoor", but met with a befitting response. The Pakistani armed forces not only shot down Indian drones that came into Pakistani territory, destroyed their check posts on the border, but also shot down their fighter jets, including the French-made Rafale. The conflict ended after United States President Donald Trump brokered a ceasefire between the arch-rival nations.

Youth must become job creators, not job seekers: Rana

LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has said that Pakistan's future rests with its youth, stressing that today's students are tomorrow's leaders and must be transformed from job-seekers into job-creators. He expressed these views on Friday while addressing a ceremony at the University of Education, Lahore, organized in connection with the Prime Minister's Youth Initiatives and the Digital Youth Hub. Rana Mashhood said that equipping young people with modern skills and technology is the government's foremost priority. He noted that over one million laptops have already been distributed, while National Incubation Centers fund more than 150 innovative projects each year. Through the Digital Youth Hub, he added, scholarships on merit, online courses, world-class certifications, internships, freelancing opportunities, and startup investment facilities are being provided to enable youth to become self-reliant and contribute to strengthening the economy.—APP

CPEC mega project to change destiny of adjoining countries: Governor

QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhel on Monday said that the mega project of China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) has the untapped potential to put an end to the economic stagnation in the entire region and change the destiny of the adjoining countries. He expressed these views while speaking with a delegation of Chinese businessmen led by President Balochistan Economic Forum Sardar Shaukat Popalzai. On this occasion, Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Noshirwani, Managing Director of Pak Eco Marine Solutions Limited Raja Taimur Rehman, Head of Blue Wave Merchantile Mr. Likui Liu and other company representatives were present. The Governor said that for the first time, a private company – Blue Wave Merchantile (BWM) is investing in Gadani, which would take CPEC to new heights of development. “This investment can create vast employment opportunities by further activating the ship-breaking industry of Gadani with modern technology, ensuring environment-friendly practices and providing modern skills to the youth”, he said and added that as the shipbreaking industry of Gadani grows, it will emerge as an “Economic Hub” of the region, attracting new investors and taking Pakistan towards a more prosperous future.—APP

Private sector pivotal in expanding Pak-Azerbaijan eco ties: Farhadov

Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Azerbaijan–Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry, in his detailed address, described the Chamber as an “economic bridge” between the two nations and stressed its pivotal role in building sustainable trade and investment linkages

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, has said that the private sector holds the key to transforming the deep-rooted brotherly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan into strong economic and commercial partnerships. He was addressing an awareness session titled “Online Trade Platform for Doing Business with Azerbaijan” held at the S.M. Munir Auditorium, Chamber House Islamabad. He underlined that Pakistan and Azerbaijan are determined to expand cooperation across multiple sectors, with special emphasis on connectivity, trade, and investment. He further noted that increased air connectivity, five weekly flights from Lahore and two from Islamabad, is significantly enhancing business and people-to-people exchanges, adding that the frequency of flights will soon be increased to further boost the current \$100 million trade volume. The Ambassador also expressed gratitude to the government, people, and media of Pakistan for extending diplomatic and moral support to his country during its war with Armenia. Earlier, in his welcome remarks, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI), said Pakistan greatly values its friendship with Azerbaijan and emphasized the need to translate political goodwill into robust economic partnerships. He said that the Pakistan–Azerbaijan Online Trade & Investment Platform will play a vital role in connecting exporters, importers, investors, and service providers from both countries. He explained that the platform would feature B2B matchmaking, e-contracting, secure payment gateways, logistics integration, and virtual exhibitions to eliminate physical barriers and reduce transaction costs. He assured ICCI's full support in mobilizing trade delegations, exhibitions, and partnerships to unlock untapped potential. Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Azerbaijan–Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry, in his detailed address, described the Chamber as an “economic bridge” between



the two nations and stressed its pivotal role in building sustainable trade and investment linkages. He emphasized that regular business-to-business engagement, joint trade exhibitions, and sector-specific collaborations are essential to unlock this potential. He also extended heartfelt appreciation to Ambassador Farhadov for his proactive role in fostering not only commercial partnerships but also cultural linkages that bring the two brotherly nations closer together. Tariq Sadiq, Chairman ICCI Founder Group, recalled Azerbaijan's consistent diplomatic and moral support for Pakistan and said that the session would help open new avenues of economic cooperation. Babak Huseynli, Trade Facilitation Coordinator for Pakistan–Azerbaijan, shared his insights on the subject by expressing confidence that ties between the two countries will continue to grow and strengthen in the days to come. Agha

Haider Zain, Chief Coordinating Officer, Pakistan–Azerbaijan Technology Hub, through an impressive presentation, showcased the use of digital platforms for promoting trade and investment between the two countries. In his vote of thanks, ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub reaffirmed the commitment to elevate Pakistan–Azerbaijan relations to new heights by fast-tracking the establishment of the Online Trade & Investment Platform. He said the initiative would serve as a landmark for regional connectivity, trade expansion, and shared prosperity. The event concluded with a joint resolve to accelerate efforts for building stronger economic linkages. It was well attended by ICCI Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry, former ICCI Presidents Mian Shaukat Masud, Zafar Bakhtawar, Mian Akram Farid, executive members, and prominent business leaders of Islamabad.

BUITEMS emphasizes urgency of economic transformation

ISLAMABAD: Underscoring the critical link between economic resilience and national security, the University College Zhob, BUITEMS hosted the launch of the groundbreaking book “Economy: Backbone of National Security”, authored by Dr. Aneel Salman, OGDCL–IPRI Chair of Economic Security, with contributions from Muneeb Shah and a multidisciplinary team of experts. The event was chaired by Professor Dr. Abdul Salam Lodhi, Director of University College Zhob, BUITEMS, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. Dr. Abdul Salam Lodhi, in his keynote remarks, stressed that “economic security is essential for the prosperity of all sections of society”, echoing the book's central premise that economic fragility represents a fault line that shapes national defense capabilities, diplomatic influence, and internal stability. He congratulated Dr. Aneel Salman and his Associate Muneeb Shah for producing a timely and urgent work that provides both analysis and actionable solutions. The ceremony featured a detailed presentation by Muneeb Shah, Research Associate at IPRI and proud alumnus of BS Economics, University College Zhob, BUITEMS.—APP

Balochistan unveils automated digital financial e-filing system

QUETTA: In a landmark move toward transparency and digital governance, Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has announced the launch of the country's first-ever automated digital financial e-filing system in Balochistan. The initiative marks a major step in modernizing public sector operations and empowering citizens with direct access to financial and development data. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Quetta on Tuesday, Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that the system will streamline financial processes, eliminate bureaucratic inefficiencies, and reinforce public oversight. The event was attended by provincial ministers, members of the assembly, and senior officials from various administrative departments. The e-filing system is designed to serve as the backbone of comprehensive financial reform across the

province. Its core features included the online budget submissions and all government departments will now submit budget requests digitally. The program would assist at every stage of approval and financial transaction will be recorded and accessible. The system aims to eliminate outdated, opaque procedures that have long hindered efficiency. The officials will have access to live data, enabling faster and more informed decisions. Under the program, citizens can monitor development projects and financial records from their devices, verifying whether initiatives are completed or merely proposed. The Chief Minister said Balochistan is now stepping into the digital age, aligning with global standards of transparency and accountability. To ensure swift implementation, Sarfraz Bugti directed all department secretaries to adopt the system immediately. He also announced that

future Cabinet meetings will be conducted using digital tablets to reduce delays and phase out paper-based processes. The Chief Minister praised the local officials and IT experts who developed the system, noting that the project was built entirely by Balochistan's youth and professionals without external assistance. The announced a one-month salary bonus for government employees involved and pledged similar incentives for private sector contributors as a token of appreciation. Finance Secretary Imran Zarkon provided a detailed briefing and live demonstration of the system's functionality. The ceremony concluded with CM Bugti distributing certificates of appreciation to the development team, reaffirming the government's commitment to the responsible and transparent use of public resources.—APP

Marriyum urges people to move to safe places

MULTAN: Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has urged people in flood-hit areas to immediately move to safe locations to ensure protection of lives. She assured that as soon as the floodwaters recede, the Punjab government will take comprehensive steps to compensate all affected families for their losses. She has been actively present in the field for the third consecutive day under the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. Upon receiving reports of a breach, she promptly reached Tehsil Shujabad to personally monitor relief operations. Accompanied by provincial ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique, Kazim Ali Pirzada, and Rana Sikandar Hayat, the senior minister oversaw ongoing operations to plug the breach at Mauza Dhondo and was briefed on the situation by local officials. She also visited Gardezpur to review the flood response and assess the on-ground challenges.—APP

Punjab plans GIS mapping for 24/7 forest protection

LAHORE: The Punjab Forest department plans GIS mapping and drone surveillance to strengthen forest protection, making technology the centerpiece of its strategy against illegal logging, timber smuggling, and deforestation. Punjab Forest department Director General Azfar Ziya told Wealth Pakistan that 104 command-and-control centres are being established across the province to provide round-the-clock forest surveillance. He said the integration of GIS and drone-based monitoring would allow real-time tracking of forest cover, detection of timber theft, and more accurate data for enforcement. Alongside the technology upgrade, the department has launched a dedicated Forest Special Squad to act on violations identified through the new system. “This is a decisive move against the timber mafia, as technology-backed monitoring will give us the capacity to curb

illegal activities far more effectively than before,” Ziya said. The department has also introduced a public helpline (1084) to encourage citizens reporting of timber theft and tree felling. Ziya said community participation was being promoted so that residents living near forest areas could directly alert the authorities and strengthen enforcement, adding that legal reforms were also underway. The Punjab government was preparing amendments to the Punjab Forest Act and Transit Rules, 2024, which would introduce tougher penalties for forest crimes. Ziya stressed that stronger laws, coupled with technology, would significantly improve the fight against deforestation. The crackdown has extended to the commercial side as well, he added. He said that cutting of green trees had already been prohibited in 2014

following directions from the Lahore High Court, only dead, dry, and wind fallen trees had been auctioned in the past decade. Now, the department had announced an immediate ban on all timber auctions to prevent deforestation and land degradation, he added. The Forest DG said that another major concern was forest fires in Punjab's mountainous regions, for which the department was establishing shielded summits in Murree and Kahuta, deploying 600 fire watchers, constructing watchtowers and water tanks, maintaining forest tracks, and equipping fire response vehicles. Ziya told Wealth Pakistan that Punjab plans to double its forest cover within five years, with large-scale plantations at the centre of the strategy. “During the next two plantation campaigns alone, 51 million saplings will be planted,” he revealed.—DNA

Zong partners with Alkhidmat Foundation to donate protective equipment for healthcare

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading digital technology innovation company, has partnered with Alkhidmat Foundation to donate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to their healthcare institutions in Lahore and Islamabad. The initiative reflects Zong's commitment to inclusive growth, ensuring that critical resources are redirected to strengthen community health and wellbeing. Through this collaboration, protective gear is being directed to frontline healthcare workers in under-resourced facilities, equipping doctors, diagnostic teams, and surgical staff with essentials that reinforce safety standards and minimize waste. The initiative also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Good Health & Well-being (SDG 3) and Responsible Consumption & Production (SDG 12). Commenting on the initiative, Andleeb Aslam, Official Spokesperson at Zong, said: “At Zong, Inclusive Growth means enabling communities through meaningful support. This collaboration with Alkhidmat Foundation reflects our commitment to social responsibility by ensuring healthcare workers have the protection they need to continue serving on the frontlines.—APP

Randhawa stresses T-Chowk flyover timely completion

“This project will prove to be a significant milestone in resolving traffic issues in the twin cities,” he remarked. The T-Chowk Flyover is among the major infrastructure projects underway in the capital region, aimed at easing chronic traffic congestion and improving connectivity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Tuesday visited the underconstruction T-Chowk Flyover and directed officials to ensure the project is completed on schedule with top-quality standards. Accompanied by Member Engineering Nafasat Raza, Member Planning and Design Dr. Khalid Hafeez, the project director, consultants, and other senior officials, Randhawa inspected ongoing construction activities and received a detailed briefing on progress. According to CDA, 12 piles of the flyover structure have already been completed, while work on the 13th pile is underway. The casting of girders has also commenced, and construction teams are working around the clock on multiple sections simultaneously. Randhawa was informed that steps are being taken to relocate utility services affected by the project to avoid delays. The CDA chief stressed the need for speedy relocation of utilities and adherence to project deadlines. “The project must be completed according to the stipulated timelines while ensuring the highest standards of quality,” Randhawa said, directing engineers and consultants to maintain strict oversight of onsite activities. Highlighting the broader impact of the development, Randhawa noted that the T-Chowk Flyover will provide uninterrupted, signal-free travel not only between Islamabad and Rawalpindi but also for commuters coming from Lahore and other parts of Punjab.



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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
Turkish Airlines.....8494949


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

Enquiry
Edhi Ambulance.....115
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

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Corporation.....9209224
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Health minister launches National Anti-Dengue campaign 2025

Underscoring the importance of health services, Mr. Kamal remarked: “Health is a sacred responsibility. People come into contact with the health system in times of suffering

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health, Mr. Mustafa Kamal, formally inaugurated the National Anti-Dengue Campaign 2025 in Islamabad. Addressing the ceremony, the Minister emphasized that “Prevention is better than cure. We must not wait for patients to arrive at hospitals but ensure that they are protected from diseases. The Ministry of Health is working on an effective and integrated strategy to eliminate dengue.” Highlighting the gravity of the issue, the Minister said that dengue is a serious public health threat, spread by mosquitoes breeding in clean water. He noted that after recent rains, there has been a significant rise in reported cases. According to the latest figures, over 300 cases have been reported from rural Islamabad and more than 100 cases from urban areas. He reiterated that eliminating the dengue mosquito remains a top priority for the Ministry.

Underscoring the importance of health services, Mr. Kamal remarked: “Health is a sacred responsibility. People come into contact with the health system in times of suffering. Allah loves His creation, and when you work tirelessly in the heat and sun to protect people from illness, the Almighty is pleased. We must serve humanity for the sake of Allah’s pleasure.” The Minister informed that machinery and facilities are being enhanced to make the anti-dengue campaign more effective. He appealed to all elected representatives of Islamabad, especially the three Members of the National Assembly, to play a leading role in this national effort and help raise awareness among the people. Paying tribute to frontline workers engaged in the campaign, the Health Minister said: “You are doing a vital job by protecting people from disease.” The Minister urged the public to follow the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health, reminding them that dengue mosquitoes breed in clean water. He stressed that building more hospitals is only a temporary solution; the real answer lies in prevention. The government, he said, is utilizing all available resources to eliminate dengue and to build a healthier society. Reaffirming his commitment, the Health Min-



ister declared that despite all challenges, the Ministry of Health is determined to make the National Anti-Dengue Campaign a success. Furthermore, Mr. Mustafa Kamal highlighted that the government has also launched

a campaign against cervical cancer. He revealed that every year nearly 5,000 women in Pakistan are diagnosed with cervical cancer, of whom 3,000 lose their lives. He strongly urged families to ensure vaccination for

prevention. Condemning baseless propaganda against vaccines, he added: “Those who spread misinformation about vaccines must fear God and refrain from such irresponsible and harmful behavior.”

PEC to facilitate Pakistani engineers in Australia

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), under the dynamic leadership of Chairman Engr. Waseem Nazir, has embarked on a landmark initiative to create international career opportunities for Pakistani engineers. In collaboration with Engineers Australia and with the support of the Pakistan Consulate General in Sydney, PEC is working to enable Pakistani engineers to access the thriving Australian engineering market. As part of this initiative, PEC and the Consulate General Office, Sydney jointly organized a comprehensive webinar that brought together prominent industry experts and policy leaders. The session offered practical guidance to Pakistani engineers on building successful engineering careers in Australia.

The key topics included pathways for professional growth, sector-wise opportunities within the Australian job market, and preparation of Competency Demonstration Reports (CDR) for those not covered under the Washington Accord. In his concluding remarks at the webinar, Chairman Engr. Waseem Nazir highlighted the transformative role of PEC’s new Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework. He noted that market-driven CPD courses have been introduced to align the skills of Pakistani engineers with global standards, thus equipping them for international job placements and ensuring their professional competence abroad. To institutionalize and strengthen this collaboration, PEC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Engineers Australia to formally facilitate the international mobility. APP

Landmark volume on Post-Pahalgam Deterrence and Escalation launched

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, in collaboration with the Center for Security Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR), has launched a landmark edited volume titled “Strategic Reckoning: Perspectives on Deterrence and Escalation Post-Pahalgam – May 2025.” The high-profile event brought together diplomats, experts, scholars, journalists, senior officials and students, said a press release issued on Tuesday. Edited by Dr. Rabia Akhtar, the volume provides a comprehensive analysis of the May 2025 crisis—widely regarded as one of the most dangerous confrontations in South Asia in decades. The contributors examine the fragility of deterrence, the risks posed by compressed escalation timelines, and the catastrophic consequences narrowly averted. The book underscores how Pakistan, despite grave provocations, exercised restraint and employed calibrated responses to prevent further escalation. Collectively, the work challenges the normalization of abnormal conflict dynamics. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, argued that India’s coercive policies towards its neighbors—including Nepal and Sri Lanka—fuel instability in South Asia and weaken regional institutions such as

SAARC, which could have become a vehicle for fostering regional cooperation and prosperity, but for India’s hubris and hegemonic designs. He cautioned that India’s quest for strategic dominance risks diplomatic isolation and long-term setbacks to its own interests. Lt. Gen. Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, Advisor, National Command Authority, emphasized Pakistan’s tri-services’ readiness, operational proficiency, and the establishment of the Army Rocket Force Command as evidence of a credible deterrence posture. He underscored India’s military shortcomings, Pakistan’s measured response, and the broader geopolitical implications, concluding that Pakistan had successfully restored deterrence and strategic equilibrium through coordinated tri-service operations. Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of AJK, identified the Pahalgam attack as a critical flashpoint, highlighting the enduring centrality of the Kashmir dispute to regional instability. He warned that neglecting Kashmiri grievances would perpetuate recurring crises. Dr. Rabia Akhtar, the editor, characterized the May 2025 crisis as a perilous destabilization of deterrence, where India sought to impose a ‘new normal’ of

pre-emptive strikes. She argued that this behavior must instead be recognized as a ‘new abnormal,’ deviating from established crisis management practices under nuclear conditions. She underscored Pakistan’s calibrated retaliation as an exemplar of responsible deterrence in contrast to India’s imprudent adventurism, cautioning against normalizing brinkmanship. Khalid Banuri, former DG Arms Control and Disarmament, SPD, analyzed the Pakistan Air Force’s (PAF) performance, detailing its rapid mobilization, neutralization of Indian strikes, and demonstration of air superiority through precise counter-air operations. He stressed that PAF’s measured yet resolute actions undermined India’s coercive objectives, showcasing the high costs of escalation. Dr. Salma Malik, Associate Professor at QAU, highlighted the adverse spillover effects of such crises on regional actors beyond India and Pakistan, noting economic disruptions, refugee flows, and heightened security risks. She called for multilateral crisis management frameworks to give smaller regional states a voice and distribute the burden of maintaining peace.—DNA

Islamabad, Astana to strengthen city-level ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad and Kazakhstan’s capital Astana are moving towards stronger city-level cooperation, with proposals for cultural exchanges, eco-friendly projects, and the symbolic naming of major roads after national icons of both countries. The development came during a meeting between Kazakhstan’s

Ambassador, Yerzhan Kistafin, and Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, at CDA Headquarters on the other day. Chairman Randhawa emphasized the need to formalize Sister City relations between Islamabad and Astana, noting that enhanced collaboration could boost cultural, environmental, and tourism links. “Cooperation between Islamabad and Astana at the

city level should be enhanced so that Sister City relations can be formally established,” he said. Ambassador Kistafin praised CDA’s ongoing efforts to improve and beautify Islamabad, and proposed a significant cultural gesture: naming a major road in Astana after Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as a symbol of friendship. In return, he suggested Islamabad name a prominent road after Kazakhstan’s renowned poet Abai Qunanbaiuly, further cementing literary and cultural ties. Randhawa also briefed the ambassador on Islamabad’s eco-friendly initiative, the “Gardenia Hub” project, describing it as a model nursery that would “not only help make the city green but also nurture a spirit of love for plantation among citizens.” He added that development and beautification work in the Diplomatic Enclave was underway, including upgraded sports and recreational facilities for diplomats. At the conclusion of the meeting, both sides expressed a shared resolve to strengthen cooperation in culture, environment, and urban development, with a focus on long-term city-to-city partnerships.

Islamabad hosts 2nd Int’l Seerat Festival

ISLAMABAD: The 2nd International Seerat Festival 2025, featuring a Book Fair and Calligraphy Exhibition, was held at FG Home Economics and Management Sciences College, F-11/1, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training. The three-day celebration, organized from September 16 to 18, was inaugurated jointly by the Rehmatul-lil-Alameen & Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Authority (NRKNA) and the Institute of Home Economics, Art & Design. The theme of this year’s festival was “Rahmat for the Earth.” At the Book Fair, 18 stalls showcased publications on Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) by various publishers and institutions across Pakistan, offering special discounts to encourage readership. The Calligraphy Exhibition highlighted Islamic art and culture with Asma-ul-Nabi calligraphies created by students from Islamabad’s educational institutions. The top ten participants received certificates and prizes for their outstanding work. The second half of the festival featured a Book Launch, presenting research papers authored by scholars from Pakistan and abroad, further enriching the intellectual discourse around Seerat studies. Speaking at the event, Principal Prof. Rozina Faheem underscored the importance of the Seerah in daily life, stressing its role in fostering moral integrity and ethical values. She also praised NRKNA’s efforts in character education and in promoting the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during the blessed month of Rabi al-Awwal. Distinguished guests included Khurshed Ahmed Nadeem, Chairman NRKNA; Dr. Kamran Jahangir, Managing Director of National Book Foundation (NBF); and Dr. Zia Batool, Chairperson PIERA.—DNA



General Practice
HOSPITAL

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Briefs

PCTVI Gwadar launches commerce courses with Chinese faculty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCTVI) at the University of Gwadar has opened admissions for short-term courses in artificial intelligence, e-commerce and other digital skills, with support from Chinese faculty. The initiative is seen as part of broader efforts to prepare local youth for opportunities in the digital economy under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Gwadar Pro reported. The three-month programs cover areas such as data analytics, generative AI, Python programming, mobile application development, freelancing and digital marketing. University officials said the training will help equip students from Balochistan and across Pakistan with skills that are increasingly in demand for trade and innovation. Faculty from Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology (SICT), China, will join Pakistani instructors in teaching several of the courses. The Chinese expertise would not only improve the quality of training but also strengthen educational cooperation between the two countries.

‘Identity is birthright, not a privilege’

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson and Director of NADRA Syed Shababhat Ali on Tuesday said that Identity is a basic human right, and every individual must be recognized as such. While speaking to a private news channel, he said International Identity Day is marked to highlight the global recognition that identity is a fundamental, birth-given right of every person. “This day has been observed since 2018 to raise awareness that everyone deserves to be counted,” he said. He added that NADRA, being the responsible authority in Pakistan, actively participates in this day each year. Ali revealed that there is still a 16.5% identity gap in Pakistan, which translates to nearly 40 million people without official identification. “Women are most affected,” he said. “Poverty, remote locations, and lack of access to mass communication are the major reasons behind this gap.” He stressed that many people living in far-flung areas remain outside the national network, making identification efforts more difficult. “We are identifying such pockets and working through data to locate and reach them,” he added.—APP

Shaping Pakistan’s future through research and policy

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal expressed pride in having contributed to PIDE’s expansion, envisioning it as a hub that nurtures a new generation of economists capable of strengthening the foundations of Pakistan’s progress

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) celebrated Orientation Day 2025 at its campus in Islamabad, warmly welcoming a new cohort of MPhil and PhD scholars embarking on their academic journey. The event featured orientation sessions, book stalls showcasing PIDE’s extensive research output, documentary screenings, and interactive engagements to familiarize students with academic rules and regulations. Delivering the keynote address, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives and Chancellor PIDE, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary (NI), welcomed the new scholars and emphasized that joining PIDE is not merely the start of an academic journey but an opportunity to shape Pakistan’s future through research, innovation, and policy engagement. Unlike other institutions where economics remains confined to classrooms, PIDE uniquely combines teaching with applied research, offering students direct exposure to real-world policymaking as a government think tank. This dual role, he noted, enables PIDE scholars to become problem-solvers whose work is academically rigorous and practically relevant.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal expressed pride in having contributed to PIDE’s expansion, envisioning it as a hub that nurtures a new generation of economists capable of strengthening the foundations of Pakistan’s progress. Drawing lessons from history, he observed that Pakistan had once been ahead of regional peers through development plans like Vision 2010 and Vision 2025 but faltered due to political instability and inconsistent policies. While countries such as China, Vietnam, and Bangladesh advanced



steadily, Pakistan missed key opportunities, resulting in slower industrial growth, stagnant exports, and developmental setbacks. He stressed that Pakistan now stands at a “fourth flight” in its development journey, where success depends on policy stability, continuity, and collective national effort. Outlining the government’s URAAN Pakistan Program, the Federal Minister said the agenda rests on five strategic pillars: export-led growth to earn vital foreign exchange; technological transformation through digitalization, AI, fintech, and biotechnology; climate and environmental resilience to ensure food and water security; energy and infrastructure reform for af-

fordable, green, and efficient systems; and equity and empowerment through stronger education, health, social protections, and inclusive development. He urged scholars to contribute to these national priorities through their research and innovation.

To guide their academic and professional journeys, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal shared three core principles. First, excellence — mediocrity cannot deliver transformation, so scholars must strive for global standards in their work. Second, relevance — knowledge should not be confined to libraries or journals but must address real national problems and improve lives. Third, resilience — progress demands perseverance

and consistency, and setbacks must not weaken resolve.

Urging students to embrace curiosity, challenge assumptions, and commit to nation-building, the Minister described them as the next generation of researchers and policymakers whose intellect, creativity, and dedication will help Pakistan achieve prosperity, stability, and equity. The program concluded with refreshments, offering students, faculty, and guests an opportunity to interact informally. With this orientation, PIDE reaffirmed its mission to nurture thought leaders, foster innovation, and provide evidence-based solutions to Pakistan’s pressing socio-economic challenges.

Pakistan to host Int’l tourism expo: Sardar Yasir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister’s Coordinator for Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Tuesday said that Pakistan, blessed with natural beauty, historic monuments, rare cultural heritage, ancient festivals, and diverse religious sites, is a paradise for tourists and has the potential to earn \$30–40 billion annually through tourism if developed on modern lines.

Sardar Yasir said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif’s decision to grant tourism the status of an industry is a historic and far-reaching step that will strengthen the economy and enhance Pakistan’s global image. “Tourism has been neglected for a long time, especially after the 18th Constitutional Amendment, when provinces made individual efforts. Now a comprehensive strategy has been prepared to revive and promote the sector,” he added. Under this plan, the National Tourism Coordination Board will be revived and restructured to ensure harmony between the federation and provinces. To attract investment, the government has decided to lease inactive government properties to local and foreign investors for 50 to 60 years for tourism-related projects. Digital tourism portals are also being developed where visitors will find details about attractions, hotel bookings, weather updates, and



essential travel information, he added. Sardar Yasir announced a new international branding slogan for Pakistan: “Pakistan: Where Beauty Greet, History Speaks, and Adventure Leaves.” He said this will project Pakistan’s diverse opportunities, including medical tourism, religious tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. He stressed that deforestation and climate change pose grave threats to tourism and the environment. Large-scale afforestation and removal of encroachments on rivers and lakes are vital to protect the ecosystem. He said climate change is

a global tragedy, but in Pakistan, forest cutting directly endangers both biodiversity and tourism. Listing upcoming initiatives, he said projects are being considered at F-9 Park and Lake View Park in Islamabad, including food streets and three mini-parks. A safari forest in Fateh Jang and several other tourism ventures are also under review. On religious and cultural tourism, he said the government is paying special attention to providing more facilities for Sikh pilgrims. Gurdwaras and Buddhist sites will be restored and handed over to their respective communities, along with necessary facilities for caretaking and worship. Sardar Yasir noted that Pakistan’s visa policy has been greatly simplified. Tourists from 126 countries can now obtain online visas, visa fees have been abolished, and further facilitation is underway. He said foreign tourists are always astonished by Pakistan’s landscapes, cultural heritage, and hospitality, and the government’s goal is to ensure more travelers discover this “hidden paradise.” He underlined that tourism has never been marketed properly in Pakistan. “Countries like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan attract millions of tourists annually despite offering less geographical diversity and fewer seasons than Pakistan. —Agencies

ICT admin moves to end parking woes at Pak Secretariat

ISLAMABAD: The district administration and traffic police have launched a joint effort to address long-standing parking problems at Pak Secretariat and have directed the employees and visitors to use newly allocated parking site. The move comes after growing complaints from employees and citizens visiting the federal offices about congestion and lack of organized parking spaces. In this regard, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (retd) Hamza Humayun, along with Magistrate Mir Yameen from the district administration, conducted a surprise visit to review the situation. The visit focused on the use of a new parking site allocated for Secretariat employees and visitors. During the inspection, the officers interacted with staff and citizens, urging them to shift their vehicles to the newly designated parking area. According to CTO Hamza Humayun, parking vehicles in the official site will not only improve the flow of traffic around the Secretariat but also prevent unnecessary obstruction on the main roads. The CTO made it clear that strict legal action will be taken against those who continue to park on roadsides despite the availability of space in the new parking facility. He emphasized that the administration’s objective is not to penalize people unnecessarily but to ensure smooth traffic movement in one of the busiest government zones of the capital. He added that the Secretariat often witnesses heavy traffic during working hours due to the presence of multiple government offices. Improperly parked vehicles on main roads and entry points create bottlenecks, causing inconvenience for both staff and citizens who visit daily for official work. The district administration, working closely with Islamabad Model Traffic Police, is implementing measures to streamline parking management. Meanwhile, Magistrate Mir Yameen said that the collaboration aims to provide practical solutions instead of temporary fixes. —APP

PMD warns of unprecedented dengue outbreak risk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has issued a high-risk dengue alert, warning that Pakistan faces an unprecedented threat of a severe outbreak beginning September 20 due to favorable weather conditions combined with the devastating effects of monsoon flooding.

In its alert, PMD highlighted that dengue fever has remained a persistent public health threat in Pakistan over the last decade, with major outbreaks reported during the post-monsoon season from September 20 to December 5. Scientific analysis shows that dengue risk is at its peak when temperatures remain between 26–29°C for three to five weeks, relative humidity exceeds 60 percent, and rainfall surpasses 27 millimeters with a lag effect of up to three weeks.

The Aedes mosquitoes responsible for dengue transmission are most active two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset, while their breeding activity slows only when temperatures drop below 16°C. Currently, Pakistan is facing severe and widespread flooding due to heavy and prolonged monsoon rains, river overflows, and water releases from reservoirs. Large parts of Punjab and Sindh, including urban centers, are inundated; villages remain submerged, millions of people are displaced, and shelters are overcrowded. The floods have left behind stagnant water and poor drainage systems, creating highly favorable environmental conditions for mosquito breeding and dengue transmission. Based on historical trends, the prevailing climate outlook, and the flood-related inundation, PMD cautioned that conditions have become highly conducive for dengue onset starting September 20. —APP

FGEHA’s IFC now operational in sector G-13/14 office

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has formally made its Investor Facilitation Cell (IFC) operational in its office in Sector G-13/14 to address all investment-related matters. The Cell became operational within a record timeframe, aimed at ensuring transparency, efficiency, and speed in the investment process while providing better facilities to investors. According to the official spokesperson of FGEHA, this initiative was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the Planning and Building Control Wing and the strong support of the administration. He added that to facilitate investors, FGEHA has decided to grant Map Approval against only a 25% payment, thereby simplifying and expediting the investment process. He noted that the Investor Facilitation Cell will provide services including the provision of complete information related to investment projects, guidance in application submission and registration processes, timely redressal of investors’ complaints, and fast-track services in the Planning and Building Control Wing through modern technology. —APP

Traffic diversion plan for Red Zone entrances

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) announced that diversions have been placed at Express Chowk and Nadra Chowk, the main entry points to the Red Zone, due to law and order measures. An official told APP on Tuesday that motorists intending to enter the Red Zone can use Margalla Road, Marriott Hotel, and Serena Hotel routes as alternatives. He said traffic flow may remain slow due to diversions, while ITP officers will remain deployed at various points to guide citizens. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Captain (retd) Hamzah Humayun urged commuters to keep a 20-minute margin in their travel schedules to avoid inconvenience. He further advised citizens to contact the ITP Helpline 1915 or follow official social media platforms for real-time traffic updates and assistance during travel. —APP

E-commerce: Shaping Pakistan’s Economy

MUHAMMAD UMAR SHABBI



E-COMMERCE is no longer just a global trend; e-commerce has become a shift that has changed how people deal with businesses, goods, and services. Millions of people in Pakistan are changing the way they shop, trade, and make a living as a result of this relatively new but rapidly shifting trend. The development of internet connections throughout urban and semi-urban areas, the expanding availability of reasonably priced smartphones, and the growing desire of the younger generation to use technology have all contributed to Pakistan’s extraordinary digital transformation during the past ten years. Even though e-commerce nowadays is responsible for a small portion of Pakistan’s retail industry, its rate of growth indicates that it may eventually play a significant role in the country’s future economic structure. E-commerce presents opportunities for diversity, job development, entrepreneurship, and engagement into the global economy in addition to convenience. Platforms such as Daraz, Foodpanda, Yayvo, and Telemart currently dominate Pakistan’s e-commerce market. These businesses have made

significant investments in technology, logistics, and infrastructure to offer a more smooth shopping experience. However, thousands of tiny businesses and entrepreneurs who sell directly through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp are the true driving force behind the industry. With the help of social media and electronic payments, it is not unusual for a home-based vendor in Lahore to connect with clients in Karachi, Islamabad, or even small towns. This trend shows e-commerce in Pakistan is not limited to big corporations; rather, it is enabling small businesses and individuals to enter the market with comparatively low barriers to entry.

The way that consumers feel about shopping online has also changed a lot. Many Pakistanis used to be cautious to trust internet vendors out of concern about poor quality goods, fraud, or delayed delivery. The lack of trust prevented the sector from growing as rapidly as it would have in other nations. But the COVID-19 pandemic turned out to be a game-changer. Even the most suspicious consumers were forced to attempt internet shopping for necessities like groceries, medications, and clothes when physical marketplaces were shut down because of lockdowns. What began as a necessity soon became a habit. Numerous people came to understand that shopping online was not only practical, but also gave them the opportunity to compare costs, save time, and acquire goods that might not be offered in their local marketplaces. Online buying has become a commonplace part of urban consumer life as a result of this behavioural shift, which has remained even after the pandemic. The diverse population of Pakistan is another element contributing to the rapid spread of e-commerce. Pakistan is one of the youngest countries in the world, with around 64 percent of its people under 30. Younger individuals are naturally technologically aware and open to trying out new buying techniques. They purchase devices from internet retailers, follow fashion influencers on Instagram, and depend more and more on apps for entertainment, dining, and travel. In addition to being a consumer base, this younger generation is also a force of digital entrepreneurs who are starting their own business with the help of online resources. Pakistani Generation Z are

changing what it means to run a business, from YouTubers selling items to garment brands that operate entirely on Instagram.

The widespread use of cellphones is another factor contributing to the steady growth of e-commerce. The number of low-cost cellphones has increased rapidly over the past five years, giving millions of individuals who previously had no means of connecting to the internet access. Due to significant cost reductions brought about by government support for local smartphone manufacturing, middle-class and lower-class households may now afford them. Because of this, e-commerce is no longer just for the wealthy; it is slowly making its way to people in smaller cities and even rural areas, although with a more limited reach. Ten years ago, it would have been unthinkable for individuals to get food, clothing, and household goods with only a few clicks thanks to mobile apps.

Another area in which Pakistan has made major progress is digital payments. Cash on delivery was used for the vast majority of transactions in the early days of e-commerce, which caused issues for both consumers and sellers. While buyers frequently hesitated to finish orders, sellers had to deal with high return rates and inefficient operations. However, the emergence of fintech services like Easypaisa, JazzCash, Sadapay, and NayaPay in recent years has started to change how people shop. Another potential game-changer is the State Bank of Pakistan’s Raast payment system, which facilitates quick and safe digital payments. Digital wallets and payment gateways are becoming more popular, especially with younger and urban consumers, even though cash on delivery is still the most common method. Pakistan will progressively shift to a cashless economy as trust in these systems increases, which will speed up the expansion of e-commerce. Even with these encouraging developments, there are still obstacles in the way. Since many consumers are still concerned about becoming a target to fraud or receiving poor products, earning trust is still one of the largest challenges. Stricter quality standards, improved regulation, and accessible platforms are all necessary to gain the trust of customers. The lack of digital literacy in many regions of the nation is another obstacle. Millions of individuals in rural areas

still struggle with basic digital skills, while young people in urban areas are at ease using internet platforms. E-commerce growth will continue to be unequal and focused in urban areas if this gap is not closed. Another major challenge is infrastructure. The smooth growth of online retail is complicated by poor logistics networks, frequent power failures, and unreliable internet connectivity in remote areas.

Government regulations will be very important for deciding how this industry develops in the future. The National E-Commerce Policy and initiatives to enhance digital financial services have already been implemented by the government. However, both domestic and foreign players are still discouraged by confusing cross-border trade laws, complicated taxation schemes, and uneven regulations. It will be crucial to strike the correct balance between innovation and regulation. Overregulation puts the industry at risk of suffocation, while underregulation exposes it to consumer mistrust and exploitation. Therefore, policymakers need to provide an atmosphere that protects consumers, promotes investment, and supports startups.

E-commerce in Pakistan has a bright future, but there are several obstacles to overcome. On the one hand, the nation offers a youthful and vibrant population, rising smartphone usage, expanding use of digital payments, and a flourishing culture of entrepreneurship. However, in order to maintain growth, trust, lawmaking, infrastructure, and digital literacy issues need to be carefully addressed. Pakistan’s e-commerce market has the potential to expand into a multibillion-dollar industry within the next ten years provided companies keep innovating, the government establishes an encouraging policy environment, and consumers confidently adopt the digital change. More significantly, it has the potential to change lives by facilitating trade, opening doors for small business owners, connecting rural markets to urban areas, and further merging Pakistan into the global digital economy. E-commerce, in many ways, is about changing how Pakistanis engage with the world, build value, and shape their future in the digital age. It is not simply about buying and selling things online.

—The Writer is pursuing Business Studies at University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom.

Arab-Islamic summit in Doha: a show of unity amid disappointment

THE Arab-Islamic Summit convened in Doha on Monday September 15, 2025, just days after an unprecedented Israeli attack shook the Qatari capital. Leaders and high-level delegations from across the Muslim world, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and heads of state from dozens of other Muslim-majority countries, gathered in a rare display of solidarity. The event, billed as a show of power and unity, came at a moment of heightened tensions in the region. The attack on Doha not only raised questions about Israel's audacity but also about the broader security guarantees traditionally extended to Qatar by its Western allies, particularly the United States. Against this backdrop, the summit carried both symbolic and strategic significance, as Muslim leaders attempted to send a clear message to Israel and its backers: another such aggression would not go unanswered. From the moment the summit opened, the optics were striking. The assembly of nearly all major Muslim leaders under one roof was in itself a political statement. Delegations from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), North Africa, South Asia, and Central Asia underscored the breadth of Muslim representation. The Saudi Crown Prince, seated alongside the Emir of Qatar, emphasized that the attack on Doha was not merely an assault on a sovereign nation but an affront to the dignity of the entire Muslim world. Similarly, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated Pakistan's "unwavering support for Qatar" and called for "collective defense mechanisms" to safeguard Muslim states against external threats. Turkish President Erdoğan, never one to mince words on Israel, described the attack as "state terrorism carried out under the shield of American protection." The speeches and the carefully staged displays of fraternity projected an image of resilience. The symbolism mattered: Muslim leaders wanted Israel and the United States to know that while internal divisions persist, there is a line beyond which provocations could unify even the most disparate actors. At the core of the summit was the warning delivered to both Israel and Washington. A joint communiqué released at the end of the session noted that "continued provocations against the sovereignty of Muslim nations will invite resolute responses." Though carefully worded, the statement carried an implicit threat: further aggression might push the Muslim world toward collective retaliation. Analysts observed that the summit's timing and strong language were meant as much for Washington as for Tel Aviv. For decades, the United States has styled itself as the security guarantor of Gulf states, particularly Qatar, where it maintains the Al Udeid Air Base — one of its largest military facilities in the region. Yet when Israel struck Doha, Washington failed to protect its ally, instead appearing to side with Tel Aviv. This failure has triggered introspection in Doha.

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"If the U.S. cannot protect Qatar against Israel, then who exactly can it protect us from?" asked one Qatari commentator. The implication is sobering: Qatar may need to reconsider the value of its security partnership with Washington, especially if American guarantees are conditional on Israeli interests. Yet for all the powerful rhetoric and the spectacle of unity, the summit fell short of the bold outcomes many observers had anticipated. In the days leading up to the gathering, speculation swirled that Muslim nations might announce concrete measures: suspension of diplomatic ties with Israel, economic sanctions, or even coordinated security initiatives. None of these materialized. Instead, the final communiqué was heavy on symbolism but light on actionable commitments. States that had normalized relations with Israel in recent years — including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and others — did not announce any rollback of ties. Despite calls from civil society groups and ordinary citizens across the Muslim world, these governments opted for caution. The reason was not difficult to discern. U.S. pressure loomed large over the summit. Washington's influence in the Gulf and across the Muslim world remains substantial, bolstered by military bases, economic partnerships, and diplomatic leverage. Even leaders most angered by Israel's actions were reluctant to risk jeopardizing relations with the United States. An important dimension of the summit was the conspicuous position of Iran. While nearly every Muslim state aligned cautiously with U.S. preferences, Tehran adopted a more uncompromising tone, openly urging Muslim countries to sever ties with Israel and to pursue retaliatory measures. Iranian leaders warned that "appeasement today will only embolden further aggression tomorrow." This posture set Iran apart but also underscored the divisions within the Muslim bloc. Many Arab states remain wary of Iran's regional ambitions, making it difficult to forge consensus on how to confront Israel. The result is a paradox: while the summit projected unity outwardly, internally it reflected the same fault lines that have long plagued Muslim solidarity on the Palestinian and broader Middle Eastern question. In the immediate sense, the summit achieved its tactical objectives. It conveyed anger, solidarity, and the warning that Muslim nations would not remain passive if Israel repeated its attack. The gathering also put Israel under diplomatic pressure, drawing international media attention and amplifying the costs of Tel Aviv's actions. But strategically, the event was a disappointment. By failing to adopt concrete punitive measures, the Muslim world signaled its limitations. The gap between rhetoric and action was glaring. While leaders spoke of collective strength, the reality remained that most of them were unwilling to cross Washington's red lines. For Qatar, the summit raised as many questions as it answered. The emirate has long relied on U.S. security guarantees, yet the attack on Doha has exposed the fragility of that arrangement. Going forward, Qatar may seek to diversify its security partnerships, possibly drawing closer to Turkey or even exploring cautious engagement with Iran. For the broader Muslim world, the challenge remains how to transform symbolic unity into actionable strategy. Unless Muslim states are willing to collectively resist U.S. pressure, their ability to influence Israel's behavior will remain limited. The Doha summit, then, will likely be remembered as both a moment of solidarity and a missed opportunity. It showcased the Muslim world's potential power but also laid bare its dependence on external actors. The message to Israel and the United States was sharp, but without action to back it up.

Cost not condemnation

Dr M Ali Hamza



IN response to Israel's strike in Qatar; an attack that targeted senior Hamas leaders who were meeting to deliberate on a United States-backed ceasefire proposal, Doha witnessed an extraordinary Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit. More than 50 Muslim majority states gathered under one roof, their leaders united in condemning Israel's unprecedented escalation with the strongest possible words. Before we start speculating about the potential outcomes of this summit, it is worth pausing for a reminder...

IN response to Israel's strike in Qatar; an attack that targeted senior Hamas leaders who were meeting to deliberate on a United States-backed ceasefire proposal, Doha witnessed an extraordinary Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit. More than 50 Muslim majority states gathered under one roof, their leaders united in condemning Israel's unprecedented escalation with the strongest possible words. Before we start speculating about the potential outcomes of this summit, it is worth pausing for a reminder: the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) has a long history of passionate statements but little to show in terms of strategic or practical measures to halt aggression. Over the past several decades, from Palestine to Iraq, from Afghanistan to Libya, the collective voice of Muslim-majority countries has rarely translated into collective action. This pattern raises an urgent question: will Doha summit mark a turning point, or will it simply add another chapter to archive of rhetorical outrage of Muslim majority countries without consequence? For more than seven decades, the Muslim world has been at the receiving end of wars, invasions, and occupations often driven or supported by Israel, the United States, or Western powers. Muslim-majority countries have witnessed repeated assaults under the banners of "security," "counter-terrorism," or "spreading democracy." Yet, a recurring question looms: has the collective voice of the Muslim world, embodied in the OIC ever truly shaped global accountability, particularly at the United Nations? Let's dive into history. The story begins with 1948, when the creation of Israel led to mass displacement and wars that followed in 1967 and 1973. Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands remains one of the longest-running injustices of modern history. Despite OIC's formation in 1969, largely in response to the burning of Al-Aqsa Mosque, its role has mostly been rhetorical; issuing statements, hosting summits, and passing resolutions. Rarely has it translated into real political leverage at the UN Security Council.

Consider the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, conducted without explicit UN approval. Millions of Muslims saw Baghdad fall and civilian lives destroyed, yet the OIC's response was limited to condemning the war and calling for restraint. The organization could not muster the political weight to influence UN sanctions against the US or its allies. Similarly, in Afghanistan (2001), the OIC had little more than a humanitarian voice. OIC has consistently demanded UN sanctions and accountability for settlements, bombings, and human rights violations by Israel. Its not the first time but in 1981, the OIC proposed suspending Israel from the UN, but this never materialized. In contrast, the OIC did manage to push for the 2004 UN advisory opinion that declared Israel's separation wall illegal, but even that ruling lacked enforcement power. Muslim majority countries are largely been reduced to a toothless talk shop issuing statements that vanish into the air while bombs fall on Muslim cities. The time for symbolic outrage is over; what is needed now is strategy, unity, and action. So, what to do? First, financial muscle. Sovereign wealth funds from the Gulf States, Türkiye, Indonesia and Malaysia together control trillions of dollars. These could be redirected away from Western defence industries and instead invested in creating independent military, technological, and media capabilities across the Muslim world. As long as Muslim nations fund Western economies while pleading for justice, insincerity will remain the order of the day. Second, economic leverage. Muslim countries collectively control over 70% of the world's proven oil reserves and are major suppliers of natural gas. In the 1973 Arab-Israel war, Arab states imposed an oil embargo, shaking Western economies to their core and forcing Washington to recalibrate its Middle East policy. That episode alone proves the West cannot simply ignore Muslim nations if they act in unison. Why hasn't the OIC revived such leverage in the face of ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza or US interventions

elsewhere? The answer is an open secret, because Muslim countries lack scientific supremacy, strategic planning and Arab-Ajam unity. Anyhow, a coordinated energy policy could instantly turn Muslim outrage into real pressure. Third, legal warfare. Israel's repeated violations of international law from illegal settlements to collective punishment in Gaza are well documented. OIC nations should pool resources to pursue cases in the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice with relentless persistence. South Africa's recent ICJ case against Israel shows what is possible when courage replaces timidity. Fourth, collective defence. NATO exists to protect Western interests. Why hasn't the OIC created even a minimal joint defence mechanism? Though a few years ago, Saudi Arabia spearheaded the formation of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC), often dubbed a "Muslim NATO," uniting over 40 Muslim-majority nations. Its stated aim was counterterrorism and collective security, but the alliance struggled with internal divisions, unclear objectives, and limited practical military coordination. Thus, a united deterrent force, would alter the calculus of any aggressor. Finally, Muslim-majority countries must urgently recalibrate their diplomatic strategies by aligning with emerging power blocs like China, Russia, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Building stronger ties with non-Western alliances can create new avenues of support at the UN, dilute US and Israel dominance. By diversifying alliances whether through BRICS, SCO, or Belt and Road partnerships Muslim states can transform their diplomatic isolation into collective bargaining power. History has shown that Western powers and Israel only respond to costs, not condemnations. If the Muslim world wants to stop being a perpetual victim, it must wield its oil, money, laws, and armies with purpose. Until then, Israel and other aggressors will continue to act with impunity, while the voice of Muslim majority countries remains more echo than action.

May 2025: The scars that still haunt India

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Therefore, Pakistan must remain vigilant. The path forward lies in a combination of strength, wisdom, and unity. First, our defenses must remain ever ready. The lessons of history teach us that weakness invites aggression, while preparedness deters it. Our armed forces have proved their mettle time and again, but they must be supported with the latest technology, intelligence networks, and cyber capabilities to counter new forms of warfare

ALMIGHTY Allah, in His infinite wisdom, has endowed the human body with extraordinary resilience. When flesh or bone is wounded, nature itself comes to its aid, and in due course the body recovers. Yet, there are wounds of another kind—those inflicted upon the soul—that remain restless and unhealed for long stretches of time. Such wounds torment the heart, disturb the mind, and give birth to a restlessness that refuses to subside. The Indian rulers and their military chiefs today find themselves bound in this very condition, for the scars left by Pakistan's firm response on May 9 and 10, 2025, continue to burn in their memories. The sting of those days has not faded, and in their desperation, they have carried this bitterness even into the realm of sports. The recent Pakistan-India clash in the Asian Cup in the United Arab Emirates was more than a cricket match. It became a canvas upon which India's frustration was painted before the eyes of the world. The conduct of their team, and in particular the posture of their captain, betrayed a willingness to sacrifice the sanctity of sport upon the altar of politics. Where the cricket field should have reflected discipline, sportsmanship, and the joy of fair competition, India's irritation and resentment turned it into a stage for political expression. That the captain himself embodied this surrender of sport to politics was a moment that stunned not only the spectators in the stadium but millions across the globe who followed the contest. Unable to gain victory on the battlefield, India's rulers have long resorted to cowardly and indirect methods to soothe their bitterness. Among these is the reckless aggression over water, a hostility that disregards humanity and international principles. In their bid to damage Pakistan, Indian authorities did not hesitate to submerge large parts of their own eastern Punjab, wreaking havoc upon the lives of their fellow citizens. It was a

tragic act of revenge, not only against Pakistan, but also against the Sikh community, who reside in that region. The Sikhs, whose voice for freedom grows stronger day by day across the world, have become the target of India's misplaced fury. This rage is not confined to internal oppression. Around the globe, the Indian government has sought to malign the Sikhs, to weaken their diaspora, and to silence their leaders. The assassinations of Sikh intellectuals and activists are no secret, and the shadow of India's hand looms large behind many such incidents. At the same time, Indian-sponsored terrorists have been attempting to spread violence within Pakistan, a fact for which Pakistan possesses undeniable evidence. The world cannot remain blind to such activities, though India continues to weave its fabric of deceit with remarkable persistence. In their madness, Indian rulers have pushed their nation into the depths of an arms race, seeking strength not in peace but in instruments of destruction. This perpetual desire to harm Pakistan, even at the cost of their own prosperity, has driven them to dangerous extremes. Yet, while it is often said that everything is fair in love and war, Pakistan has always endeavored to uphold principles, even in the midst of conflict. Unlike its neighbor, Pakistan does not abandon humanity, even when compelled to defend itself. The restraint shown on May 9 and 10 itself stands as a testament to this truth. It is this distinction that the world must recognize; one nation drunk with vengeance, the other tempered with dignity. Yet, recognition from abroad must not lead us into complacency at home. India today sits uneasily upon the fence, restless, embittered, and opportunistic. At any moment, it will seize upon whatever chance arises to inflict harm upon Pakistan, whether through open aggression, covert operations, propaganda, or international maneuvering. Therefore, Pakistan must remain vigilant. The path forward lies in a combination of strength, wisdom,

and unity. First, our defenses must remain ever ready. The lessons of history teach us that weakness invites aggression, while preparedness deters it. Our armed forces have proved their mettle time and again, but they must be supported with the latest technology, intelligence networks, and cyber capabilities to counter new forms of warfare. Second, Pakistan must strengthen its internal unity. No external enemy can weaken a nation whose people are bound together in spirit and purpose. Political polarization, sectarian divisions, and economic disparities serve only to provide our adversary with opportunities. We must build a Pakistan where unity of thought, economic resilience, and social harmony stand as strong as our military defenses. Third, Pakistan must continue to raise its voice on global platforms, not only to expose Indian aggression but also to highlight our own commitment to peace and principles. The world must be reminded that Pakistan does not seek war, but neither does it fear it. Our diplomacy, therefore, must be as sharp as our defenses, ensuring that our narrative is heard and our truth understood. Finally, Pakistan must invest in the strength of its youth—the true guardians of tomorrow. It is through education, innovation, and character-building that we will ensure a Pakistan capable of withstanding any storm. India may drown itself in hatred, but Pakistan's future must be anchored in hope, progress, and faith in Allah Almighty. The scars of May 2025 may haunt India, but they remind us of the enduring truth; Pakistan is a nation that cannot be subdued. Its people have paid with blood, endured with patience, and risen with resilience. Our adversaries may weave plots in shadows, but the light of Pakistan's resolve shines brighter. The way forward is clear; vigilance, unity, and unwavering faith. For Pakistan, every challenge is a reminder that we are a nation not built to bow, but to stand firm—against all odds, and for all time.

Briefs

PM Shehbaz likely to meet President Trump

FROM PAGE 01

The prospective 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 by President Donald Trump brokered a ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. It may be noted that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held a telephonic conversation on Sunday with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio wherein both dignitaries reaffirmed their resolve to bolster Pakistan-US ties and strengthen bilateral relations across multifaceted areas of cooperation. Dar had met Rubio back in July where 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. Under the agreement, there will be a reduction in tariffs, particularly on Pakistani exports to the US, and a fresh start in economic cooperation between the two countries, which also includes developing oil reserves.

‘Morally bankrupt nation’...

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Suryakumar, defended his team's decision not to shake hands with the Pakistani players saying that it was taken in alignment with their government and cricket board. "We are aligned with the government and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Some things are above sportsmanship. Is it really sportsmanship if you don't even shake hands with the opposing team? That was our answer," he said. The move prompted a strong reaction from the cricketing fraternity as well as Mohsin Nagvi, who heads both the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and is also the serving head of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). Not only did Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha, in protest, refused to attend the post-match presentation ceremony, breaking from broadcast norms where captains usually share their thoughts, the PCB has filed a formal complaint with the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), calling for the removal of match referee Andy Pycroft from the ongoing Asia Cup 2025 — for reportedly instructing the omission of the customary handshake.

Israel intensifies attacks in...

FROM PAGE 01

Rubio showed no daylight between himself and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on a visit to Jerusalem, despite President Donald Trump chiding Israel a week earlier for carrying out air strikes on Hamas leaders in US partner Qatar. "The people of Gaza deserve a better future, but that better future cannot begin until Hamas is eliminated," Rubio told reporters at a joint press conference with Netanyahu. "You can count on our unwavering support," he said. Meanwhile, United Nations investigators on Tuesday accused Israel of committing "genocide" in Gaza in a bid to "destroy the Palestinians" there, and blamed Israel's prime minister and other top officials for incitement. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), which does not speak on behalf of the world body and has faced harsh Israeli criticism, found that "genocide is occurring in Gaza and is continuing to occur", commission chief Navi Pillay told AFP. "The responsibility lies with State of Israel."

ICC rejects PCB's demand to remove Match Referee Andy Pycroft

The PCB had raised objections after a series of controversial decisions during the group-stage matches, which Pakistani officials claimed were unfair and influenced the outcomes. Andy Pycroft, a former Zimbabwean cricketer, has served as an ICC Elite Panel match referee for years and officiated in several high-profile tournaments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has turned down Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) request to remove match referee Andy Pycroft from his role during the ongoing Asia Cup, reliable sources confirmed on Tuesday. According to insiders, the ICC has formally informed the PCB that Pycroft will continue to supervise matches, dismissing Pakistan's concerns. The development follows Pakistan's dissatisfaction over certain umpiring and refereeing decisions during recent Asia Cup fixtures, which the PCB believed had adversely affected the national team. Sources further revealed that the PCB is likely to consult the government to decide its future course of action. "Pakistan's matches in the Asia Cup will be finalized after high-level consultations," one

source said, adding that the cricket board is weighing its options in light of ICC's response. The PCB had raised objections after a series of controversial decisions during the group-stage matches, which Pakistani officials claimed were unfair and influenced the outcomes. Andy Pycroft, a former Zimbabwean cricketer, has served as an ICC Elite Panel match referee for years and officiated in several high-profile tournaments. Pakistan's cricket management feels that retaining Pycroft compromises the neutrality of officiating, especially after their repeated complaints went unaddressed. However, the ICC has stood by its official, indicating that its match referees are appointed based on strict neutrality and performance standards. The Asia Cup 2025, currently underway in the UAE, has already seen rising tensions not only on the field but also off it, with Pakistan expressing reser-

vations over officiating standards. Analysts believe that Pakistan's potential consultation with the government signals how seriously the issue is being taken in Islamabad. The Asia Cup match between India and Pakistan took place on Sunday in Dubai, where spinners led by Kuldeep Yadav helped the Men in Blue beat the Green Shirts by seven wickets as the neighbours met on the cricket pitch for the first time since their military conflict in May. After hitting the winning shot, skipper Suryakumar Yadav and his teammates refused to shake hands with their Pakistan counterparts. The captain said in the post-match press conference that the move was in alignment "with the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) and the government" and the team wanted to give the Green Shirts a "proper reply". Suryakumar also seemingly "politicised" the vic-

tory by bringing up the April terrorist attack in India-occupied Kashmir's Pahalgam — over which Delhi and Islamabad fought the four-day conflict in May — at his post-match presentation and said the victory was "a perfect gift" for his country. He also dedicated the win to the Indian armed forces, with Pakistani cricketers and various analysts criticising his comments. The Sunday's match, the first ever since the two countries were involved in an armed conflict triggered by India's cross-border attack, followed by Pakistan's retaliation and launch of "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos". The hostilities left more than 70 people dead in missile, drone, and artillery exchanges, before a ceasefire was eventually reached. The neighbours have not met on either side's soil in a bilateral series since 2012 and only play each other in international tournaments on neutral ground as part of a compromise deal.

Lyles back on the track as Kerr eyes second world 1,500m title

Katie Moon will be gunning for a third gold in the women's pole vault in the Tokyo stadium where she also won Olympic gold in 2021

TOKYO: Noah Lyles will seek to rebound from defeat in the 100 metres by safely negotiating the heats of the 200m on day five of the world championships on Wednesday, while Britain's Josh Kerr and Jake Wightman each go for a second 1,500m title. Katie Moon will be gunning for a third gold in the women's pole vault in the Tokyo stadium where she also won Olympic gold in 2021. AFP Sport looks at three stand-out events: - Men's 1,500m — A cat was put among the pigeons in this ultra-competitive event when Norway's 2021 Olympic champion Jakob Ingebrigtsen failed to make it out of the heats. Ingebrigtsen sustained an Achilles injury after sweeping to a world indoor double in March, and a first outdoor outing in Tokyo proved too much. Then Olympic champion Cole Hocker was disqualified in the semi-finals on Monday for 'jostling' as the American barged his way through a gaggle of runners

in the home straight. His appeal was rejected. The defending champion is Kerr, who along with British teammate Wightman deprived Ingebrigtsen of golds at the last two world championships. "I am coming here as someone who's done it before and I am coming to do it again," said 27-year-old Kerr. Despite the high-profile athletes missing, competition will be tough, with a third Scot in the shape of Neil Gourlay and the likes of in-form Dutchman Niels Laros, Kenyans Timothy and Reynold Cheruiyot, Spain's Adrien Ben and Portugal's Isaac Nader all in the mix. - Women's pole vault - American Katie Moon, the two-time defending world champion and Olympic gold medalist in Tokyo in 2021, will be joined by 13 other athletes in the final of the women's pole vault. They all cleared 4.60m in qualification and Moon will be accompanied in Wednesday's final by teammates Sandi Morris and Hana

Moll. "I am here for revenge because at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 I broke a pole in qualification and got injured, so I've already started better than last time I was here," said Morris, a two-time world indoor champion who has won three world outdoor silvers. One notable absentee, however, will be former world indoor champion Molly Caudery after the Briton sustained an ankle injury in warm-up that forced her to withdraw from the event. Reigning Olympic champion Nina Kennedy of Australia did not travel to Tokyo, having pulled out with a strained leg muscle following hamstring surgery. - Men and women's 200m heats - Noah Lyles will begin his bid for a fourth consecutive world 200m title when he takes to the track at the National Stadium. In the 100m, won by Oblique Seville from Kishane Thompson in a Jamaican 1-2 on Sunday, was "not the day to get the gold",

Lyles said. The Olympic 100m champion had to settle for bronze. "The focus is now on 200 metres, that's my bread and butter," he said. The women's Olympic 100m champion Julien Alfred, who had to settle for an unhappy third place in the women's world 100m, has pulled out of the 200m because of a hamstring strain. "The decision was made to prioritise Julien's health and long-term career," the Saint Lucia Athletics Association said in a statement. Alfred was no match in the short sprint for Melissa Jefferson-Wooden, who scorched to victory in 10.61sec. And the in-form American should be in the mix for a tilt at a sprint double. "Coming out with the gold medal and a championship record, it's a great start to my second world championships," Jefferson-Wooden said after her 100m victory. "I am excited about the 200 metres now." — APP

Diaz Nears KBO HR & RBI Records

Lewin Diaz Nears KBO Records for Most Home Runs and RBIs by a Foreign Player

DNA

SEOUL: Samsung Lions slugger Lewin Diaz is nearing records for most home runs and RBIs in a season by a foreign player in South Korean baseball. Through the weekend's action, Diaz was leading the Korea Baseball Organization (KBO) with 46 home runs and 135 RBIs. The Dominican first baseman has played all 133 games so far this season, and the Lions have 11 games remaining. Diaz is three homers away from setting the single-season home run record by a foreign hitter. Ex-Lions second baseman Yamaico Navarro owns the record with 48 homers from 2015. Beyond Navarro's record, Diaz is also trying to become the first foreign player, and fourth player in KBO history overall, to hit 50 home runs in a season. Another ex-Lions star, Lee Seung-yuop, holds the single-season mark with 56 home runs from 2003. He also launched 54 homers in 1999. Also in 2003, Shim Chong-soo of the Hyundai Unicorns had 53 home runs. Diaz's Lions teammate, Park Byung-ho, put up 52 and then 53 homers in 2014 and 2015 while playing for the Nexen Heroes. Former NC Dinos slugger Eric Thames holds the RBI record by a foreign player with 140, also from the 2015 campaign, and Diaz is only six away from surpassing that mark. Park set the single-season record with 146 RBIs in 2015. Diaz has had multiple RBIs in 35 of his 133 games so far, including seven RBIs on April 25 — tied for the most RBIs in a game this season. — Agencies

Qatar, US set to seal enhanced defence...

FROM PAGE 01

short window of time in which a deal could happen." "If any country in the world can help mediate it, Qatar is the one. They're the ones that can do it," Rubio said while departing Tel Aviv for Doha. "We have a close partnership with the Qataris. In fact, we have an enhanced defence cooperation agreement, which we've been working on, we're on the verge of finalising," Rubio said.

Rehman moves intra-court appeal...

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The one-member bench of the IHC stated that the entire edifice of processes and decisions built on an "illegal foundation" must crumble upon such "illegal foundation". As the advertisement and the process of recruitment undertaken suffered from malice in law, all subsequent decisions in pursuit of such process, including the appointment of the PTA chairman, are illegal and of no legal effect, it added.

US issues fresh Iran-related sanctions

FROM PAGE 01

"Iranian 'shadow banking' networks like these—run by trusted illicit financial facilitators—abuse the international financial system, and evade sanctions by laundering money through overseas front companies and cryptocurrency," it said in a statement. US sanctions generally prohibit American individuals and companies from engaging in any business transactions with those targeted.

Pak envoy to Australia meets Dar

FROM PAGE 01

to focus on strengthening trade, economic, and educational cooperation, while also engaging proactively with the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in Australia. He expressed confidence that Irfan Shaukat would continue to serve Pakistan with distinction in his new diplomatic role.

Imran refuses to...

FROM PAGE 01

according to sources, by Additional Director Ayaz Khan, along with two Sub Inspectors, namely SI Muneeb Zafar and SI Muhammad Waseem Khan, visited Adiala Jail to question the PTI founder about posts and the operation of his X and other social media accounts. When investigators pressed Khan he became agitated, at one point trying to leave the room. He accused the lead investigator of personal bias, saying that the additional director had filed "cipher" and fake-account cases against him in the past.

U14 basketball squad shortlisted for Samaranch Cup in China

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, said a press release. 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 Imtiaz 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. — APP

Hong Kong captain Yasim Murtaza proud despite SL defeat

Hong Kong Captain Proud After Narrow Asia Cup Loss to Sri Lanka, Vows Stronger Comeback Ahead

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: Hong Kong captain Yasim Murtaza expressed pride in his team's spirited performance despite their narrow defeat to Sri Lanka in the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2025 on Monday. Batting first in the must-win clash at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Hong Kong posted a competitive 149/4, powered by a composed 48 from opener Anshy Rath and an unbeaten half-century from veteran Nizakat Khan. Murtaza then played a key role with the ball, striking twice in the middle overs to jolt Sri Lanka's chase. His efforts briefly turned the tide as Sri Lanka stumbled from 119/2 to 127/6, raising hopes of an upset. But Wanindu Hasaranga's counterattack, coupled with opener Pathum Nissanka's 68, proved decisive as Sri Lanka edged home with four wickets in hand.

Kylian Mbappe 'not anxious' over Champions League goal

"Gastroenteritis meant it was Kylian 'lite' at the Club World Cup," said Alonso. "Without doubt (he's a leader), for his personality, experience, the influence he has on the others, he's one of them"

MADRID: Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso said Monday that superstar striker Kylian Mbappe feels no anxiety to win the Champions League for the first time as Los Blancos prepare to face Marseille. The coach also included Jude Bellingham in the squad for the first time this season after the player had shoulder surgery in July. Mbappe, 26, left Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) last summer to join record 15-time winners Madrid, only to see his former club lift the trophy for the first time in their history. "He's not anxious, we all feel this is a project that's just starting," Alonso told a news conference ahead of Tuesday's opening match at the Santiago Bernabeu. "One of the objectives is to win the Champions League, hopefully sooner rather than later. Kylian is part of the path to getting there, but I don't think he's anxious. "Today we spoke about what the Champions League means, but we were not talking about May (and the final), we were talking about the near future." Mbappe faced his former club PSG for the first time at the Club World Cup this summer, with Madrid thrashing 4-0 in the semi-finals. However, the striker was not fully fit at the tournament in the United States because of a stomach bug. He has hit the ground running with four goals in four La Liga games this season. "Gastroenteritis meant it was Kylian 'lite' at the Club World Cup," said Alonso. "Without doubt (he's a leader), for his personality, experience, the influence he has on the others, he's one of them." Real Madrid have won six of the last 12 Champions Leagues, but Alonso said he did not feel extra pressure because of the club's rich history in the competition. "It's a fat, unquestionable honour, a motivation, and it is a responsibility you live with and enjoy," added Alonso. "It's a privilege." Xabi Alonso named Jude Bellingham and Eduardo Camavinga in his squad for the game, with both returning ahead of schedule, although they may not feature. England international Bellingham had shoulder surgery to fix a problem that began in 2023 when he dislocated it, and was not expected to return for a couple of weeks. Marseille coach Roberto De Zerbi said his team would stick to their guns after hearing the news. "It doesn't change our plan for tomorrow. I don't know if they will play or not. I know that there are two champions, and so is whoever will be on the pitch," said the coach. "They have to play with 11 players, and whoever plays is dangerous." De Zerbi said his team would have to battle to take anything from their opening game. "We have to play very well to get a result, playing with respect but also knowing what we have to do," he continued. "We know Real Madrid are a huge club, but our idea is to play a great game." — DNA

Legendary Australian captain Ricky Ponting denies viral India-Pakistan Handshake Comment

Ricky Ponting Denies Fake Quote on India-Pakistan Handshake Controversy After Asia Cup 2025 Clash

DNA

DUBAI: Legendary Australian captain Ricky Ponting has dismissed a viral social media post that falsely attributed remarks to him regarding the handshake controversy during the high-voltage India-Pakistan clash in the Asia Cup 2025. India chased down Pakistan's 128-run target at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, with skipper Suryakumar Yadav sealing the win in the 16th over. The post-match proceedings, however, took a controversial turn as Yadav and Shivam



Dube bypassed the customary handshake, opting for fist bumps before walking off, leaving Pakistan players waiting. In the aftermath, a fabricated statement began circulating online, claiming that Ponting had criticised India's behaviour while praising Pakistan as "true champions of the gentleman's game." "This match will be remembered forever, India the big loser. Pakistan's gesture to shake hands despite defeat has immortalised them as true champions of the gentleman's game, while India remains the perpetual sore loser," the rumoured comment. However, Ricky Ponting swiftly denied ever making such comments. Taking to social media platform X, the 50-year-old clarified: "I am aware of certain comments being attributed to me on social media. Please know that I categorically did not make those statements and indeed have made no public comment about the Asia Cup at all."

Briefs

India launches first national policy on geothermal energy

NEW DELHI: India has launched its first national geothermal energy policy to develop the country's largely untapped resources, as New Delhi seeks to further its transition to clean energy. Geothermal, which currently meets less than 1 percent of global energy demand, is considered a clean source of power that harnesses heat produced by the Earth from underground reservoirs for heating, cooling and electricity generation. India has identified potential sites to explore and develop its geothermal energy sources, which include 381 hot springs and 10 geothermal provinces, including Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat. "India's renewable energy growth is vital for achieving ambitious climate change targets and the 2070 net-zero goal. India's geothermal potential, rooted in its unique geological settings, remains largely untapped," the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy said in the policy announcement on Monday.—APP

France repatriates three women, 10 kids from Syrian camps

PARIS: France on Tuesday repatriated three women and 10 children from Syrian prisons for alleged jihadists, anti-terror prosecutors said, in the first such operation in two years. Repatriation is a deeply sensitive issue in France, which has been a target of Islamists over the last decade, notably in 2015, when jihadist gunmen and suicide bombers staged the worst attack on Paris since World War II, killing 130 people. More than five years after the Islamic State group's territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria, tens of thousands of people are still held in Kurdish-run camps and prisons in northeastern Syria, many with alleged or perceived links to IS. The women repatriated early Tuesday morning are aged between 18 and 34. Two of them have been taken into police custody, while the third faces possible indictment, according to France's anti-terror unit PNAT. The 10 children were handed over to child care services and will be monitored by the anti-terror unit and local prosecutors, it added. France's foreign ministry thanked "the Syrian transitional authorities and the local administration in northeastern Syria for making the operation possible". Since 2019, France has repatriated 179 children and 60 women, according to a diplomatic source. The country halted such operations two years ago.—APP

Spain to boycott Eurovision if Israel takes part

MADRID: Spain will boycott next year's Eurovision Song Contest if Israel takes part, public broadcaster RTVE, which is charged with selecting the country's entry for the event, said Tuesday. While other European nations have threatened to pull out of the contest, Spain is the first of the so-called "big five" nations which provide the most funding for the event to do so. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the organizer of Eurovision, is set to decide whether Israel will take part in the 2026 edition at its general assembly in December. If EBU members decide to keep Israeli public broadcaster KAN as a participant, "RTVE would have to carry out the threat of withdrawing from the contest for the first time in history," the Spanish broadcaster said in a statement. The decision comes a day after Spanish Culture Minister Ernest Urtegas said Spain should boycott the event if Israel takes part due to its devastating military offensive in Gaza.—APP

Seven projects win Aga Khan Award for Architecture

As well as environmental justice, the built environment is well placed to help solve issues of social justice, His Highness explained in his address, It is not an exaggeration to say that affordability of our housing, ease of access to green space, education, health and cultural heritage all hinge on the creativity of our architects and the wisdom of our civic planners

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Seven architectural projects that shield communities from climate risk, preserve cultural heritage and create affordable housing were honoured this evening at the Aga Khan Award for Architecture prize-giving ceremony at the Kyrgyz National Philharmonic Hall. The Aga Khan accompanied His Excellency Adylbek Kasymaliev, Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, to preside over the ceremony. The winning designs, which will share a prize of US \$1 million, demonstrate the power of architecture to address some of humanity's most pressing challenges. Projects include flood-resistant bamboo homes that can be relocated when rivers shift; an incremental, community-led restoration of urban heritage; and a community centre that transforms abandoned oil company ruins into lively public space. Distinguished laureates joined national officials, architecture experts, the Award's Steering Committee and Master Jury, and other dignitaries for the event, which marks the culmination of the Award's 16th triennial cycle. A series of events this week in Bishkek have brought together architects, designers, policymakers and community leaders to celebrate the transformative potential of architecture and urban planning to improve the world. Vision Pakistan was one of the winners, placing Pakistan at the forefront of global



recognition for social transformative and climate conscious design. Vision Pakistan in Islamabad, by DB Studios is a multi-storey facility boasting joyful facades inspired by Pakistani and Arab craft, while housing a charity that aims to empower disadvantaged youth through vocational training. The Jury noted that the building not only contains a new type of education, but is full of light, spatially interesting and economically efficient. Established by His late Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV in 1977, the Aga Khan Award is unique among architecture prizes. It

spotlights projects that not only demonstrate design excellence but also improve quality of life, and considers the contributions of municipalities, builders, clients, master artisans and engineers alongside architects. Since its inception, the Award has recognised more than 130 projects worldwide, influencing the global discourse on architecture in the Muslim world and beyond. The Aga Khan elaborated on the importance of this pursuit: "Today, with the climate more volatile than ever, architects have a great responsibility, and an opportunity, to use their creativity to

design the buildings that will buffer that volatility and protect us all – and especially the most vulnerable – from climatic risk," he said. "This quality – flexibility in the face of the unexpected – was at the heart of the jury's concerns in this cycle of the award." As well as environmental justice, the built environment is well placed to help solve issues of social justice, His Highness explained in his address: "It is not an exaggeration to say that affordability of our housing, ease of access to green space, education, health and cultural heritage all hinge on the creativity of our architects."

Pak investment exchange conference held in Guangzhou

ISLAMABAD: The "World Meets GZ – 2025 Pakistan Business and Investment Exchange Conference" was held at the Guangzhou International Cooperation Center (GICC), China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. The conference aimed to provide Guangzhou enterprises with comprehensive guidance on entering the Pakistani market, including policy interpretation, project matchmaking, and localized implementation services. Guided by the Guangzhou Foreign Affairs Office, the event was jointly organized by GICC, the Consulate General of Pakistan in Guangzhou,

and the Pakistan Federal Board of Investment. Over 100 representatives from Chinese and Pakistani business associations and enterprises attended to discuss investment opportunities and promote pragmatic cooperation. In his speech, Sardar Muhammad, Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou, emphasized that the Pakistani government attaches great importance to cooperation with China and welcomes Chinese investment, particularly in manufacturing, energy, and e-commerce. He noted that more Pakistani entrepreneurs are also turning to Guangzhou, with interests in

home furnishings, IT, and new energy vehicles. During the B2B matchmaking session, enterprises from both countries expressed intentions for collaboration and explored potential partnerships in cross-border e-commerce, automobile manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, building materials, smart transport, education technology, agricultural preservation, and traditional Chinese medicine. The event concluded with a mango tasting and networking session, providing participants with further opportunities to build connections and deepen mutual understanding.—DNA

Trump says bringing \$15b lawsuit against NYT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said Monday that he is bringing a \$15 billion "defamation and libel lawsuit" against the New York Times. "The New York Times has been allowed to freely lie, smear, and defame me for far too long, and that stops, NOW!" he wrote on his Truth Social platform, adding the lawsuit was being brought in Florida. AFP has contacted the New York Times for comment. Trump decried the newspaper as a "virtual 'mouthpiece' for the Radical Left Democrat Party" and accused it of lying about his "family, business, the America First Movement, MAGA, and our Nation as a whole." He provided no evidence for his claims. The news outlet reported last week that Trump had threatened legal action against it in relation to articles on a lewd birthday note given to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The Republican president has denied authoring the note. Trump has intensified his attacks on traditional media since his return to the White House, repeatedly badmouthing journalists critical of his administration, restricting access and bringing lawsuits. sued media magnate Rupert Murdoch and The Wall Street Journal for at least \$10 billion in July after it published an article about his friendship with Epstein.—APP

Syria, Jordan, and US agree on roadmap for Sweida

DUBAI: Syria announced on Tuesday that it has reached an agreement on a roadmap for the southern governorate of Sweida with the support of Jordan and the United States, in what officials described as a historic step toward stability and reconciliation. Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shibani received Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, along with US Special Envoy to Syria Thomas Barrack, in Damascus for high-level talks. The discussions focused on the signing of an agreement that outlines measures for security, accountability, and national reconciliation in Sweida, which has recently witnessed unrest. Shibani stressed that the roadmap "serves the interest of all Syrians" and includes provisions to hold those responsible for violence accountable while launching a wider reconciliation process. "We want to stabilize southern Syria," Shibani said. Jordan's foreign minister emphasized the deep security ties between Damascus and Amman. "The security of southern Syria is the security of Jordan. Its stability is essential to ours," Safadi said. He also condemned recent Israeli strikes in Syrian territory and described the events in Sweida as tragic, insisting they must be overcome through cooperation. US envoy, Thomas Barrack, called the agreement "historic" and affirming Washington's commitment to assist Damascus.—Agencies

From medic to trade bridge: Amir's journey linking China, Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Amir Shehzad, widely known as "Doctor Amir," has traded his medical scrubs for a role as a trade facilitator, strengthening economic and cultural bonds between China and Pakistan, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday. A graduate of Hebei North University, Amir originally came to China to pursue medicine. But what began as an academic journey soon evolved into a lifelong bond with the country. After returning to Pakistan, he felt a compelling draw to return—this time as an entrepreneur. "During my student years, I witnessed China's advancements in technology and manufacturing, and recognized the huge potential to build bridges between our markets," Amir recalls. Despite his medical background, he ventured into international trade—a decision that initially surprised his family but soon earned their full backing. Today, Amir leads a cross-border business that introduces Chinese products—including machinery, electronics, and virgin coconut oil—to international buyers, while also promoting Pakistani goods such as natural pink Himalayan salt and rice in China. "We use exhibitions, TikTok, WeChat, and our own mini-program to connect with customers," he explains. "It's all about making business accessible and efficient." Beyond trade, Amir runs a consulting company that supports foreign entrepreneurs with regulatory compliance, visas, and market entry. His evolution from a student receiving guidance to becoming a "living map" for others—helping new international entrepreneurs and students navigate life in China—brings him profound satisfaction. Amir established his business in Yazhou Bay, Hainan, drawn by the island's free trade policies, tax benefits, and streamlined import-export mechanisms. Even more impressive, he says, is the open and cooperative attitude of the local government. "Here in Hainan, I haven't encountered major obstacles. The government has been supportive since the very first day of my business." This supportive ecosystem extends to the community of foreign entrepreneurs in the region. Government-organized events and seminars foster collaboration and resource-sharing, creating a nurturing environment for business growth. Though he has transitioned into trade, Amir has kept "Doctor" in his WeChat name—a deliberate nod to his roots and his long-term mission. "Becoming a businessman doesn't mean I've abandoned medicine. In fact, I see this as a path to eventually fund health initiatives—providing free or affordable care for those in need." —DNA

First anniversary of SK Hydropower station celebrated under CPEC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A ceremony was held on Sunday to mark the first anniversary of the commercial operation of the SK Hydropower Station, a flagship project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The project, located in the Kunhar River basin in Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was mainly invested, constructed, and operated by the China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC), a Fortune Global 500 company. It is the largest hydropower project constructed under CPEC and has been hailed as the "Green Pearl on the CPEC." The ceremony was attended by Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms; Mr. Shi Yu-anqiang, Chargé d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan; and Mr. Shah Jahan Mirza, Managing Director of the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB). The dignitaries lauded the station's

contribution to diversifying Pakistan's energy mix, strengthening energy security, and advancing China-Pakistan cooperation. Since commencing operations on September 14, 2024, the SK Hydropower Station has transmitted 2.8 billion kWh of clean electricity to the national grid, Maintained a record of "zero accidents, zero

losses" in production, Created more than 6,000 jobs during construction and provided over 100 stable jobs post-operation, Launched community development initiatives, including the planting of 150,000+ trees, scholarships for local students, infrastructure improvements, and disaster relief support. Beyond energy generation, the pro-

ject has contributed to education, environmental protection, tourism, and local livelihoods, becoming a model of sustainable development under CPEC. In recognition of its achievements, the SK Hydropower Station has received multiple honors from the Government of Pakistan, including, Excellent Taxpayer Unit Award, Ac-

tive Contribution Award for Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development, Occupational Health, Safety, and Environment Excellence Award. Looking ahead, officials said the hydropower station will continue to optimize operations, expand clean energy output, and further cement Pakistan-China cooperation through CPEC.

**France repatriates three women, 10 children from Syrian camps**

PARIS: France on Tuesday repatriated three women and 10 children from Syrian prisons for alleged militants, anti-terror prosecutors said, in the first such operation in two years.

Repatriation is a deeply sensitive issue in France, which has been a target of Islamists over the last decade, notably in 2015, when militant gunmen and suicide bombers staged the worst attack on Paris since World War II, killing 130 people.

More than five years after the Daesh group's territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria, tens of thousands of people are still held in Kurdish-run camps and prisons in northeastern Syria, many with alleged or perceived links to Daesh. The women repatriated early Tuesday morning are aged between 18 and 34. Two of them have been taken into police custody, while the third faces possible indictment, according to France's anti-terror unit PNAT.—APP

UN rights chief demands end to 'carnage'

GENEVA: The UN rights chief on Tuesday condemned Israel's ground assault on Gaza City as "utterly unacceptable," demanding an end to the "carnage" and warning of growing evidence of genocide in the Palestinian territory.

"It is absolutely clear that this carnage must stop," United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said when asked about the launch of Israel's long-anticipated ground assault on Gaza's largest city. "The whole world screams for peace. Palestinians, Israelis scream for peace. Everyone wants an end to this, and what we see is a further escalation which is totally and utterly unacceptable," he said. Turk highlighted that in recent days "we have seen expanding attacks in the northwestern parts of Gaza, where the population had sought shelter from previous attacks." He decried in particular "the ongoing bombardment of residential buildings, buildings that have served as shelters for people who have been displaced multiple times." "These attacks need to stop." He pointed out that the Israeli military "repeatedly claimed that it is targeting so-called terrorist infrastructure."—APP

'Inhumane' to expect Gaza's kids to flee, UN agency says

GENEVA: An official of the United Nations' children's agency said on Tuesday it was "inhumane" to expect hundreds of thousands of children to leave Gaza City as camps further south were unsafe, overcrowded and ill-equipped to receive them. Israel announced on Tuesday the start of its long-awaited ground operation into Gaza City, the main urban center in the enclave where Israel has ordered residents to flee. So far, more than 140,000 have already fled south from Gaza City since August 14, UN data shows, of a population of around 1 million people. "It is inhumane to expect nearly half a million children, battered and traumatized by over 700 days of unrelenting conflict, to flee one hellscap and end up in another," Tess Ingram, a UNICEF spokesperson, told reporters by video link from the sprawling tent camp of Mawasi, Gaza. Conditions there are so desperate that some people who fled Israel's new offensive on famine-struck Gaza City in recent days are heading back toward the falling bombs, they told Reuters. "People really do have no good option – stay in danger or flee to a place that they also know is dangerous," she said, adding that some children had been killed at the Mawasi camp while collecting water. Ingram described seeing large numbers of people fleeing down the main road out of Gaza City this week. One mother, Israa, made the journey on foot accompanied by her five hungry, thirsty children including two with no shoes, said Ingram, who met them. "They were walking into the unknown – no clear destination or plan – with little hope of finding solace," she said.—APP

Briefs

NDMA
dispatches
5,000 tents
to flood-hit
Muzaffargarh

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday dispatched 5,000 tents to Muzaffargarh to assist communities severely affected by recent flooding, according to an official press release. The shipment includes 1,100 tents dispatched from Sukkur to Muzaffargarh on eight trucks. In addition, two separate convoys left Jaloza for Muzaffargarh, carrying a total of 3,900 tents on 15 and 16 trucks, respectively. The tents will be handed over to the Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) for onward distribution among flood victims. NDMA has so far provided 2,215 tons of relief goods to flood-affected areas in Punjab. The supplies include blankets, tents, mosquito nets, water filtration plants, quilts, folding beds, water cans, and 17 boats, aimed at supporting displaced communities and aiding ongoing rescue efforts. To date, NDMA has delivered a total of 35,000 tents across Punjab as part of its emergency response. The authority remains in full coordination with all relevant civil and military institutions, and is continuously monitoring relief operations being carried out by concerned agencies under the directives of the prime minister. — APP

Shipowner
linked to
giant Beirut
blast held

SOFIA: A shipowner wanted over a 2020 blast at Beirut port that killed more than 220 people has been arrested in Bulgaria, officials said Tuesday. Igor Grechushkin is one of three people wanted by Interpol and linked to a shipment of ammonium nitrate that exploded at the port, injuring over 6,500 people and ravaging swathes of the Lebanese capital. The August 4, 2020 disaster was one of the world's largest non-nuclear explosions. Beirut authorities identified Grechushkin, a 48-year-old Russian-Cypriot citizen, as the owner of the Rhosus, the ship that transported the ammonium nitrate. "He has been placed in detention for a maximum duration of 40 days by a court decision on September 7, confirmed on appeal," a Sofia city court spokeswoman told AFP. The authorities requesting extradition have 40 days to send the necessary documents to effect such a move, according to Bulgarian law. Grechushkin was held on an Interpol red notice at Sofia airport on September 5 upon his arrival from Paphos in Cyprus, a Bulgarian judicial source confirmed to AFP. The Rhosus, a Moldovan-flagged cargo ship sailing from Georgia and bound for Mozambique, is widely understood to have brought the fertiliser to Beirut in 2013. After it arrived in Lebanon, the Rhosus faced "technical problems". — APP

Pakistan, Iran call for Muslim unity against Israeli aggression

President Pezeshkian appreciated Pakistan's firm stance on the Palestinian cause and expressed his desire to work closely with the Prime Minister to further strengthen Pakistan-Iran relations

DNA

DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with His Excellency Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the sidelines of the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit convened in Doha today, following Israel's recent attack on Qatar. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar were also present during the meeting. The Prime Minister strongly condemned the Israeli aggression against Qatar on September 9 and reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with Doha. Both leaders expressed their support for Qatar and underscored the need for unity among Muslim nations in the face of Israeli hostilities. Highlighting the significance of the Doha Summit, the Prime Minister said that the Muslim world had conveyed a strong and unified message that Israel's aggression could no longer be tolerated. Recalling President Pezeshkian's recent visit to Pakistan, the Prime Minister re-

iterated Islamabad's resolve to enhance bilateral cooperation with Iran in all areas of mutual interest. He also conveyed warm regards for His Eminence Ayatullah Ali

Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran. President Pezeshkian appreciated Pakistan's firm stance on the Palestinian cause and expressed his desire to work closely

with the Prime Minister to further strengthen Pakistan-Iran relations. The two leaders agreed to remain in close contact, given the rapidly evolving regional situation.

US, China reach
framework
agreement
for TikTok

MADRID: US and Chinese officials have announced a framework agreement that would transfer control of the short-video app TikTok to US ownership. From Madrid where he was meeting with Chinese officials, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Monday that Washington and Beijing had struck a "framework for a TikTok deal." Bessent offered few details about the agreement, especially regarding a key sticking point: control of TikTok's algorithm. When asked about it, he said, "We're not going to talk about the commercial terms of the deal. It's between two private parties, but the terms have been agreed upon." "We were very focused on TikTok and making sure that it was a deal that is fair for the Chinese and completely respects US national security concerns." — DNA

Trump likely to meet
Zelensky next week
on peace efforts

TEL AVIV: President Donald Trump will likely meet Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky next week and still hopes to broker a peace deal between Kyiv and Moscow, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Tuesday. Trump has repeatedly threatened sanctions against Russia if President Vladimir Putin does not compromise. But he has not followed through even as Russia ramps up attacks, frustrating Ukraine. Trump has had "multiple calls with Putin, multiple meetings with Zelensky, including probably next week again in New York", where leaders will gather for the UN General Assembly, Rubio told reporters in Israel. "He's going to keep trying. If peace is possible, he wants to achieve it," Rubio said. "At some point the president may conclude it's not possible. He's not there yet, but he could get to that point." Rubio pointed to a figure previously cited by Trump, saying that Russia lost 20,000 soldiers in fighting in July alone. Trump a month ago welcomed Putin to Alaska — the first time a Western nation has

allowed the Russian leader to visit since he ordered the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 — and days later met with Zelensky alongside European leaders at the White House. Rubio said that Trump was unique in being able to speak to Putin as well as Zelensky and the Europeans. "If somehow he were to disengage from this, or sanction Russia and say, 'I'm done', then there's no one left in the world that could possibly mediate the end," Rubio said. Trump came into office vowing to end the war within a day, blaming his predecessor Joe Biden for Russia's invasion and criticising the billions of dollars provided by the United States to Ukraine. At a February 28 meeting at the White House that stunned US allies, Trump and Vice President JD Vance publicly berated Zelensky, accusing him of ingratitude, and then briefly cut off US military and intelligence support for Ukraine. Zelensky has since met Trump twice and each time gone out of his way to praise the US president and voice appreciation for American support. — Agencies

"Suspected gunman Tyler Robinson wrote note threatening Kirk"

FBI official didn't say who received text message by Robinsn or whether anyone seen written note before attack

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The suspect of assassinating right-wing activist Charlie Kirk in Utah wrote a text message before the shooting that he planned to kill Kirk, FBI Director Kash Patel said on Monday. In an appearance on Fox News' "Fox & Friends," Patel said investigators believe Tyler Robinson also wrote a physical note saying he had the "opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk" and would do so. The note was destroyed, Patel said, but investigators have collected forensic evidence

that it had existed and confirmed its contents through interviews. Patel did not say who had received the text message or whether anyone had seen the written note before the attack. Investigators have not publicly identified a motive. Law enforcement authorities have said they believe Robinson acted alone when he shot Kirk but are investigating whether anyone else had a role in plotting the killing. Separately, the Washington Post reported on Monday that Robinson had sent a message via the online platform Discord to friends apparently confessing to the crime on Thursday night, shortly before he was arrested. "It

was me at UVU yesterday. I'm sorry for all of this," read a message from the account belonging to Robinson, the newspaper reported, citing two people familiar with the chat as well as screenshots it had obtained. Kirk, an influential ally of US President Donald Trump who co-founded the leading conservative student group Turning Point USA, was killed by a single rifle shot last Wednesday during an event at Utah Valley University in Orem, about 40 miles south (65 km) of Salt Lake City. Robinson, 22, is expected to be formally charged on Tuesday, around the same time that he makes an initial court appearance by video from his jail cell.

Pakistan urges all Yemeni
parties to exercise restraint

UNITED NATIONS: With famine, fighting and aid worker detentions exacerbating the crisis in Yemen, Pakistan has called on all parties to break the stalemate through political will and concrete steps towards an inclusive peace process. "The Security Council must facilitate and advance the peace process," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member Council on Monday. "It (the Council) must speak with one voice to end the suffering of the Yemeni people, uphold the UN Charter, and chart a path toward peace, stability, and prosperity in Yemen and the wider Middle East," he said in a debate in the situation in Yemen. Yemen continues to be gripped by a protracted conflict that erupted in 2014 when Ansar Allah — the Houthis — forces seized Sana'a, the capital, prompting a military intervention in 2015 by a Saudi-led coalition in support of the internationally recognized Government. Clashes between Government-aligned forces and the Houthis have persisted despite intermittent ceasefires, economic collapse, humanitarian crises, and recent cross-border and maritime attacks linked to the wider regional tensions following the escalation of hostilities in Gaza have compounded the conflict. Opening the debate, Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen said that stability in the country cannot be separated from the wider dynamics of the region. Yemen's unresolved conflict is "like a fault line, sending tremors across its borders", amplifying rivalries, while "regional instability continues to return to Yemen, fueling its divisions", he said. In short, "Yemen is both a mirror and a magnifier of the region's volatility", and without addressing both tracks "neither can advance in isolation". Against the backdrop of the war in Gaza, Grundberg emphasized, the world faces "an alarming and dangerous intensification of hostilities between Ansar Allah and Israel". Ansar Allah "has continued to target Israel with drones and missiles", while Israeli strikes in Sana'a and other areas have reportedly killed civilians, including "senior Ansar Allah officials, some of whom were interlocutors of my office". This "escalatory cycle must end", he stressed, adding that "if Yemen is addressed primarily through the lens of regional concerns, the voices and aspirations of the Yemenis themselves become sidelined". The country is "dragged further from a peace process that would bring sustainable, long-term peace". He urged the Council to "get the focus back on Yemen". — Agencies

Sikh pilgrims
travel ban
sparks strong
reaction

Sikh pilgrims were scheduled to travel to Pakistan in November for the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Sikh pilgrims have expressed strong reaction after being barred from travelling to Pakistan, according to Indian media reports. The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs has stopped the pilgrims from making the journey, citing prevailing tensions and security concerns between the two countries. An advisory issued by the ministry formally prevented the travel, Indian media said. Opposition parties and Sikh religious leaders in Indian Punjab condemned the decision. They remarked that if cricket matches could be held with Pakistan, then there was no justification for stopping Sikh pilgrims from visiting. Sikh pilgrims were scheduled to travel to Pakistan in November for the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the central government had no right to obstruct religious freedom, adding that if cricket matches could take place with Pakistan, it was unreasonable to stop the pilgrims. Former Lok Sabha member Sukhbir Singh Badal urged Home Minister Amit Shah to reconsider the decision. He stressed that not granting access to Kartarpur would hurt religious sentiments and demanded the reopening of the Kartarpur Corridor. Thousands of Sikh pilgrims come to Pakistan every year to commemorate Baisakhi and other religious holidays.

Zardari meets
Chairman
of Chery
Holding

DNA

SHANGHAI: President Asif Ali Zardari met Mr Yin Tongyue, Chairman of the Board of Chery Holding Co., Ltd. and Chery Automobile Co., Ltd., in Shanghai today. He was accompanied by First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla. The President thanked Mr Yin for his detailed briefing and welcomed Chery Auto's growing interest in Pakistan. He appreciated the company's plans to introduce electric buses and pursue localisation, noting that these steps would help generate employment opportunities for young people in the country. President Zardari assured the Chairman that the Government of Pakistan would provide policy support for new energy vehicles, electric buses and local production of components. The President encouraged Chery to explore joint ventures in electric buses, mini trucks, green energy solutions and charging infrastructure. He also highlighted opportunities for collaboration with Pakistani companies in manufacturing, minerals and energy storage solutions.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif lauds
Pakistan Navy professionalism

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif visited Naval Headquarters, Islamabad, and called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf. During the meeting, discussions were held on the regional maritime security environment and operational readiness of Pakistan Navy. The Naval Chief apprised the Defence Minister on the prevailing maritime challenges and Navy's compre-

hensive preparedness to address them. He further provided an overview of ongoing and future initiatives aimed at enhancement and modernization of PN capabilities. The Defence Minister took a keen interest in the recent inductions of advanced platforms and cutting-edge equipment, which will significantly strengthen Pakistan's maritime defence. He appreciated Pakistan Navy's critical role in safeguarding the country's maritime interests and assured that the Ministry of Defence remains committed to supporting Navy's operational and developmental requirements.

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