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UN veto: Pakistan calls it a dark day: Ambassador Asim

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Energy minister chairs meeting on RLNG issues

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Ethiopia keen to expand ties with Pakistan

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DPM / Defence Minister say

Doors not closed' for others to join Pak-Saudi pact

JUI-F chief Fazl welcomes Pak-Saudi agreement, says both countries have capacity to lead Islamic world "If either Pakistan or Saudi Arabia is attacked from anywhere, it will be considered an attack on both nations, and we will respond together," Asif added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said it is premature to speak of the possibility of other countries joining the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia security pact, but stressed that "the door has not been closed" on such a possibility. "It is too early to speak of other countries joining the agreement, the door has not been closed," said the defence czar in an interview. Islamabad and Riyadh formalised a landmark Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement, pledging to treat any aggression against one country as aggression against both. The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia pact was signed during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's state visit to Riyadh on September 17, where he was received by Crown Prince and PM Mohammed bin Salman at Al-Yamamah Palace. He went on to say that any attack on either Pakistan or Saudi Arabia will be considered an attack on both countries, and the two nations will respond jointly. "If either Pakistan or Saudi Arabia is attacked from anywhere, it will be considered an attack on both nations, and we will respond together," Asif added. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that several countries have expressed interest in pursuing strategic defence agreements with Pakistan, following its landmark pact with Saudi Arabia. "It is premature to say something, but after this development, other countries have also expressed a desire for similar arrangements," the deputy premier said while speaking to journalists in London. "But such things follow a due process. Even with Saudi Arabia, it took several months to finalise." His statement came two days after Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement,

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'Pakistan-Saudi defence pact not against any particular country'

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan stated that the historic defence agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is strictly defensive and carries no implications against any other nation. At the weekly media briefing on Friday, Khan said the leadership of both countries was committed to elevating bilateral relations to new heights. Riyadh and Islamabad signed the mutual defence pact on September 17, significantly strengthening a decades-old security partnership, a week after Israel's strikes on Qatar upended the diplomatic calculus in the region. "The agreement states that any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both," a statement from the prime minister's office had mentioned. The deal was signed by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Riyadh, where Pakistan's top official was accorded a warm welcome. Pakistan's decades-old alliance with Saudi Arabia — the site of Islam's holiest sites — is rooted in shared faith, strategic interests, and economic interdependence.

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Egypt FM felicitates on Pak-Saudi defence pact

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar received a call from Foreign Minister of Egypt Dr. Badr Abdelatty who warmly felicitated Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on the signing of the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement. During the telephonic conversation held on Thursday evening, the Egyptian foreign minister said the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defence agreement was an important milestone in strengthening partnership, trust and cooperation.

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Govt to protect Journalists rights: Tarar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar has expressed deep concern and regret over the notice sent to journalist Abdullah Momand, affiliated with Dawn News, by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a statement today, Attaulah Tarar described the billion-rupee legal notice served to Abdullah Momand, merely for asking a question, as an attack on press freedom, a violation of democratic principles, and a departure from constitutional norms. He emphasized that it is the duty of journalists to ask

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GB CM calls on finance minister

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has urged the Gilgit-Baltistan government to explore new revenue-generation avenues. He was talking to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in Islamabad on Friday. During the meeting, the Finance Minister underlined the need to develop airport and road infrastructure as well as tourism spots to promote package tourism, especially for visitors from Gulf countries. Muhammad Aurangzeb emphasized responsible investment with strict

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KASHGAR: President Asif Ali Zardari shaking hands with Mr. Nie Zhuang at a banquet hosted by him, September 19, 2025 in Kashgar, China. — DNA

Indian army driven by extremist ideology: ISPR DG

It's important to make Indians realise via int'l mediation that strategic arrogance will not work, says Lt Gen Chaudhry

NEWS DESK / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has assailed India and its state institutions, including the Army, for being influenced by extremist political ideologies. "It's very important that the international players, like US, they must intervene and resolve the issues which are the enduring reasons of the ongoing conflict [between Pakistan and India]," Lt Gen Chaudhry said while speaking during an interview with a German news outlet on September 5. Reflecting on the recent May conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, the ISPR chief said that there has only been a ceasefire. "The conflicts [between Pakistan and India] endure. Whether it's the Kashmir issue, whether it's the state-sponsored terrorism of India. Whether it is the rising extremism of Hindutva mentality, or rational

ity that has gripped India. "[...] It is important for the international community [...] through its mediation, the Indians are made to realise that this sort of irrationality, strategic arrogance, hubristic attitude that they've adopted, its not going to work." Underscoring the Indian-sponsored terrorism inside Pakistan, Lt Gen Chaudhry said that what the country has endured for years is not "insurgency," but outright terrorism. "The correct term is not insurgents, its terrorists. There is no insurgency in Pakistan. Whether its in Balochistan or KP. Its pure terrorism. We have no doubt in our minds that each terror incident that happens inside Pakistan, behind that is Indian

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Siddiqui foresees PTI's exit from parliament

PML-N's senator warns Pakistan risks being pushed into another major crisis

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui has predicted that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) may exit the parliament while some judges may resign from the judiciary for "mutual interests". Taking to X, the senator emphasised that parliamentary standing committees are the soul of parliament. He stressed that the major opposition party should also remain part of them if it is present in the parliament. Siddiqui

urged the Imran Khan-founded party to play its democratic role, adding that the pace of events suggests that, in the near future, the PTI may withdraw from parliament, while some judges may resign from the judiciary for mutual interests. Questioning the motives behind such moves, Siddiqui said the target is to push Pakistan back into another major crisis. Warning the opposition without naming it, he further remarked that what lies ahead is another major failure and another major humiliation. His statement came after the former ruling party's lawmakers in the National Assembly and the Senate resigned from the parliamentary committees

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Briefs

Hong Kong to evacuate 6,000

DNA

HONG KONG: Hong Kong planned to evacuate thousands of residents on Friday as a bomb left over from World War II was discovered at a construction site. Police said that the bomb measured approximately 1.5 metres in length and weighed about 450 kilograms (1,000 pounds), adding that they believed it remained "fully functional". "Due to the extremely high risks involved in dismantling and disposing of the bomb, we must activate the emergency evacuation plan," said Hong Kong Police District Commander Andy Chan. About 6,000 people from 18 residential buildings in the Quarry Bay area will be evacuated on Friday night, with demolition work set to begin early on Saturday morning, police added.

Pak, Iran agree to deepen agri coop

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran have agreed to advance ongoing agricultural cooperation and implement decisions taken by the Joint Committee on Agriculture Cooperation. The agreement to this effect was reached during the meeting of Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan with Iranian Minister for Agriculture, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezeli in Tehran. It was informed in the meeting the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture will send a high-level delegation to Pakistan within next two weeks.

Holiday Notice

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

GHQ attack case

ATC rejects PTI plea seeking in person appearance of Imran

The prosecutor said submitting an application against Imran's appearance via video link "is tantamount to creating hurdles in the trial and wasting time"

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi on Friday dismissed the plea seeking Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's in person appearance in General Headquarters (GHQ) attack case related to May 9 violent protests. Imran's arrest on May 9, 2023 sparked violent protests across the country, during which state buildings and military installations, including the GHQ, were torched and vandalised. He was expected to attend today's hearing at the ATC via video link, but his counsel argued before Judge Aamjad Ali Shah against this arrangement on the PTI's application.

For his part, prosecutor Zaheer Shah contended that trial proceedings were transferred to the ATC from Adiala Jail — where Imran is imprisoned — on the Punjab government's executive order. "The authority to review the executive order lies with the constitutional court," he added. He further argued that in 2016, the Code of Criminal Procedure was amended to allow suspects to appear in courts via video link. Shah also cited Sections 15 and 21 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, saying that they authorised the courts to make "decisions regarding trials". He added that the government was "not obliged" to give a reason for transferring the trial.

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Pakistan extends airspace ban on Indian airlines

Restriction bars Indian commercial airlines, registered aircraft, military flights from entering Pakistani airspace

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has extended its airspace ban for all Indian-registered and Indian-operated aircraft, including military planes, for another month, the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) said on Friday. According to a new NOTAM (Notice to Airmen), the restriction bars Indian commercial airlines, India-registered aircraft, and military flights from entering Pakistani airspace. Pakistan closed its airspace for Indian airlines in a tit-for-tat move after New Delhi suspended the critical Indus Water Treaty amid heightened bilateral tensions following the deadly Pahalgam attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Following Pakistan's decision, India shut its airspace to Pakistani airlines on April 30. Pakistan's initial restriction was extended on May 23 for another month. The latest extension brings the total duration of Pakistan's airspace closure for Indian aircraft to 210 days. On May 6-7, India launched unprovoked attacks on multiple Pakistani cities. In response, Pakistan's armed forces launched a large-scale retaliatory military action, named "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos", and targeted several Indian military targets across multiple regions. The strikes, described by officials as "precise and proportionate", were carried out in

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SEPTEMBER 2025

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Crackdown on milk adulteration in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Rawalpindi has intensified its crackdown against milk adulteration, discarding more than 50,000 litres of contaminated milk during large-scale inspections carried out over the last ten days. According to a PFA spokesman, as many as 234 milk shops and 303 milk carrier vehicles were checked in different areas including Motorway, Satellite Town, and Katarian. Laboratory tests revealed that dry milk powder and vegetable oil were being mixed in fresh milk.

He said First Information Reports (FIRs) were registered against 10 persons, while nine accused were arrested on the spot. A total fine of Rs 2.2 million was imposed on milk shop owners and transporters, with around 90 shops and vehicles penalized.

The spokesman added that over 1.4 million litres of milk was checked during the campaign, while more than 50,000 litres of adulterated milk was discarded. He reiterated that the drive against the adulteration mafia across Punjab would continue and urged citizens to report such practices through the Helpline 1223.—APP

26% HPV drive target achieved in Punjab

RAWALPINDI: The District Health Authority (DHA), Rawalpindi has successfully vaccinated 1,01,153 girls with HPV vaccine during the first four days of the 12 day drive, making 26% of the total target population of 3,95,609. According to the statistical details released by the DHA on Friday, the campaign has focused on 131,870 girls four days setting a daily target of vaccinating 33,000 girls per day. Whereas, 23,022 girls have been reported as missed across all days. However, 77% of the daily target has been successful as the cumulative vaccination for Day 4 stands at 25,727 girls, or 78% of the day's target. Additionally, efforts to reach missed girls have resulted in 2,630 vaccinations, accounting for 11% of that group. The campaign aims to cover a remaining target of 3,36,268 girls within the remaining days.—APP

Islamabad IT Park to generate 10,000 jobs

ISLAMABAD :The under-construction IT Park in Islamabad is set to create 10,000 job opportunities for the country's youth, with physical progress reaching 71 per cent. According to an official of the Ministry of IT, the landmark project is being developed with a \$76.3 million loan from South Korea, secured on highly concessional terms. He said the foundation stone of an IT park in Islamabad, assisted by Korea, was laid in Chak Shahzad to fulfil Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's 'Digital Pakistan' vision.—APP



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited the newly constructed building and interacted with students during inaugural ceremony of Dental College and Hospital at Bahria University Health Sciences Campus Karachi.

Maryam launches Electric Bus Service in Sargodha

SARGODHA: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday inaugurated a modern electric bus service in Sargodha, calling it a milestone initiative to provide affordable, comfortable, and environment-friendly travel facilities to the public.

The chief minister took a symbolic ride on one of the newly launched buses from Circuit House to the University of Sargodha, where the inaugural ceremony was held. Addressing the gathering, Maryam Nawaz announced that the Punjab government had allocated 105 electric buses for Sargodha division, of which 60 would soon be available in district Sargodha. Currently, 33 buses have been deployed in the district. Calling the initiative "a landmark project for Punjab", she said the service would ensure bet-

ter mobility for citizens, particularly in medium-sized cities that had long been deprived of modern transportation. "We chose to begin this project from smaller cities like Sargodha rather than starting with big cities. This is unprecedented in Punjab's history and marks the beginning of a new era of inclusive development," she said. The chief minister highlighted that Sargodha, known as the "City of Eagles" and a stronghold of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), had long faced inadequate travel infrastructure. "People were bound to travel on worn-out roads and outdated buses. Now, with the electric bus service, they will have access to safe, modern, and comfortable transport," she said. The buses, she added, are equipped

with CCTV cameras for passenger safety and have separate compartments for women to ensure a secure and convenient experience. Maryam Nawaz also spoke about the government's efforts in the health sector, noting that the Nawaz Sharif Cardiology Hospital in Sargodha had been completed in record time of one year. She said cardiologists had been appointed across Punjab with residential facilities provided to them. The hospital would be formally inaugurated by three-time prime minister and PML-N President Nawaz Sharif next month after his return from abroad, she added. On the occasion, Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari, Provincial Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan, other government officials, and a large number of citizens attended the ceremony.—DNA

Sindh, Centre agree to formulate national wheat policy

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain, in a high-level meeting at CM House, agreed on the urgent need to formulate a national food security policy with provincial consultation and to ensure fair support prices for wheat growers to encourage higher production. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Special Assistant to CM on Food Jabar Khan, Principal Secretary to CM Agha Wasif, Secretary Agriculture Zaman Narejo and Secretary Food Bachal Rahpoto. The Federal Government delegation includes Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs Tariq Bajwa, PM's Coordinator

Ahmed Azeer, and Joint Secretary National Food Security Syed Bilal Haidar, a CM house communiqué said. Welcoming the Federal Minister and his delegation, the Chief Minister recalled that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had already warned about looming food security challenges. "We must give our farmers a good support price; without it, they won't grow wheat," he said. Federal Minister Rana Tanveer acknowledged the CM's concerns, adding, "Last year, wheat sowing in the country declined by 6 per cent. The Prime Minister has directed me to meet with you, as the federal government is committed to building strategic wheat reserves."

Murad Shah informed the meeting that Sindh produced 3.452 million

metric tons of wheat in 2024-25, with a current stock of 1.385 million metric tons. He said the province had held several meetings on Sindh and Balochistan's wheat needs and reserves, and current estimates show sufficient wheat stock until the new harvest. The CM warned that the absence of a support price last year had dealt a major blow to growers. "Farmers suffered such heavy losses that some were forced to sell their land or switch over to other crops. As a result, wheat was sown on fewer acres, yields declined, and farmers could not afford fertilisers and other inputs," he said. Tariq Bajwa pointed out that 90 per cent of Pakistan's wheat production comes from Sindh and Punjab, where 80 per cent of it is also

consumed. He stressed that farmer incentives were the only way to strengthen food security. Participants agreed that wheat must not be imported, and instead, domestic growers should be encouraged and protected. They noted that wheat prices in the open market currently range between Rs3,300 and Rs4,000 per 40kg, and support policies should benefit farmers directly rather than middlemen. The meeting decided to draft a comprehensive national wheat policy with provincial input, focusing on farmer support, better procurement mechanisms, and ensuring strategic reserves. "This year, we must fix a support price so that our growers are protected. Only then can we secure food for our people," CM Murad Shah concluded.—APP

CDA, PR set to sign MoU for modern twin-city train service

ISLAMABAD: Plans for a modern, high-speed train service connecting Islamabad and Rawalpindi have moved a step closer, as the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Pakistan Railways prepare to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formally launch the project.

The decision came during a meeting held at CDA Headquarters on Friday, chaired by Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting, attended by senior officials from both

CDA and Pakistan Railways, reviewed the draft MoU and discussed key aspects of the project, including the proposed route, layout plan, business model, and the use of eco-friendly technology. Randhawa said the train service would help ease traffic congestion across the twin cities, which are often choked by rising vehicle numbers. "The completion of this project will significantly reduce the overall traffic flow in Islamabad and Rawalpindi," he said, adding that the

train will be integrated with feeder electric bus services to improve accessibility for commuters. The chairman emphasized that the service would be affordable, safe, and comfortable, while adhering to international standards and best practices. "This train service will be a gift for the people of the twin cities," Randhawa remarked, stressing its role not only in providing modern transport facilities but also in boosting the overall development of the capital.—DNA

KP launches wildlife restoration project

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Muhammad Ali Saif on Friday said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, the provincial government has taken another revolutionary step by launching a wildlife restoration project, making KP the first province to introduce a re-wilding initiative. As part of the project, different species of deer have been released into the forests of Kohat, where they are being monitored through drone technology, he said. Adding local communities and wildlife officials have also been engaged in continuous monitoring to ensure the protection and survival of the species. Saif said that the positive outcomes of the Billion Tree Tsunami project are now visible in the form of the revival of wildlife. He added that the newly launched initiative would pave the way for the restoration of other species and serve as a milestone in maintaining ecological balance across the province. Highlighting the background, he recalled that the Billion Tree Tsunami was launched in 2014 to combat climate change, and its long-term benefits are now materializing through improved forest cover and biodiversity. Building on this success, the provincial government has now practically realized another major initiative with the introduction of the wildlife restoration and reintroduction project, he noted. Saif emphasized that this revolutionary step aims to restore the ecosystem that had been severely damaged over the past several years, ensuring a sustainable environment for future generations.—APP

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Gilani promises flood affectees' full rehabilitation

MULTAN: Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani visited flood-hit areas of Tehsil Shujabad and Jalalpur Pirwala on Friday to review relief and rehabilitation efforts. During his visit to Mouza Rukan Hatti, he inspected the flood relief camp, interacted with victims, and inquired about their problems and available facilities. He also visited the medical camp, checked the quality of medicines, and directed officials to ensure uninterrupted healthcare and food supplies. MNA Abdul Qadir Gilani, Chairman Kashmir Committee Rana Qasim Noon, former MPA Javed Ansari, Pakistan Sweet Home head Zam-ur Khan, senior district and police officers, and local notables accompanied him. Assistant Commissioner Shujabad Syeda Humaira Shah briefed the acting president on losses and ongoing rehabilitation measures. Talking to the media, Gilani said the recent floods caused massive destruction, especially in south Punjab, but all institutions were actively engaged in relief work. He assured that victims would be fully rehabilitated and damages compensated, adding that all avail-



able resources were being utilised to provide food, medical care, and shelter. Later, food was distributed

among flood victims by Pakistan Sweet Home. Gilani mingled with the victims and shared a meal with

them. The residents thanked him for the visit and expressed satisfaction over the arrangements.—DNA

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

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Canth Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ICCI President, Tajik envoy agree to boost bilateral trade

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Tajikistan reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen the long-standing brotherly ties by expanding cooperation in diverse fields, particularly trade and investment. This resolve was expressed during the visit of H.E. Yusuf Sharifzoda, Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Friday. The Ambassador visited ICCI to felicitate Sardar Tahir Mehmood on his unopposed election as President of the Chamber. Ambassador Sharifzoda said that Pakistan is a land of opportunities with its most intelligent and loving people know for their hospitality. He highlighted Tajikistan's economic, trade, and tourism potential and extended an invitation to the ICCI President in particular and the ICCI members in general to attend the forthcoming Dushanbe International Investment Forum-2025 to be held on October 14-16, 2025 by expressing confidence that Pakistani business community's participation in this Forum will not only enable it to showcase Pakistani products but will further develop bilateral relations also. He mentioned that medical equipment, leather products, pharmaceuticals and Pakistani skilled workers especially in handicraft have vast scope in Tajikistan. Welcoming the Ambassador, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood thanked him for his visit and goodwill gesture. He said Pakistan and Tajikistan are bound by centuries-old cultural and social ties and stressed the need to transform these relations into robust trade and economic partnerships. He said that bilateral cooperation between the two countries will be further promoted with the completion of CASA-1000. He underlined the need for the regulatory facilitations for the promotion the trade between the two countries and that Pakistani businessmen by using Tajikistan as a base can have an easy access to other central Asian states for the promotion of businesses. Sardar Tahir reaffirmed ICCI's determination to strengthen chamber-to-chamber relations through B2B networking with friendly nations, with a special focus on Tajikistan. ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub lauded the deep-rooted friendship between the two countries and reiterated that ICCI is committed to enhancing bilateral trade and economic ties with Tajikistan for shared prosperity. In his vote of thanks ICCI Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry underscored the need that Tajik investors must also frequently visit Pakistan for the promotion of people to people contacts. ICCI Executive members Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry, Mohsin Khalid Malik, Rohail Anwar Butt, Khayyam Abbasi and Ms. Fatima Azim were also present on the occasion alongside others.



Police promote 260 officers

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police promoted more than 260 officers and personnel, ranging from constables to inspectors, to higher ranks. An official told APP on Friday that the promotions were approved in a meeting of the promotion committee held under the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi. He said four inspectors were promoted to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), 62 head constables were promoted as Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs), while over 200 constables were elevated to the rank of head constable. He said IGP Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi congratulated the officers and directed them to perform their duties with greater dedication and professionalism. Public service and facilitation must remain the foremost priority of the police force, the IGP added.—APP

Muqam pledges unwavering support for Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people, stating that the country will continue to extend moral, political, and diplomatic backing until their right to self-determination is realized. Chairing a high-level meeting, Muqam paid tribute to the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people and expressed deep concern over the alarming security and human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). During the meeting, senior officials provided a comprehensive briefing to the Federal Minister on the law and order situation and ongoing development initiatives in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Muqam emphasized that the development and prosperity of AJK is a top priority for the Federal Government. He noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the progress of AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan remains a central agenda.—APP

Ulema Council calls Pak-Saudi pact historic for Haramain's protection

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The members of the National Ulema and Mashaikh Council on Thursday warmly welcomed the signing of the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement, describing it as a 'historic milestone' in bilateral ties and a source of strength for the entire Muslim Ummah. In a joint statement issued here, Council members including Qari Muhammad Hanif Jalandhri, Dr. Muhammad Raghif Naeemi, Maulana Yaseen Zafar, Qari Mehboob-ur-Rehman, and Professor Sajjad Qamar said the protection and reverence of the Haramain Sharifain are integral to the faith of Muslims worldwide. They emphasized that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share deep-rooted historical and religious ties, and the landmark agreement further consolidates their relationship. The council extended felicitations to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, and the people of both countries. "The defense pact will not only strengthen Pakistan-Saudi

relations but also reinforce the unity of the Muslim Ummah," the statement read, adding that both nations have always worked together for the empowerment of Muslims globally. The scholars expressed hope that the agreement would also pave the way for enhanced cooperation in the religious sphere, including exchanges of scholars and students, enabling both nations to benefit from each other's experience and knowledge in Islamic education. They further said the accord has brought honor to Pakistan, crediting the country's leadership and armed forces for achieving a new milestone in national and Islamic solidarity. Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf has expressed gratitude to the nation and religious scholars for observing Yaum-e-Tashakur (Day of Thanksgiving) and for offering special prayers for Pakistan and Saudi Arabia during Friday sermons. Talking to scholars from different schools of thought here Friday, the minister said this week will be marked as a 'Week of Thanksgiving' in recognition of the strengthening Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties. He said various events would be held across the country to commemorate Saudi Arabia's National Day under the theme of Pakistan-Saudi friendship and bilateral agreements. During a special prayer after Friday congregational prayers, Sardar Yousaf highlighted the enduring brotherhood between the two countries, describing Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as 'pillars of the Muslim Ummah'. He said, "The strength of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is the strength of the entire Muslim world." The minister also prayed for the health and long life of the leadership of both nations, while lauding Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and military leadership for successful defense agreement with Saudi Arabia. "The Pakistan Army has made our homeland invincible, and now the entire Muslim Ummah will stand united and undefeatable," he remarked. Praising Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as a farsighted leaders, the minister further acknowledged the efforts of Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, calling them 'unforgettable contributions' toward strengthening bilateral relations.

Raabta flagship program to strengthen public partnership

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has launched its flagship program titled "Raabta" aimed at building a strong public-police partnership for a more efficient traffic system in the federal capital. An ITP official told APP on Friday that Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Capt (ret'd) Hamzah Humayun, formally announced the program and said that the Islamabad Traffic Police has always believed community policing to be the most effective and efficient form of policing. "Taking that vision forward, I would like to announce the launch of the Raabta flagship program by ITP," he said, adding that Raabta symbolizes a two-way partnership in which the police act as guardians for the public, while the public takes ownership of the traffic system. He said this connection would enable both the police and citizens to support each other and work collectively to make Islamabad's traffic system exemplary. The CTO Hamza stressed that the initiative would not be confined to meetings, gatherings, or videos but would directly involve citizens as key stakeholders in the operational affairs of traffic management. "I appeal to you to support us in making this campaign successful. ITP cannot manage the city's traffic without the people, and the people cannot improve traffic without the police. Let's become each other's strength and make this mission a success," Hamzah Humayun remarked. CTO further said that providing safe and convenient travel facilities and ensuring a coordinated traffic system in Islamabad remained among the top priorities of the ITP.—DNA

Early warning, and local capacity-building critical to mitigate flood risks

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's increasing vulnerability to climate change-driven extremes demands integrated and urgent responses at all levels, as the increasing frequency of floods, rising temperatures, and deteriorating water quality pose a threat to the country's food security, water resources, biodiversity, and livelihoods. While floods have dominated national discussions, rising temperatures, shrinking forest cover, and weak governance capacities pose equally significant risks, all of which undermine resilience. This underscores the importance of ensuring policy implementation, proactive governance, enhancing national water storage capacity, sustainable water management, improving early warning systems, and building local capacity to mitigate the impacts of disasters. These observations were made by climate and sustainability experts at a roundtable titled "Floods in Pakistan: Building Resilience and Insights for Future Planning," organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The experts included Dr. Pervaiz Amir, climate change expert, Dr. Ghulam Rasul, advisor, China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences, Dr. Syed Tahir Hijazi, former member Planning Commission, Syed Ikram ul Haq, disaster risk capacity building expert, Yasir Riaz, flood recovery expert, Dr. Imran Hashmi, associate professor NUST, Dr. Mujtaba Hassan, HoD Space Sciences, Institute of Space Technology, and Altaf Sher, president Alkhidmat Foundation, Islamabad. Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, also joined the session, which was chaired by Mirza Hamid Hassan, former federal secretary water and power, and moderated by Ameena Sohail, an energy sector lawyer. Dr. Pervaiz Amir highlighted that climate extremes in Pakistan extend beyond floods, with rising temperatures and disappearing winters posing threats to food, water, and biodiversity. He stressed the urgency of increasing the country's forest cover, which has dropped below 1%, to at least 40%. He also emphasized the importance of building dams to store monsoon rainwater as well as water diversion schemes to desert areas. Building on his suggestions, Dr. Ghulam Rasul underlined that climate change has intensified heatwaves and floods in recent decades. He recommended vertical rather than horizontal urban expansion and clearing of natural waterways. He also called for incorporating climate projections in town planning.—APP

Talal represents Pakistan at GPSCF in China

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry represented Pakistan at the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum 2025 held in China, following directives from Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The high-profile forum brought together global leaders, security experts and law enforcement officials to strengthen international cooperation on public security, counter-terrorism, and technological advancements in policing, said a press release issued here Friday. During the conference, Talal Chaudhry toured an accompanying security expo showcasing the latest innovations in surveillance, counter-terrorism tools, and public safety technology. His visit underscored Pakistan's commitment to modernizing its security infrastructure through international partnerships and knowledge exchange. As part of his engagements, Counter-Terrorism Commissioner Yuse Xiuho hosted a special luncheon in honor of Talal Chaudhry. The two officials held detailed discussions on enhancing bilateral collaboration in counter-terrorism operations and advanced technology sharing. Both sides emphasized the importance of joint strategies to combat emerging global security threats. On the sidelines of the forum,

Consultative session to enhance IT graduates' employability

ISLAMABAD: Under the European Union-funded TVET Sector Support Programme, the British Council, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), convened a high-level consultative session titled "Enabling Future-Ready IT Graduates: Industry Partnerships Driving FYPs, Centralised Test & Curriculum Reform. The session brought together leading representatives of Pakistan's IT industry and focused on enhancing the quality, relevance, and employability of more than 75,000 computing and IT graduates produced annually across the country. The event brought together senior officials from the European Union, HEC, MoITT, Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), and key academic and industry stakeholders. Key themes under discussion included restructuring Final Year Projects (FYPs): Transforming traditional university projects into industry placement-based models to provide students with hands-on, real-world exposure. Centralised ICT Graduate Test: Exploring the feasibility of a national-level assessment to benchmark graduate employability and support industry recruitment. Curriculum Revision: Incorporating industry feedback on emerging technologies, globally recognised certifications, and essential workplace-ready skills into the upcoming National Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC) deliberations. Prof. Dr. Zia ul-Qayyum, Executive Director of HEC appreciated the collaborative spirit of all stakeholders, stressing the importance of curriculum reforms.—APP

Briefs

**Mayo Hospital
adopts China's
co-ablation
Cancer
technology first**

ISLAMABAD: A medical revolution is underway in Punjab. Mayo Hospital, one of South Asia's oldest and largest medical institutions, has become the region's first to introduce China's cutting-edge Co-ablation cancer treatment technology, ushering in a new era of minimally invasive oncology care. The breakthrough comes as a direct result of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's recent study tour to China. During her visit to Hygea Medical Equipment Company, she observed firsthand the Co-ablation technique—a method that freezes tumors at -180°C using liquid nitrogen, followed by controlled heating up to 80°C to destroy malignant cells while sparing healthy tissue, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Friday. "I was deeply inspired by the innovation I witnessed in China," Maryam recalled at the inauguration ceremony. "Alhamdulillah, today Punjab has become the first in South Asia to introduce this life-saving treatment. Within just 60 minutes, without surgery, chemotherapy or radiation, cancer patients are walking back to their families with hope." First patients treated successfully.—APP

**Pakistan
attracts \$120m
FDI from
China in recent
months**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan attracted \$120 million in net foreign direct investment (FDI) from China during July-August of the current fiscal year, making up 32.9 percent of the country's total \$364.3 million inflows, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday quoting State Bank of Pakistan's latest report. In August alone, China contributed \$68.6 million out of Pakistan's \$156.2 million net FDI, representing 43.9 percent of the monthly inflows. By comparison, combined investment from all other countries stood at \$244.3 million in July-August and \$87.6 million in August. Sectors-wise, the power sector was the largest recipient of foreign investment, drawing \$156.9 million in the first two months.

**Qurat ul
Ain elected
chairperson
of APMC**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Qurat ul Ain Ali Khawaja — PhD Scholar, Founder of Let Kashmir Decide, and awardee "Pride of Pakistan Award 2025" — has been elected as the Chairperson of the All Pakistan Media Council (Registered). Following the electoral process, she was unanimously chosen, a decision widely recognized by the concerned quarters as a testament to her intellectual and leadership credentials.

Ethiopia, Pak agree on further strengthening linkages

The Additional Secretary briefed the Ambassador on the preparations for the 5th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference & Single Country Exhibition (PATDC & SCE), which is scheduled for October 16–18, 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have agreed to further strengthen their bilateral relations by fostering institutional linkages. The crucial discussion to this end took place during a meeting between H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia to Pakistan, and H.E. Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan, Additional Secretary (Africa) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. The two sides reviewed the full spectrum of their bilateral and multilateral cooperation in various areas, including peace and security, climate change, aviation, trade, investment, science and technology, culture, and tourism. Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker noted the growing bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries with great satisfaction and admiration, reiterating his commitment to working closely with the Government of Pakistan to further strengthen bilateral relations. He underscored the need to strengthen institutional linkages between the two countries to achieve new heights in their bilateral relations. The Ambassador also briefed the Additional Secretary about the inauguration of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which was built in accordance with the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization of water resources. He highlighted the critical role being played by the FDR Ethiopia in regional integration, especially by lead-



ing the climate agenda and sharing its resources with neighboring countries and beyond. The Additional Secretary appreciated the crucial role the FDR Ethiopia is playing in integrating region especially by sharing its resources with the regional

countries. Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan said that economic diplomacy is key to strengthening bilateral relations and that Pakistan is committed to its "Look Africa" and "Engage Africa" policies. The Additional Secretary briefed

the Ambassador on the preparations for the 5th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference & Single Country Exhibition (PATDC & SCE), which is scheduled for October 16–18, 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Calligraphy, spirituality mark Seerat Festival

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 2nd International Seerat Festival 2025, a vibrant three-day celebration of knowledge, faith, and art, concluded at the Federal Government College of Home Economics, Art and Design, F-11/1, on Friday. The festival was organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training in collaboration with the Rehmatul-lil-Alameen and Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Authority. Held under the theme "Rahmat for the Earth," the festival combined scholarship, spirituality, and creativity. The inauguration was graced by Federal Minister for Planning and Development Chaudhry Ahsan Iqbal, senior officials including Khurshid Ahmed Nadeem, Dr. Kamran Jahangir (MD, National Book Foundation), and Dr. Zia Batool (Chairperson PIERA). In her welcome address, Prof. Rozina Faheem, Principal of the host institution, emphasized the timeless relevance of the Seerah in nurturing moral values and shaping character. She praised the efforts of all organizers in promoting the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during the blessed month of Rabi-ul-Awwal. The Book Fair featured 18 stalls by leading publishers from across Pakistan, offering discounted Seerat-related literature, while the Calligraphy Exhibition showcased exquisite

works on Asma-ul-Nabi prepared by talented students. Notable winners, including Ilsa Shafiq, Muqaddas Ajmal, Zulfinah Ahmad, Ghamamah Tariq, and Farwa Mumtaz, were awarded for their outstanding contributions. The second day was marked by a Seerat Conference, inaugurated by Federal Minister Dr. Ahsan Iqbal, with participation from international scholars such as Abdul Rehman (Embassy of Turkey) and Dr. Fatheeh Obedaar (Morocco). The evening was enriched by a soulful Mehfil-e-Naat and a Naatia Mushaira, where eminent poets paid poetic tributes to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). On the concluding day, a Youth Convention was held with Dr. Mohiuddin Qadri, Chairman Supreme Council Minhaj-ul-Quran International, as Chief Guest. His inspiring address urged students to embody the teachings of the Seerah in all spheres of life. The Closing Ceremony was graced by Federal Education Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, who lauded the festival as "a shining beacon of knowledge, art, and spirituality." Fourteen principals of leading federal colleges, along with their students, also attended the event and congratulated the host college for successfully organizing the mega celebration. The festival concluded as a radiant symbol of peace, ethics, and harmony—reflecting the eternal guidance of the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) Seerah and leaving a lasting imprint on the hearts of participants.

New Defence Pact important

MAHAM TAHIR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia formalised a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement, under which "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both." The pact was signed in Riyadh by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, was present. A Saudi official told Reuters the agreement is "a culmination of years of discussions. This is not a response to specific countries or specific events but an institutionalisation of longstanding and deep cooperation between our two countries." The historical ties between Riyadh and Islamabad are long and deep. Since 1967, Pakistan has trained over 8,200 Saudi armed forces personnel, establishing an enduring basis for bilateral military cooperation. The agreement builds on decades of joint exercises, arms cooperation, and informal defence coordination, but this is the first time the link has been pledged in a binding mutual defence format. One of the most sensitive aspects is nuclear ambiguity. When asked whether Pakistan's nuclear deterrent is part of the guarantee, the Saudi official said the pact is "a comprehensive defensive agreement that encompasses all military means." However, the public text does not explicitly extend a nuclear umbrella. There is no clear wording on whether Pakistan will deploy its nuclear assets in Saudi defence, under what circumstances, or with what control or oversight. This leaves space for interpretation and potential diplomatic risk. Regional balancing is also a clear message. While Islamabad gains prestige and renewed strategic relevance, Riyadh seems to be signalling that its defence posture is not anchored to dependence on any single ally.

Kamal stresses safety of 'Cervical Cancer Vaccine'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal appealed to the public to trust 'Cervical Cancer Vaccine', noting Pakistan's inclusion among 151 countries providing it, despite receiving a limited supply and revealed that officials are vaccinating their own children to encourage protection of girls aged 9 to . While in exclusive speaking to a local news channel, Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal emphasized that the cervical cancer vaccine is both safe and essential for protecting young girls in Pakistan. He acknowledged the limited availability of the vaccine but assured the public that the gov-

ernment is committed to expanding access and raising awareness about its importance. The Health Minister also revealed that many officials, including himself have vaccinated their own children to set an example and build public confidence. He urged parents to trust the vaccine and ensure girls aged 9 to 14 receive it to prevent cervical cancer and safeguard their future health. Responding to a query, the Health Minister highlighted that many Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and Kuwait have successfully vaccinated their populations against cervical cancer, demonstrating their commitment to public health

and the well-being of their citizens. He emphasized that Pakistan is following this important global health trend to protect its own girls and ensure a healthier future. To another question, Minister health added that Pakistan is already behind schedule and still has a limited supply of the vaccine, stressing that the WHO and global research have endorsed its safety; he emphasized that the ideal age for vaccination is 9 to 14 years and warned that 97% of cervical cancer cases affect girls compared to only 3% in males. He also clarified that the vaccine's purpose is to strengthen immunity and not linked to sexual behavior, stressing it protects the girls, mothers, sisters and wives of the nation. He highlighted that cancer treatment is costly and out of reach for many, making vaccination the most effective and affordable preventive measure. He also mentioned that new vaccines for various diseases are continuously being developed worldwide. Kamal concluded with called for collective cooperation from the public and urged media outlets to promote accurate and positive information about the vaccine .—APP

Pak-KSA defense treaty-will it meet its objectives?

SHAMIM SHAHID

THE signing of the historic defense treaty between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has brought jubilation across much of the Muslim world. Yet, the Western powers have reacted cautiously—viewing the development through the lens of regional security and, in particular, Israel's interests. The fact remains that Israel's continued aggression against its neighbors has generated unrest not only in the Middle East but also among Muslims globally. Immediately after the treaty was signed, Western media outlets raised alarm, emphasizing that Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed Muslim state. Speculation arose that nuclear technology could one day be transferred to Saudi Arabia—an eventuality that Western powers, especially the United States, fear would

threaten Israel, their key strategic ally in the region. Responding to such concerns, a senior Saudi official clarified: "This is a comprehensive defensive agreement that encompasses all military means. It is not directed against any specific country or event but institutionalizes long-standing and deep cooperation between our two nations." Reuters further highlighted Pakistan's stature: it not only possesses nuclear capability but also commands the Islamic world's largest army—traditionally focused on its rivalry with India. The treaty, therefore, is the outcome of years of strategic dialogue, not a sudden reaction to current events. On the other side, the United States continues to openly patronize Israel, justifying its genocidal campaign in Gaza and its strikes in neighboring Arab countries, including Qatar and Iran. At the same time, Washington has used various means to

divide and weaken the Muslim Ummah. Since the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, unity in the Arab and Muslim world has been elusive. Despite this, Saudi Arabia, since its establishment in 1932, has retained its central role in regional and global politics—largely in alignment with Western powers. Historically, Riyadh has been considered Washington's most trusted ally in the Muslim world. Through Saudi support, the U.S. and its partners were able to confront the Soviet Union and later played decisive roles in reshaping leadership in Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Afghanistan, and beyond. The U.S. also continues to strengthen Israel as part of its broader strategy to secure influence in Asia—the economic heartland of China. Moreover, it is undeniable that U.S. intelligence agencies have historically nurtured headline religious groups, initially to fight the Soviet Union in Af-

ghanistan. Many of these groups remain active today, serving as proxies for Western interests across Asia and the Middle East. Against this backdrop, the Pak-KSA defense treaty may indeed strengthen Riyadh's position—but it cannot eliminate the pervasive influence of Western-backed networks embedded across the region.

The key question, then, is whether Saudi Arabia can truly achieve its objectives and protect its strategic, religious, and geographic assets while U.S. proxies remain active throughout the Arab world. Iran's experience shows the limitations of such arrangements. Treaties like the Pak-KSA agreement are undoubtedly important, but they will not yield their full potential unless Muslim leadership first resolves internal rifts and develops a collective strategy to dismantle external proxies that fuel instability.

**Pakistan-Saudi pact
to unlock
opportunities**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement on Wednesday, with both nations declaring that any aggression against either country will be considered aggression against both, marking a watershed moment that prominent business leader Omar Butt describes as "the foundation for unprecedented economic integration between our nations." The security agreement positions Pakistan to capture a larger share of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 infrastructure spending. Building on what Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif described as "a historic partnership extending for nearly eight decades, he added. Speaking to the business community, Omar Butt, President of Pakistan Business Network, said that the formalized defense ties create the trust framework needed for significant commercial partnerships, in which Field Marshal Asim Munir has played a historic role in the national interest. The pact arrives as Arab states grow increasingly wary of US security guarantees, creating space for Pakistan's nuclear deterrent to supplement Saudi regional security calculations.—APP

**Pakistan
Exports
545,403 tons
Rice worth
\$314m**

ISLAMABAD: Rice exports from the country during the first two months of the current financial year were recorded at 545,403 metric tons, as against the exports of 616,744 metric tons of the same period of the last year. During the period from July to August 2025, the country earned \$314.388 million by exporting rice as compared to the earnings of \$464.66 million of the corresponding period of the last year. The exports of rice registered negative growth of 32.34 per cent during the period under review as compared to the exports of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Meanwhile, 101,934 metric tons of Basmati rice worth \$107.294 million were also exported during the period under review, as compared to the exports of 186,673 metric tons valued at \$192.609 million of the same period of the last year. In the last two months of the current financial year, 443,469 metric tons of rice other than Basmati rice worth \$207.094 million were exported as compared to the exports of 430,071 metric tons valued at \$272.057 million of the same period of the last year.—APP

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China Believes in ‘Live and Let Live’

SHAMIM SHAHID

IN line with President Xi Jinping’s vision, the People’s Republic of China is moving forward with its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—a transformative project aimed at fostering global connectivity and building a prosperous future for humanity, irrespective of race, religion, or color. Unlike the expansionist designs of some world powers, the BRI reflects China’s long-held philosophy of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and the principle of “live and let live.” Since its inception in 2013, the BRI has grown into one of the most extensive development initiatives of the modern era, linking more than 150 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond. Its vision is rooted in the historical Silk Road, which, for centuries, connected civilizations through trade, culture, and exchange of ideas. By reviving that spirit, China aims not only to boost global commerce but also to rekindle bonds of trust and partnership among nations. Critics often attempt to portray the BRI as a strategic tool to extend Beijing’s influence. Yet, a deeper look reveals a different picture. China is not engaged in a race for political, military, or industrial supremacy. Rather, it is pursuing trust-building through development, connectivity, and respect for international norms. Today, BRI has moved far beyond abstract concepts. It is visible in roads, ports, energy projects, and digital corridors that have begun reshaping the economic landscape of partner countries. These tangible results are steadily reinforcing global faith in China’s role as a neutral, credible, and constructive partner. In contrast, the United States and some of its allies have relied heavily on military interventions, aggressive diplomacy, and economic sanctions. Such policies have often pushed the world into hostility and confrontation, leaving behind instability in regions like Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan. China, on the other hand, has chosen a markedly different path—advocating peace, stability, and cooperation over conflict. The BRI seeks to restore intercontinental linkages with an emphasis on security, mutual development, and shared prosperity, thereby offering an alternative to divisive power politics. For China, Pakistan occupies a special place in the BRI framework. Islamabad has been regarded as Beijing’s most reliable partner and a central pillar of the initiative. Despite deep involvement in Pakistan’s economic and industrial development, China has scrupulously respected Islamabad’s sovereignty and refrained from interfering in its domestic affairs. At the same time, China has strongly supported Pakistan in its fight against terrorism and extremism. After the launch of the National Action Plan (NAP) in 2014, Beijing repeatedly underscored the need for its effective implementation as a way to restore durable peace. Chinese policymakers have consistently argued that Pakistan, having suffered immensely from terrorism, deserves international backing in its pursuit of stability and security.

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China’s cooperation with Pakistan spans agriculture, communications, mining, IT, health, and education. Recently, the two countries signed ten new agreements covering diverse sectors, including new industrial blocks, further demonstrating Beijing’s long-term commitment. Special attention has been directed toward Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where experts believe that effective use of mineral and agricultural resources could turn the province into one of Pakistan’s most prosperous regions—provided that peace and security are firmly established. One of China’s most notable foreign policy strengths is its ability to maintain balance in South Asia. While Pakistan is considered Beijing’s “iron brother,” China has also maintained valuable relations with India, despite longstanding border disputes. Chinese diplomats often stress the importance of reducing hostility between Islamabad and New Delhi, emphasizing dialogue over confrontation and rejecting proxy wars as a legitimate tool of statecraft. China’s balancing efforts also extend to Afghanistan. Beijing has worked quietly to bring Pakistan and the Afghan Interim Government closer, especially in addressing cross-border militancy. While acknowledging the Taliban’s limited capacity due to frozen assets and economic hardships, Chinese officials encourage cooperation and reconciliation. Projects such as the Wakhan Corridor, linking Afghanistan directly into the BRI framework, are seen as milestones for regional integration. At the same time, Chinese diplomats have recognized Pakistan’s concerns about militants operating from Afghan soil, urging Kabul to take meaningful steps to curb these elements. While sensitive to international criticism over Pakistan’s repatriation of Afghan nationals, China has remained cautious, emphasizing dialogue and long-term stability rather than confrontation. China’s principled approach is also evident in its reaction to Pakistan’s recent agreements with the United States regarding mineral resources. Beijing has been clear that Pakistan is a sovereign nation and has every right to decide how to utilize its wealth. Yet, Chinese officials also caution that true economic progress can only be achieved if Pakistan establishes durable peace, strengthens internal security, and ends terrorism in all its forms. China’s approach to international relations stands out in today’s polarized world. By anchoring its policies in peace, neutrality, and development, Beijing offers a refreshing departure from the confrontational stance of some global powers. The BRI is not simply about trade routes or infrastructure; it is about reimagining them as pathways of cooperation, prosperity, and harmony. For Pakistan, this partnership represents far more than economic investment. It is a lifeline—one that promises industrial growth, agricultural revival, and regional stability. More importantly, it offers a shared future built on trust, respect, and a vision of collective prosperity. As the world grapples with multiple crises—from wars and economic recessions to climate change—the philosophy of “live and let live” championed by China under President Xi Jinping provides a constructive alternative. The Belt and Road Initiative is not just about infrastructure; it is about building bridges—between continents, between economies, and above all, between peoples. For Pakistan, and indeed for much of the world, the BRI holds the promise of peace and progress. And in that promise lies the hope of a new global order—one based not on dominance, but on cooperation, dignity, and shared humanity.

Pakistan’s Voice of Conscience at United Nations



This intervention was not an isolated act but part of a larger continuum of Ambassador Iftikhar’s work. Again and again at the United Nations, he has projected the suffering of Gaza and the West Bank with unflinching clarity. In June this year, he declared before the General Assembly that “the situation in Gaza is a stain on our collective conscience. Over fifty-five thousand lives have been lost, including eighteen thousand children and twenty-eight thousand women

IN the crowded halls of diplomacy, where words of ten drown in endless speeches, moments arise that define not only the speaker but the nation behind him. Such a moment recently came when Pakistan’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar, stood before the world and dismantled Israel’s attempt to misuse Pakistan’s sacrifices in the fight against terrorism to justify its indiscriminate assault on Gaza. His intervention not only forced an unprecedented apology from Israel’s ambassador, Danny Danon, but also reaffirmed Pakistan’s moral authority as the voice of conscience for the Muslim world and for oppressed people everywhere. For me, this triumph was not just a matter of national pride but also personal reflection. Two years ago, while waiting for an audience with President Arif Alvi in Islamabad, I met Ambassador Asim Iftikhar as he prepared to assume his responsibilities as Pakistan’s envoy to France. In those quiet minutes, I found him to be articulate, deeply thoughtful, and radiating professionalism. There was in his demeanor a rare blend of intellectual precision and quiet confidence, qualities that I felt would take him far in representing Pakistan. That impression, formed in the corridors of the presidency, has since been vindicated in the most remarkable way, culminating in his recent performance at the United Nations where he shone not only as Pakistan’s voice but as the spokesperson of the Muslim world. The confrontation that revealed his strength of character unfolded when the Israeli ambassador attempted to draw an analogy between Israel’s bombardment of Gaza and the U.S. operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan, which killed Osama bin Laden. It was a deliberate distortion, intended to cloak genocide in the language of counterterrorism, and it invoked Pakistan’s history in a way that was both misleading and offensive. Ambassador Iftikhar rose with words that pierced the façade. He reminded the world that Pakistan had been a frontline state in the global fight against terrorism, losing more than seventy thousand men, women, and children, dismantling terror networks, and rendering sacrifices unmatched by any other nation. “Pakistan’s record,” he declared, “is bright, recognized worldwide, and written in the blood of its martyrs.” He then turned the analogy on its head, pointing out with clarity that invoking Pakistan’s sacrifices to justify the mass killing of inno-

cents in Gaza was “outrageous, incoherent, and morally indefensible,” for what Israel was doing was not counterterrorism but genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the conversion of Gaza into a slaughterhouse. The chamber fell silent. Rarely does rhetoric give way to truth so powerfully, and rarely is propaganda so effectively exposed. The weight of his words left Israel’s representative cornered, and in a rare act of contrition, Danny Danon publicly apologized to Pakistan, admitting that invoking its name had been inappropriate. It was more than a diplomatic win; it was a narrative triumph, a moment where Pakistan’s honor was defended, its sacrifices acknowledged, and Israel’s distortion dismantled. For Pakistan, it was a reminder of the power of words when spoken with conviction, and for the Muslim world, it was proof that a principled voice could still rise above the noise of power politics. This intervention was not an isolated act but part of a larger continuum of Ambassador Iftikhar’s work. Again and again at the United Nations, he has projected the suffering of Gaza and the West Bank with unflinching clarity. In June this year, he declared before the General Assembly that “the situation in Gaza is a stain on our collective conscience. Over fifty-five thousand lives have been lost, including eighteen thousand children and twenty-eight thousand women. Infrastructure has been razed—homes, hospitals, schools, cultural heritage, places of worship. Famine looms. Humanitarian workers and UN personnel are being attacked with impunity. This is not just a humanitarian catastrophe; it is a collapse of humanity.” These were not the words of a man speaking only for Pakistan. They were the words of a diplomat mobilizing the conscience of the world, urging not only the Muslim community but all of civilization to act, to recognize that without justice there can be no peace. He has repeatedly called for the only viable solution: the realization of a two-state solution on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the capital of a sovereign, independent, and contiguous State of Palestine. By vividly describing demolished schools, destroyed hospitals, displaced families, starving children, and the blockade of humanitarian aid, he has carried the Palestinian tragedy from the rubble of Gaza to the chambers of the United Nations, where it cannot be ignored. He has mobilized not just the Muslim world but also neutral states, civil society, and even hesitant Western

capitals to rethink their silence. His interventions have contributed to the momentum behind resolutions in the General Assembly, including Pakistan’s pivotal role in the historic vote affirming the two-state solution, a success story of multilateral diplomacy where Pakistan once again played a leading role. His diplomacy is marked by dignity. In confronting Israel, he did not descend into anger or hyperbole. Instead, he marshaled facts, invoked moral clarity, and exposed propaganda with surgical precision. He reminded the world that the fight against terrorism cannot be equated with the slaughter of innocent civilians, and in doing so, he not only defended Pakistan’s honor but also gave voice to the millions of Palestinians trapped under bombardment and occupation. His words carried the weight of truth, and truth compelled even Israel, often shielded by its allies, to apologize. This was Pakistan at its finest—firm, dignified, principled. It was not just defending its own history but championing the cause of justice for Palestine, exposing tyranny, and mobilizing the conscience of the world. For me, watching this unfold brought back that first impression I had of him in Islamabad, a man destined to leave his mark. He has not only fulfilled that promise but exceeded it, standing tall as a diplomat whose words moved nations and whose voice gave hope to the oppressed. The United Nations may often be a theater of speeches with little consequence, but sometimes, words alter the moral landscape. Through Ambassador Asim Iftikhar, Pakistan has shown that truth, when spoken with conviction, can silence distortion, compel apologies, and remind the world that dignity and justice still matter. In that chamber, Pakistan’s voice was heard and respected. It was the voice of a nation that has suffered and sacrificed, yet continues to stand for justice—not only for itself but for all oppressed peoples. And in that moment, Pakistan reminded the world that diplomacy, at its best, is not about power but about conscience, and that conscience, when articulated with courage, can still shake the foundations of injustice. – Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attache to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC Macomb, Michigan, USA

Trump’s UK visit benefits both sides of the Atlantic

Luke Coffey

High-stakes diplomacy and statecraft often come down to personalities. European leaders miscalculated in Trump’s first term by failing to engage with his personality and, instead, joining the anti-Trump bandwagon. By contrast, Europe’s new approach has already produced real results. For example, the US and the EU recently agreed on what some claim is the largest trade deal in history — something unthinkable during Trump’s first term. NATO members have committed to spending 5 percent of their gross domestic product on defense, far beyond previous levels. And it seems that Trump himself is starting to shift on Ukraine

US President Donald Trump’s state visit to the UK this week offered an interesting reminder of how far US-European relations have come during his second administration compared with his first. The images from England were stunning: smartly dressed soldiers, a horse-drawn carriage procession, all the trappings of a state dinner glistening in gold, and with everything revolving around the US leader. In fact, Trump’s visit made history. He is the first elected leader to be hosted for two state visits to the UK. Keir Starmer’s invitation — personally delivered during the UK prime minister’s first meeting with Trump in the Oval Office in February — set the stage for the occasion, and also for the broader tone of US-European relations in Trump’s second term. It is worth remembering how rocky US-European relations were during Trump’s first White House tenure. Senior European officials and leaders openly mocked the US leader in public and on social media. Trump, in turn, hit back with sharp attacks. Only a few European leaders at the time knew how to manage the relationship. Jens Stoltenberg, then NATO secretary-general and now Norway’s finance minister, was perhaps the most effective, even earning the nickname “the Trump Whisperer.” Emmanuel Macron, France’s president, also managed to build a productive relationship with Trump. But most of Europe’s elite were counting down the days until Trump departed the Oval Office. This time, the situation is very different. European leaders across the political spectrum have demonstrated an ability to engage with Trump, unlike many of their predecessors in his first term. This has led to a healthier transatlantic relationship at a time when there are many geopolitical challenges. What is the secret? The answer is to focus on the person, not just the position. Starmer understood that Trump admires the British monarchy, and a handwritten letter from King Charles inviting him to an unprecedented second state visit was well received. Finland’s President, Alexander Stubb,

has become one of the most effective communicators with Trump on Ukraine. His path to the Oval Office was not through formal policy channels but on the golf course, having once played as a college-level golfer in the US. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, aware of Trump’s pride in his family heritage, brought a framed copy of the US leader’s great-grandfather’s German birth certificate during his first Oval Office meeting with him. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who is more ideologically aligned with Trump, has also found it easier to engage, stressing issues of sovereignty and migration where she and Trump share common ground. High-stakes diplomacy and statecraft often come down to personalities. European leaders miscalculated in Trump’s first term by failing to engage with his personality and, instead, joining the anti-Trump bandwagon. By contrast, Europe’s new approach has already produced real results. For example, the US and the EU recently agreed on what some claim is the largest trade deal in history — something unthinkable during Trump’s first term. NATO members have committed to spending 5 percent of their gross domestic product on defense, far beyond previous levels. And it seems that Trump himself is starting to shift on Ukraine. Previously highly critical of US military support, he now facilitates large aid packages of American-made weapons funded by Europe. This marks a dramatic shift from the tensions of his first term, when he openly questioned NATO’s value and European leaders feared US abandonment. Had anyone predicted these outcomes before January 2025, it would have seemed unimaginable. Yet Trump thrives on deal-making. He enjoys bargaining, negotiating, and being the center of attention. He also respects tough negotiating tactics from European leaders. The best example is Volodymyr Zelensky. Of all European leaders, Ukraine’s president faced the greatest difficulties with Trump in the early days of his second term. But over time, Zelensky adjusted his approach and became one of

the most effective advocates for his country with Trump. The minerals deal between Ukraine and the US, signed after weeks of grueling negotiations and even a public Oval Office falling-out, illustrates this evolution. Zelensky learned to work with Trump on personal terms, becoming the enabler of Trump’s peace proposal and making the Kremlin look like the obstacle. The result has been stronger US-Ukraine cooperation. This is good not only for Europe but for the US as well. Although some in Trump’s administration take an isolationist world view, Europe’s importance is undeniable. Europe is America’s most important single trading partner, largest export market, and biggest source of foreign direct investment. The economic well-being and security of the US are deeply tied to Europe’s, as the 20th century clearly demonstrated. Even though many around Trump’s inner circle often criticize and complain about Europe, deep down they know how important the region is to the US. Even Vice President JD Vance, who has been highly critical of many political issues in Europe, especially those relating to free speech, recently found himself vacationing in the UK with his family. The symbolism of such a trip should not be overlooked: It shows that despite the rhetoric, the cultural, personal, and economic bonds between the US and Europe run deep. It is, therefore, fortunate that European leaders have adapted their approach to Trump. By appealing to his instincts and personality, they have opened the door to a healthier and more pragmatic transatlantic relationship. For his part, Trump has responded to these gestures of goodwill by advancing cooperation rather than confrontation. The lesson is simple. Diplomacy is often about personalities as much as policies. In Trump’s case, European leaders now understand that engaging with the man himself is the best way to ensure good relations for both sides of the Atlantic. – Luke Coffey is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. X: @LukeDCoffey

Briefs

Doors not closed' for others to join Pak...

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pledging to treat any aggression against one country as aggression against both. The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia pact was signed during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's state visit to Riyadh on September 17, where he was received by Crown Prince and PM Mohammed bin Salman at Al-Yamamah Palace. "This agreement, which reflects the shared commitment of both nations to enhance their security and to achieve security and peace in the region and the world, aims to develop aspects of defence cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression. The agreement states that any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both," a statement from the prime minister's office said. Experts have described the agreement as a "historic and unprecedented development", which came days after Israel launched a strike against Qatar, targeting Hamas leaders in Doha, a move that sparked outrage among Muslim nations and world leaders alike

'Pak-Saudi defence pact not...

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In his press briefing, the spokesperson added that during the visit, official-level talks were held and high-level delegations participated. The spokesperson said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia shared a unique bond of brotherhood and cooperation, with the Pakistani people holding deep reverence for the land of the Two Holy Mosques. He noted that defence cooperation since the 1960s had remained a cornerstone of ties and the two leaders were determined to further strengthen relations. Khan said both sides reviewed their historic and strategic relations and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest.

ATC rejects PTI plea seeking...

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The prosecutor said submitting an application against Imran's appearance via video link "is tantamount to creating hurdles in the trial and wasting time". He said it was the defence lawyer's right to approach the superior court against the notification for transferring trial proceedings from jail to the ATC, but the trial could not be stopped. During his arguments, Imran's lawyer, Faisal Malik, said, "We demand fair trial from the court." He added that a fair trial was conditional upon the accused being physically present in the court. He informed the ATC that they had received a copy of the provincial government's notification yesterday, and they would approach the higher court against it. The judge then asked Malik whether he wanted to present any more arguments on the matter. At that, the defence counsel sought some time for consultation with his legal team.

Indian army driven by...

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support and abatement," Lt Gen Chaudhry said while speaking during an interview with a German news outlet on September 5. With regards to the evidence of Indian-backed terrorism, Lt Gen Chaudhry recalled that at least six dossiers — from 2009 to 2023 — had been issued and provided by Pakistan to the international community reflecting Indian involvement in terrorism inside Pakistan. Highlighting the country's ongoing efforts to root out the menace of terrorism, the ISPR chief said that the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have carried out as many as 47,900 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) across the country in the ongoing year where at least 1,016 terrorists were gunned down and there had been a total of 762 martyrdoms — including nearly 300 civilians.

PMYP-Qalandars trials draw huge youth participation

"This entire journey is only possible because of the tremendous support of our Prime Minister, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and HEC"

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) cricket talent hunt, powered by Lahore Qalandars, continued its inspiring journey across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with consecutive trials held in Kohat, Abbottabad, and Peshawar. The events witnessed overwhelming participation, as thousands of young boys and girls turned up brimming with energy, determination, and dreams of representing Pakistan on the bigger stage. The nationwide initiative, aimed at unearthing the country's next generation of cricket stars, has been met with resounding enthusiasm at every stop. In Kohat, Abbottabad, and Peshawar, aspiring cricketers displayed outstanding passion, discipline, and resilience, reflecting the deep-rooted cricket culture of the province. With Lahore Qalandars' professional setup providing technical expertise and structured opportunities, the trials have not only given youngsters a platform to showcase their skills but also instilled belief and confidence that their talent will be recognized at the highest levels.



CEO Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana extended heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for their vision and extraordinary support in empowering

youth and women through cricket. "This entire journey is only possible because of the tremendous support of our Prime Minister, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and HEC. Their commitment to youth and women's crick-

et is commendable. I also want to thank the youth of Pakistan, who came out in huge numbers, turning these trials into a festival of cricket and hope. Their passion assures us that Pakistan's cricketing future is in safe hands," said Atif Rana.



Australia skipper Pat Cummins 'hopeful' of playing in Ashes

DNA

DUBAI: Australia skipper Pat Cummins said Friday he hoped to play in all five Ashes Tests against England but conceded he will need to see how his back injury holds up, local media said. Pace spearhead Cummins has been ruled out of the October white-ball series against New Zealand and India with "lumbar bone stress". The 32-year-old has not bowled since the Test tour of the West Indies in June-July, and no firm date has been set for his return. Cummins said Friday that although he hopes to be part of the Ashes, he would need to "wait and see". "There are no hard and fast plans yet," the skipper told reporters. "I'm still doing a bit of gym and keeping things kicking over, but with this kind of injury, it's rest and then we'll build back and kind of work back from the Ashes," he said. "Still really hopeful to be able to be part of the Ashes. But it is a little bit of a wait-and-see." Pat Cummins told reporters he aimed to play in all five Tests, but conceded a decision would have to be made closer to the time. "It's honestly too far out to say. But the aim at the moment is to try and be ready for all of it," he said. Cummins has suffered severe back issues several times over the years, including a flare-up in 2018 that kept him out of action for a full off-season. Australia coach Andrew McDonald said this week he was confident Cummings would play a key part in the Ashes. But he acknowledged to SEN radio that the uncertainty around Cummins "is not ideal", but it was an "overreaction" to say the skipper would not play.

Syed Azhar Ali selected as voting delegate

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cycling Federation has announced that eight representatives from Asia's 45 member countries of the Asian Cycling Confederation Syed Azhar Ali Shah have been selected as voting delegates for the upcoming UCI election meeting. Among them, Muhammad Haroon General and Nisar Ahmed will represent the Pakistan Cycling Federation in Congress, said a press release. The UCI election will take place in Kigali, Rwanda, on September 24. This marks a moment of pride for Pakistan, as the Pakistan Cycling Federation continues to play an active and visible role at the continental level. In addition, the Pakistani delegation has been formally invited by UCI President David Lappartient to attend the World Road Cycling Championships in Kigali. — APP

Asia Cup 2025: Sri Lanka, Bangladesh through as Afghanistan crash out

Kusal Mendis Shines as Sri Lanka Cruise Into Asia Cup 2025 Super Fours, Afghanistan Exit

DNA

ABU DHABI: Kusal Mendis' gutsy half-century propelled Sri Lanka, alongside Bangladesh, into the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2025 Super Fours as Afghanistan crashed out. Set 170, Sri Lanka cruised to a victory in 18.4 overs, losing just four wickets in the process. Mendis anchored the innings with 74* off 52 balls, striking 10 fours, while Kamindu Mendis chipped in with 26 off 13 with the aid of two sixes. The chase started on a shaky note as Sri Lanka lost their inform opener Pathum Nissanka (6) in the second over. Despite the wicket, the Islanders continued on to score briskly. Afghanistan got their second breakthrough in the last over of the powerplay in the form of Kamil Mishara, who departed after scoring four from 10 balls. At this stage, Sri Lanka were 47-2 in 5.2 overs. Meanwhile, Mendis held one end firm and forged two crucial stands. First, he partnered with Kusal Perera for a 45-run partnership and then with skipper Charith

Asalanka for a brief 27-run partnership. Perera and Charith made 28 and 17 runs respectively, which powered them into a strong position. For Afghanistan, Mohammad Nabi, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, and Noor Ahmad picked up one wicket each. Earlier, Mohammad Nabi's counterattacking half-century lifted his side to a respectable total. Opting to bat first, Afghanistan racked up 169-8 in the 11th fixture of the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2025 here at the Zayed Cricket Stadium on Thursday. Afghanistan's openers were off to a flyer, posting 26 runs on the board in 2.1 overs. However, Thushara had other plans, who ripped through the top order with excellent bowling. He first removed Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who made 14 from eight, and then Karim Janat (1) in a span of five balls to rock Afghanistan. As a result, Afghanistan were reduced to 32-2 in three overs. Thushara continued on, and in the fourth over, he removed Sediqlullah Atal to put Sri Lanka in the driving seat. Atal was castled after making 18 from 14 with the aid of two fours and a six.

Haaland hits 50 UCL goals as Manchester City cruise over 10-man Napoli

SPORT DESK

ENGLAND: Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola said Erling Haaland can become the all-time top goalscorer of the Champions League after reaching 50 in record time in the 2-0 win over 10-man Napoli. Haaland reached his half-century in Europe's elite competition in just 49 appearances before Jeremy Doku ensured Guardiola's men got their quest for Champions League glory off to a winning start. "The numbers speak for themselves and how fortunate we are to have him," said Guardiola. Haaland moved to 12th in the all-time scoring Champions League scoring charts and is barely over a third of the way to Cristiano Ronaldo's record 141 goals. But Guardiola believes the 25-year-old has time on his side to reach that milestone. "Along with the two monsters of the past 15 to 20 years, Ronaldo and (Lionel) Messi, Erling is there. In terms of goals, he is unbelievable," added Guardiola. "In that rhythm, he can break the record. If he can play 10 to 12 more years and maintain this progression, absolutely." There was no fairytale return to the Etihad for Kevin De Bruyne as his night was cut short after just 26 minutes as a result of Giovanni Di Lorenzo's early dismissal. De Bruyne was welcomed back like a hero just months

after departing as one of City's greatest players in the club's history. The Belgian's name rang around the Etihad before kick-off, while a series of banners paid homage to the man who contributed nearly 300 goals or assists in 422 matches during his time in Manchester. However, Antonio Conte showed no room for sentiment as he sacrificed the 34-year-old to bolster his defence with the introduction of Mathias Olivera. "I was very sorry I had to make that substitution. I also knew by taking him off, we were going to miss some of the things he could give us," said Conte. "But I don't really see that I had any other option. He understood why I had to make that decision." The game-changing moment came when Di Lorenzo made a desperate lunge to prevent Haaland from running clear on goal and wiped out the Norwegian on 21 minutes. Referee Felix Zwayer initially thought the defender had got a touch on the ball but was instructed by VAR to review and correct his error. Napoli held firm until half-time thanks to some spectacular goalkeeping from Vanja Milinkovic-Savic. The Serbian, who had a brief spell early in his career at Manchester United, produced excellent saves to deny Rodri, Nico O'Riley, and Josko Gvardiol. Even when Milinkovic-Savic appeared beaten in first-half stoppage time, Matteo Politano got back on the line to block Tijjani Reijnders' goalbound effort.

Pak outclass India in Commonwealth Beach Handball opener

Indian handball players opt not to violate the spirit of sports and shook hands with Pakistani players

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan opened their campaign at the Commonwealth Beach Handball Championship with a resounding 2-0 win over archrival India on Thursday. Playing at the Khedhufushi City Beach Handball Court, Pakistan dominated both sets to register a commanding victory. Pakistan clinched the first set 26-9 before stepping up the pace in the second, cruising to a 34-12 finish. Ahmed Hassan Baig delivered a standout performance for Pakistan and was named the man of the match. The event, running from Sept. 18 to 24, features six participating teams. The competition is being played on a league basis, with the top four advancing to the semifinals. Pakistan will next face the Maldives and Sri Lanka on Friday. In a moment of contrast to recent tensions in cricket between the two nations, the Indian handball players opted not to violate the spirit of sports and shook hands with Pakistani players.

Siddiqui foresees PTI's...

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following the directives of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan. Before resigning, the opposition party also decided not to take part in by-elections for national and provincial assemblies last month as part of the strategy to build political pressure. In his remarks, the senator also pointed towards the division among top court judges, which became clearer when four jurists refused to attend a full court meeting summoned by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi, reviewing and approving the SC Rules, 2025, earlier this month. The jurists included senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Ayesha Malik, and Justice Athar Minallah, who wrote a joint letter to the CJP and termed the full court meeting "cosmetic", "not legally valid" and a gathering just for "damage control".

Egypt FM felicitates...

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The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and international developments, underscoring the importance of peace, stability and economic progress. They reaffirmed their commitment to multilateral cooperation and look forward to substantive interactions at 80th session of the UN General Assembly next week.

Govt to protect...

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questions, and issuing legal notices in response is not only unconstitutional and unlawful but also an unjust and coercive tactic. The Minister said such actions are intended to silence journalists and deal a serious blow to democratic culture. He stressed that democratic values require questions to be answered with reason and transparency, not through intimidation or harassment. He further asserted that serving defamation notices and threatening cybercrime charges against journalists is unacceptable under any circumstances. Attaullah Tarar condemned this behavior as a misuse of state authority and power. He warned that such actions harm Pakistan's reputation both domestically and internationally.

GB CM calls on finance...

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adherence to building regulations and environmental laws, particularly in the areas of waste and water management to preserve the local ecosystem. The Minister also recalled his recent visit to Gilgit-Baltistan and discussed the ongoing flood situation and related relief efforts, including release of federal funds. He lauded the progress made in road infrastructure and investments in tourism. The Minister noted that the region is endowed with immense natural beauty and holds huge potential for tourism-led growth. In his remarks, Chief Minister Gulbar Khan apprised the Minister of ongoing infrastructure development efforts. He highlighted that Skardu International Airport is attracting significant traffic and plans are underway to upgrade Gilgit Airport to international status to further boost tourism.

Pakistan extends...

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response to India's continued aggression across the LoC and within Pakistan's territory, which New Delhi claimed were aimed at "terrorist targets". Pakistan downed its six fighter jets, including three Rafale, and dozens of drones. After at least 87 hours, the war between the two nuclear-armed nations ended on May 10 with a ceasefire agreement brokered by the United States. While India's aviation industry has faced heavy losses, the impact on Pakistani aviation has been minimal. This is not the first time Pakistan has imposed such restrictions. Airstrike closures were previously enacted during the 1999 Kargil conflict and the 2019 Pulwama crisis, both instances in which India faced greater aviation disruptions than Pakistan.

Indian Spinner Hails Shaheen Afridi ahead of Asia Cup 2025 Super 4 Clash

Green Shirts to take on arch-rivals for second time in ongoing tournament on September 21

SPORT DESK

DUBAI: With Pakistan set to take on arch-rivals India once again in their Asia Cup 2025 Super Four match on September 21, Indian spinner Kuldeep Yadav has heaped praise on Pakistan's star pacer Shaheen Afridi citing his good form. "Shaheen [Afridi] is in excellent form, a small mistake can be costly [against him]," Kuldeep said during a press conference, adding that the players' motivation was also high in the match against Pakistan. The two sides went up against each other on September 14 in their Group A fixture, where the Men in Blue secured a seven-wicket win after chasing down the Green Shirts' 128-run target. Group A fixtures are yet to be completed, though India and Pakistan have already sealed qualification. India will play their final group-stage match against Oman on Friday at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Group B fixtures concluded on Thursday with Sri Lanka remaining unbeaten, winning all three matches to finish at the top with six points. Bangladesh secured second place with two wins, collecting four points despite a negative net run rate. The Super Four stage begins on Saturday in Dubai, where Bangladesh will face Sri Lanka. On Sunday, arch-rivals Pakistan and India will clash once again at the same venue. Monday has been designated a rest day before Pakistan meet Sri Lanka at the Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi on September 23. The upcoming clash between Pakistan and India is highly anticipated by fans around the world, not only due to the history of their traditional rivalry, but because their first encounter in the ongoing tournament was marred and spiralled into a major controversy after the International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Andy

Pycroft instructed both sides to avoid the customary handshake. India did not stop there. The team also refused to shake hands after the match ended. This did not sit well with the Pakistani side. They registered a protest with the ICC, and the situation escalated. However, days after the match, the referee apologised, following which Pakistan decided to continue with the ongoing event. Super 4 fixtures
• Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka — Dubai, September 20
• Pakistan vs India — Dubai, September 21
• Pakistan vs Sri Lanka — Abu Dhabi, September 23
• Bangladesh vs India — Dubai, September 24
• Pakistan vs Bangladesh — Dubai, September 25
• India vs Sri Lanka — Dubai, September 26
• Final — September 28



Briefs

France warns mayors against flying Palestinian flag next week

PARIS: France's interior ministry has ordered prefects to oppose the display of Palestinian flags on town halls and other public buildings next week when Paris is set to formally recognize the Palestinian state.

"The principle of neutrality in public service prohibits such displays," the interior ministry said in a telegram, a copy of which was seen by AFP on Friday. Any decisions by mayors to fly the Palestinian flag should be referred to courts, the interior ministry said. Israel's war on Gaza is a hot-button issue in France, and several French mayors have already announced their intention to display the Palestinian flag on their town halls next week. On Monday, France is set to formally recognize a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly. The warning from the interior ministry came after Socialist leader Olivier Faure called for the Palestinian flag to be flown on town halls on Monday, when Jewish worshippers also celebrate the Rosh Hashanah holiday, the Jewish New Year. However, the telegram said any such display would amount to "taking sides in an international conflict."

"It is therefore appropriate," the telegram said, "to ask mayors who display such flags on their public buildings to cease doing so and, in the event of refusal or non-compliance" to refer those mayors' decisions to administrative courts.

Israel has been under mounting pressure to wrap up its campaign in Gaza, where the war has created a humanitarian crisis and devastated much of the territory, and to bring home Israeli hostages held there.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Macron of pursuing a policy of "appeasement" of the Hamas militants. Macron said Thursday that recognizing a Palestinian state would isolate Hamas.

Several other leaders have announced their intent to formally recognize the Palestinian state during the UN summit.—APP

Kitchen items' prices ease by 1.34 percent

ISLAMABAD:The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), recorded a decrease of 1.34 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on September 18, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 330.84 points against 335.35 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 4.17 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015=100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs17,732 decreased by 1.43 percent, going down to 322.71 points from last week's 327.39 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs17,733–22,888; Rs22,889–29,517; Rs29,518–44,175 and above Rs44,175 also decreased by 1.59 percent, 1.34 percent, 1.31 percent and 1.23 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.29 percent) items increased, 14 (27.45 percent) items decreased and 19 (37.26 percent) items remained stable. The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (23.11%), chicken (12.74%), electricity charges for Q1 (6.21%), bananas (5.07%), wheat flour (2.60%), onions (1.17%), pulse masoor (0.64%), pulse gram (0.47%) and garlic (0.46%). The items which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included diesel (1.06%), eggs (0.91%), rice basmati broken (0.84%), georgette. — APP

Iraq fails to win US approval to import Turkmen gas via Iran

A deal first proposed in 2023 would have seen Turkmenistan export gas to Iraq through Iran, which lies between the two countries. Under the swap deal, Iran would receive the gas and supply it to Iraq, but this risked violating US sanctions on Tehran — requiring Washington's approval

DUBAI/BAGHDAD: Iraq's attempt to ease its chronic power shortage with gas from Turkmenistan routed through neighboring Iran has failed under US pressure, leaving Baghdad scrambling for alternatives to keep the lights on. Oil-rich Iraq has struggled to provide its citizens with power since the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, forcing many to rely on expensive private generators, causing economic hardship and sparking social unrest. Hussain Saad, a 43-year-old owner of a butcher shop in the Kasra neighborhood of Baghdad, is struggling to protect his livelihood and keep his meat from spoiling in the scorching heat. "This isn't just my suffering — it's the suffering of the entire Iraqi people," he said. A deal first proposed in 2023 would have seen Turkmenistan export gas to Iraq through Iran, which lies between the two countries. Under the swap deal, Iran would receive the gas and supply it to Iraq, but this risked violating US sanctions on Tehran — requiring Washington's approval. That approval never came. US President Trump's administration has doubled down on a "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran. Media spoke to four Iraqi officials and reviewed seven official documents to reveal how Baghdad had sought Washington's approval for months to let it import roughly 5 billion cubic meters (bcm) of Turkmen gas via Iran. Iraq sought to import 5.025 bcm of Turk-

men gas a year, facilitated via Iran's state-owned National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), according to a draft contract of the swap deal seen by Reuters. Iran would receive no money, but would get gas for its own needs amounting to no more than 23 percent of the overall daily volume coming from Turkmenistan, a document showed. Baghdad also offered to allow a third-party international monitor to oversee the deal's compliance with US sanctions and anti-money laundering rules, the same document showed. But despite months of lobbying, US objections ultimately scuppered the deal as Washington ramps up pressure on Iran over its nuclear plans. That has left Baghdad facing an increasingly difficult balancing act between its main allies in Washington and Tehran. "Proceeding (with the Turkmen deal) could trigger sanctions on Iraqi banks and financial institutions, so the contract is currently suspended," Adel Karim, adviser to Iraq's prime minister for electricity affairs, told Reuters. The US Treasury declined to comment but a US source familiar with the matter said the Trump administration would not approve arrangements that could benefit Iran, though it was working with Iraq on its energy needs. The Iranian government, oil ministry, NIGC and Turkmen foreign ministry did not respond to Reuters requests for comment. I Iraq has relied on gas and power imports from Iran for the past decade.

Iranian gas covers nearly a third of Iraq's power generation and in 2024 gas imports reached 9.5 bcm, said an Iraqi power official, who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue. "If we lose Iranian gas, we'll face a serious problem in electricity generation," Karim said. Although Iraq is OPEC's second-largest oil producer, it burns off much of the gas it produces alongside oil due to under-investment and lack of infrastructure to capture and process it. The country extracted just 11 bcm of gas in 2023 that could be used for power or industrial needs, according to the IEA. Iraq's gas needs vary seasonally, with demand surging in summer to around 45 million cubic meters (mcm) per day, Karim said, otherwise dropping to 10–20 mcm per day. In March, the Trump administration ended a sanctions waiver that since 2018 had allowed Iraq to pay for Iranian power, curtailing imports. The lack of gas supplies from Iran led to a loss of about 3,000 megawatts of power generation since the waivers ended and peak summer demand set in — more than 10 percent of Iraq's roughly 28,000 megawatts of total capacity, Karim said, enough to impact around 2.5 million homes according to Iraqi electricity officials. Baghdad hoped to diversify its supply and avoid the risk of breaching sanctions with the Turkmen deal, sources said and documents showed. Failing to se-

cure that deal could jeopardize Baghdad's ability to sustain gas plants during peak summer demand, Iraq's electricity ministry warned in a letter to state-owned Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI) on May 27, three months prior to a nationwide blackout in August. With the Turkmen route blocked, Iraq is exploring alternatives to plug its power needs gap, including building infrastructure to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar. Hamza Abdul Baqi, head of the state-owned South Gas Company, told Reuters in March that Iraq would lease a floating LNG terminal to handle Qatari and Omani gas. The government had tasked the oil ministry with finding alternatives to Iranian gas in case the US decided to restrict it, he said. The country has also signed deals with global oil majors such as TotalEnergies, BP and Chevron over the past two years to speed up its gas projects. French oil major TotalEnergies said this week it has launched the second development phase at Iraq's Ratawi field, the final stages of a \$27 billion project that aims to boost Iraq's oil, gas and power production. Britain's BP said in March it has received final government approval for the redevelopment of Iraq's giant Kirkuk oilfields, with an initial plan to produce 3 billion barrels of oil equivalent. "We're expanding our gas-fired power plants," Karim said. "We'll need more gas and more sources."

Iraq says senior Daesh leader killed in Syria

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi counterterrorism service said on Friday that a senior Daesh leader was killed in a security operation in Syria carried out in coordination with the US-led international coalition. The commander, Omar Abdul Qader Bassam, known as "Abdul Rahman Al-Halabi," was the group's head of external operations and security, the service said. He was accused of overseeing attacks in multiple countries, including the bombing of Iran's embassy in Lebanon, and planning other operations in Europe and the United States that were ultimately foiled through intelligence work, it added. US Central Command has carried out a series of strikes targeting Daesh figures in Syria. US officials have warned the group is hoping to stage a comeback in the country following the fall of Syrian President Bashar Assad last December.—APP

Hong Kong to evacuate 6,000 after WWII-era bomb found

HONG KONG: Hong Kong planned to evacuate thousands of residents on Friday as a bomb left over from World War II was discovered at a construction site. Police said that the bomb measured approximately 1.5 meters (4.9 feet) in length and weighed about 450 kilograms (1,000 pounds), adding that they believed it remained "fully functional."

"Due to the extremely high risks involved in dismantling and disposing of the bomb, we must activate the emergency evacuation plan," said Hong Kong Police's district commander Andy Chan.

About 6,000 people from 18 residential buildings in the Quarry Bay area will be evacuated Friday night, with demolition work set to begin early Saturday morning, police added. Hong Kong was an early target in what would become a full-blown Asian campaign for imperial Japan during the Second World War. The city saw fierce fighting between Japanese and Allied forces during wartime, and hikers and construction workers still occasionally discover unexploded bombs in the territory nearly 100 years later. In May 2018, a bomb was discovered in Hong Kong's Wan Chai district, which led authorities to evacuate 1,200 residents. Police said the unexploded ordnance unearthed on Friday was of the same type as the one found in 2018. At that time, the bomb disposal process took about 20 hours to complete.—APP

Iraq nears deal to restart pipeline oil exports from Kurdistan to Türkiye

BAGHDAD: Iraq, OPEC's second-largest producer, has given preliminary approval to a plan to resume pipeline oil exports from its semi-autonomous Kurdistan region through Türkiye following delays to a hoped-for restart, sources familiar with the talks told Reuters.

The deal between Iraq's federal government, the Kurdistan Regional Government and international oil companies could add at least 230,000 barrels per day of fresh supplies at a time OPEC producers are raising output to regain market share. Iraq exports around 3.4 million barrels of oil per day from its southern ports, but the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline in the north has been shut since March 2023 after an arbitration court ruled that Türkiye should pay \$1.5 billion in damages for unauthorized exports between 2014 and 2018. Türkiye is appealing the ruling.

Ankara has since said it is willing to restart exports, but the flows remain suspended because of ongoing legal and political disputes between Baghdad, the Kurdistan Regional Government in Irbil, and the international oil companies. _APP

Ali Pervaiz chairs meeting on RLNG domestic connections

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik reviewed a comprehensive rollout plan on Friday for providing Regasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG)

ern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL). During the meeting, the Managing Directors of SNGPL and SSGCL presented a detailed strategy for the effective implementation

able to apply online through the official websites and mobile applications of the Sui companies, in addition to the traditional method of applying at their local offices. Ali



Islamabad: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik chaired a meeting to review the comprehensive roll-out plan for providing RLNG connections to domestic users across the country.

connections to domestic consumers. The meeting, chaired by the minister, was attended by the Secretary of Petroleum, the Additional Secretary, the Director General of Gas, representatives of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), and the Managing Directors of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui South-

ern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL). During the meeting, the Managing Directors of SNGPL and SSGCL presented a detailed strategy for the effective implementation

Pervaiz Malik directed the management of both gas utilities to formulate a robust and consumer-friendly mechanism to ensure the seamless facilitation of the public. He emphasised that this initiative is the priority of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to meet the growing public demand for clean and affordable energy.

Israeli strike on south Lebanon kills one: ministry

BEIRUT: An Israeli strike on southern Lebanon killed one person and wounded three others on Friday, Lebanon's health ministry said, in the latest attack despite a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. In a statement, the ministry said that an "Israeli airstrike on a vehicle" in Tibnin, southern Lebanon killed one person and wounded three, describing it as a preliminary toll. The Israeli army did not immediately comment on the incident. The attack comes a day after Israel bombed several southern Lebanese towns it had warned residents to evacuate. The Israeli military said it struck on Thursday several weapons storage facilities belonging to Hezbollah's elite Radwan force in southern Lebanon. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned the attacks and "the silence of the countries who had sponsored" the ceasefire, which he said "encourages further aggression." "The time has come to put an immediate end to these blatant violations of Lebanon's sovereignty," he said. United Nations peacekeepers in southern Lebanon said the attacks "put the fragile stability that has been built since November of last year at risk," calling on Israel to "refrain from any further strikes and to fully withdraw from Lebanese territory." Israel has repeatedly bombed Lebanon despite a November ceasefire that sought to end over a year of hostilities with Hezbollah. _APP

UN warns of deepening ethnic violence in Sudan

GENEVA: Sudan's brutal war has intensified since the start of the year, with surging numbers of summary executions and a deeply worrying increase in ethnic violence, the United Nations said Friday. The UN rights chief Volker Turk warned in a statement of "increasing ethnicization of the conflict" between the regular armed forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which has gripped Sudan since April 2023. The "forgotten" conflict has already killed tens of thousands and displaced millions. And Turk's office detailed in a fresh report how the war had expanded and intensified further during the first six months of the year, "taking on increasingly ethnic and divisive dimensions, with a devastating impact on the civilian population." In North Darfur particularly, "violence is being directed on an ethnic basis," Li Fung, the rights office representative for Sudan, told reporters in Geneva. "This is very, very worrying," she said. The war has effectively split the country, with the army holding the north, east and center, while the RSF dominates parts of the south and nearly all of the western Darfur region. The first half of the year saw "a continued pervasiveness of sexual violence, indiscriminate attacks, and the widespread use of retaliatory violence against civilians, particularly on an ethnic basis," Friday's report said. New trends include the use of drones in attacks on civilian sites and in the north and east of the country, which have up to now been largely spared by the war, it said. The rights office said it had documented the deaths of at least 3,384 civilians in the conflict in the first six months of 2025, but acknowledged the true numbers were likely far higher. That represents about 80 percent of the total number of killings documented in the whole of last year, it said. Most of the civilians killed died in the hostilities, but at least 990 civilians were killed outside the fighting, including through summary executions, the office said. It noted "a surge in summary executions" between February and April in Khartoum as government forces recaptured territory previously controlled by RSF, and "campaigns of apparent reprisals against alleged collaborators ensued." The conflict in Sudan has created what the UN has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with famine declared in several areas and a severe cholera outbreak. More than 2,500 people have already died of the acute intestinal infection in the country, the International Committee of the Red Cross said, citing figures from Sudanese authorities. That "is a big, big number, ... that will certainly increase," Patrick Youssef, ICRC's regional director for Africa, told reporters in Geneva. Turk urged a rapid end to the conflict. "Many more lives will be lost without urgent action to protect civilians and without the rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid," he said.—DNA

Massive attack join Israel boycott campaign

PARIS: British trip-hop group Massive Attack announced they are joining a new music industry initiative to block their music in Israel and have also asked for their songs to be removed from Spotify. The Bristol natives said they had joined "No Music for Genocide," a collective of musicians modelled on the "Film Workers for Palestine" group, which has also called for a cultural boycott of Israel over the war in Gaza. "We'd appeal to all musicians to transfer their sadness, anger and artistic contributions into a coherent, reasonable and vital action to end the unspeakable hell being visited upon the Palestinians hour after hour," the group wrote on Instagram on Thursday. A website for "No Music for Genocide" says it brings together more than 400 artists and labels that "have geo-blocked and removed their music" from Israel in protest at the country's Gaza

campaign. It offers advice to artists about how to geo-block their songs, so they are unavailable on streaming platforms in Israel. Massive Attack also said they had asked their label to remove all their songs from Spotify over investments in a European defense start-up by the CEO and co-founder of the Swedish streaming platform, Daniel Ek. Ek runs a private equity company that led a consortium of investors which injected 600 million euros (\$700 million) in European military artificial intelligence and drone maker Helsing in June. Ek is also chairman of Helsing, which says on its website that its mission is "to protect our democratic values and open societies." Massive Attack, who are long-time anti-war campaigners, said that "the hard-earned money of fans and the creative endeavours of musicians funds lethal, dystopian technologies." AFP has approached Spotify for

comment, but a spokesperson told the Guardian newspaper that Spotify and Helsing were "totally separate companies", and Helsing was "not involved in Gaza." A statement from Helsing said its technology was not being used outside of Europe. "Our technology is deployed to European countries for deterrence and for defense against the Russian aggression in Ukraine only," it said. Like many other campaigners, Massive Attack cited the cultural boycott of apartheid-era South Africa as inspiration for their actions against Israel. "Complicity with that state was considered unacceptable," the group said. They also took part in a major concert in London on Wednesday evening called "Together for Palestine" that featured top British artists including indie band Bastille, Brian Eno and DJ Jamie xx.—APP

German conservative party freezes aid for West Bank

BERLIN: A conservative party in Germany's governing coalition said Friday it would temporarily block aid promised to the Palestinian Authority in the occupied West Bank over concerns the cash could be used against Israel. Development Minister Reem Alabali Radovan of the center-left Social Democrats (SPD) had pledged 30 million euros (\$35 million) for the Palestinian Authority after a trip to the region last month. But Alexander Hoffmann, parliamentary leader of the conservative CSU party, told the Bild newspaper the party wanted further "clarification." Hoffmann's spokesman confirmed to AFP his comments that "humanitarian help is important, but it must be clear which concrete projects the money will be used for before the funds are approved." "Projects that endanger Israel's security must be excluded." German government sources said the money would be used to pay the salaries of health care and education workers and be disbursed under an EU-run mechanism. The CSU is the Bavarian counterpart to Chancellor Friedrich Merz's CDU and has been among Israel's staunchest supporters in Germany, while the SPD has been somewhat more critical. _APP

Briefs

Nepal's ousted PM calls for probe into deadly protests

DNA

KATMANDU: Nepal's deposed prime minister KP Sharma Oli said Friday his government did not order police to open fire on protesters and called for a probe into violence that killed at least 73 people. In his first statement since stepping down last Tuesday, the 73-year-old said "infiltrators" were responsible for inciting bloodshed during youth-led protests that swept the Himalayan nation beginning September 8. The demonstrations were sparked by a short-lived ban on social media, but fueled by anger at corruption and long-standing economic woes. At least 19 people were killed in a crackdown on the first day. "Those who infiltrated (the protests) incited violence, resulting in the tragic loss of young lives," Oli said in a post in Nepali on Facebook. "The government did not issue orders to target the protesters and fire shots," Oli said, as the country marked its constitution day Friday. Mobs ransacked government offices, set fire to a newly opened Hilton hotel and attacked other symbols of authority – including Oli's residence – as fury swept across towns and cities.

Pak joins Arab payments platform in landmark integration move

Arrangement to enable cross-border transactions, but only allow inflows from overseas Pakistanis

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to integrate its digital payment system with the Arab world's Buna platform, operated by the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF). The arrangement will enable cross-border transactions, but only allow inflows from overseas Pakistanis, with no provision for outward transfers. The development was disclosed during a meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by Syed Naveed Qamar, at an IT park in Islamabad on Thursday. Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmed informed the NA panel that transactions under the digital payment system hovered around the Rs1 trillion mark on a per-annum basis when Raast was launched, but now the volume of transactions under the digital payment system crosses Rs1 trillion mark in nine days.

Indonesian students suffer food poisoning

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Over 800 students fell sick in two cases of mass food poisoning this week after consuming free school meals sponsored by the Indonesian government, officials said on Friday. One case affected more than 500 and was the biggest outbreak yet under President Prabowo Subianto's flagship program. From January, when the program was launched, up to August, over 4,000 children have been hit by food poisoning after consuming the meals, according to Indonesian-based think tank, the Institute for Development of Economics and Finance, raising questions on oversight. In Indonesia's West Java province, 569 students from five schools in the Garut region experienced nausea and vomiting on Wednesday after consuming chicken and rice provided by one free meals kitchen a day earlier, Nurdin Yana, the secretary of Garut regional government, told media.

Pakistan calls it 'dark moment'

US vetoes UNSC's Gaza ceasefire resolution

The resolution also demanded the release of all hostages held by Hamas and for Israel to lift all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid and ensure that it is safely distributed to the population, in particular by UN agencies and partners

UNITED NATIONS: The United States vetoed on Thursday a UN Security Council resolution that would have called for an unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and that Israel lift all restrictions on aid deliveries to the besieged Palestinian enclave, with Pakistan "profoundly" regretting the exercise of veto against a solely humanitarian text. The resolution, sponsored by the 10 elected members of the 15-member Council, received 14 votes in favour. It was the sixth time the US had cast a veto in the Council over the nearly two-year Israeli war in Gaza. More than 65,000 Palestinians have been killed since the war began, according to the Gaza health authorities. Thursday's negative vote was cast as the Council held its 10,000th meeting against the backdrop of famine and hunger spreading in the besieged enclave and an ongoing Israeli offensive to take full control of Gaza City. The resolution also demanded the release of all hostages held by Hamas and for Israel to lift all restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid and ensure that it is safely distributed to the population, in particular by UN agencies and partners. The Council's 10 non-permanent members, who submitted the draft, are: Pakistan, Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, Panama, South Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and

Somalia. The five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – have the right to veto any resolution and all have exercised this power at some time. Thursday's Security Council meeting was presided over by South Korea, which holds the rotating presidency for the month of September. Speaking prior to the vote, US delegate Morgan Ortogus stated that Washington's opposition to the resolution "will come as no surprise" as it fails to condemn Hamas or recognize Israel's right to defend itself. The text also "wrongly legitimizes the false narratives benefiting Hamas, which have sadly found currency in this Council," she said. "This

resolution also refuses to acknowledge and seeks to return to a failed system that has allowed Hamas to enrich and strengthen itself at the expense of civilians in need." Pakistan's UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad regretted the US action "profoundly", saying, "On the eve of the 80th General Assembly Session and the High-Level week, and 10,000th meeting – what a dark moment – in this Chamber?" "What prevented the Council from acting was the exercise of the veto," the Pakistani envoy asserted. "That carries a heavy responsibility. And that is where the apology must lie," he said. "In moments of such grave human suffering, preventing the Coun-

cil from fulfilling its mandate risks being seen as enabling the continuation of that suffering. Those who have chosen this course must review their position." Highlighting the plight of the people of Gaza who are trapped between relentless bombardment and a suffocating blockade, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said, "In that grim setting, today's failure sends a dangerous message: that the lives of two million besieged Palestinians are deemed expendable and can be subordinated to political considerations. "Every hour of obstruction deepens the wound – and aggravates the suffering of the people of Gaza. Each failure compounds the cost – also for the credibility of this Council," he added. "The majority of this Council has acted responsibly – We have fulfilled our duty under the Charter. The shortcomings lie not with the Council as a whole, but with the constraints imposed on it." In this regard, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad pointed out that famine threatens to spread across the Gaza Strip; the Israeli onslaught is now claiming dozens of lives daily and could uproot a million people; the expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank exposes the entrenched nature of occupation and its true intentions – a death knell to the two-state solution. – APP

Taliban release British couple

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: The Taliban released on Friday a British couple held in Afghanistan for more than seven months on undisclosed charges, an official said, part of a wider effort to get their government recognized internationally years after taking power. The case of Peter and Barbie Reynolds, aged 80 and 75, underlined the concerns of the West over the actions of the Taliban since they overthrew the country's US-backed government in a 2021 lightning offensive. The Reynolds had lived in Afghanistan for 18 years and run an education and training organization in the country's central province of Bamiyan, choosing to remain in the country after the Taliban seized power. Qatar, an energy-rich nation on the Arabian Peninsula that mediated talks between the US and the Taliban before the American withdrawal, helped in releasing the Reynolds. The couple left Afghanistan on Friday, a diplomat said. The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations in the case. The Reynolds' family members in the United Kingdom repeatedly called for the couple's release, saying they were being mistreated and held on undisclosed charges.

Dispute within the IHC

Five judges petition SC over benches, rosters, case transfers

Justices Kayani, Sattar, Jahangiri and Khan's petitions, all of which bear the same request. According to information available to a Dawn.com court correspondent, Justice Rafat's petition is similar to those of the other four judges



COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Five judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) – namely Justices Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Babar Sattar, Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri, Saman Rafat and Ejaz Ishaq Khan – submitted separate petitions at the Supreme Court (SC) on Friday. Justice Kayani, Sattar, Jahangiri and Khan's petitions, all of which bear the same request. According to information available to a Dawn.com court correspondent, Justice Rafat's petition is similar to those of the other four judges. In their petitions, the judges moved the SC to declare that administrative powers could not be "deployed to undermine or trump the judicial powers" of the high court judges. They further asked the apex court to declare that a chief justice of the high court was "not authorised to constitute benches or transfer cases" once a high court bench had been assigned a case. Moreover, the petitions sought the declaration that the chief justice of a high court "cannot exclude available judges from the roster, at will, and use the power to issue a roster to oust judges from performing judicial functions". The SC was also urged to declare "that the constitution of benches, transfer of cases and issuance of roster can

only be done in accordance with the rules adopted by the entirety of the High Court under Article 202 (rules of procedure), read with Article 192(1) (constitution of high court) of the Constitution". The petitioners also asked the apex court to declare that the "decision-making" with respect to the constitution of benches, issuance of roster and transfer of cases could not "solely rest in the hands of the chief justice". "Declare that the 'Doctrine of the Master of the Roster' has definitely been set aside in Supreme Court decisions," the petitions read. The petitions further sought the declaration that formation of IHC's administration committees through notifications dated February 3 and July 15 and all the actions taken by them "suffer from mala fide in law and are illegal". They asked the court to set aside these notifications and all actions taken by the administration committees constituted under them for "being illegal and coram non judice". Moreover, they stated: "Declare that the adoption and approval of Islamabad High Court Practice and Procedure Rules, 2025, by the illegally constituted administration committee, and its notification without prior approval of the high court is in breach of Article 192(1) and Article 202 of the Constitution, and its subsequent endorsement in September, are illegal and of no legal effect."



URUMQI: President Asif Ali Zardari witnessing the signing of an MoU between Mr Wang Shanpu, Chairman of Luoyang Modern Biology Group, and Mr Nasir Hussain Shah, Provincial Minister for Energy, Development and Planning, Government of Sindh, to promote modern livestock industry technologies and enhance collaboration on disease prevention and vaccines. – DNA

Trump and Xi seek TikTok win to break US-China gridlock

Tik Tok agreement is at top of agenda alongside trade for leaders' first known call in three months expected on Friday

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping will seek an agreement on Friday to help keep the video app TikTok online in the US and ease tensions between two superpowers locked in a standoff over trade. The agreement is at the top of the agenda alongside trade for the leaders' first known call in three months, expected on Friday morning, US officials said. However, China has not confirmed plans for the call. Trump and Xi's effort to steady relations comes as the two governments have been discussing a potential in-person summit between Xi and Trump during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in South Korea from October 30 to November 1, Reuters has reported. Beijing's sign-off is one of the hurdles Trump needed to clear to keep TikTok open. Congress had ordered the app shut down for US users by January 2025 if its US assets weren't sold by Chinese owner ByteDance. Trump has declined to enforce the law while his administration looks for a new owner, but also because he worries a ban on the app would anger TikTok's huge user base and disrupt political communications. US flag and TikTok logo are seen in this illustration taken January 8, 2025.

Azerbaijan, EU discuss economic cooperation

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov met with Marta Kos, the European Commissioner for Enlargement. During the meeting, they highlighted with satisfaction that the European Union is one of Azerbaijan's key foreign trade partners, with mutual economic relations steadily developing. Successful cooperation in the fields of energy and investment between Azerbaijan and the EU was noted. They emphasized that there are significant prospects for further advancing collaboration in the transport sector. The meeting included an exchange of views on the draft financing agreement for a support project between Azerbaijan and the European Commission, focusing on mine clearance, water resource management, and sustainable development of transport sector. – DNA

