



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan young hockey players talented: Neil

Detailed News On Page-06

EU keeping an eye on Pak HR record

Detailed News On Page-08



Pak-Saudi pact good for country

Detailed News On Page-08



LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing overseas Pakistanis in London on Sunday. — DNA

PM Shehbaz says

India must decide if we remain hostile or become good neighbours

Premier vows that blood of Kashmiris will not be forgotten, raises voice for Gaza as Israeli hostilities peak

NEWS DESK / DNA

LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said Pakistan and India are neighbours with no choice but to coexist, with India facing the decision to remain hostile or become good neighbours. "Any talks with India must be fair," said the PM, addressing a packed hall of overseas Pakistanis in London, where he also spoke about Pakistan's development, global crises, and the country's recent achievements. PM reminded the audience that Pakistan and India have fought four wars, costing billions of dollars. "That money should have been spent on schools, hospitals, roads, and improving the lives of ordinary citizens," he said, stressing that ties with India cannot move forward without resolving the Kashmir issue. "Billions of dollars spent on wars between

Continued on Page 06

PM to attend meeting of 'select' Muslim leaders with Trump

Premier will draw attention of int'l community towards grave crisis in Gaza at UNGA, says FO

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will participate in a meeting of "select" Muslim leaders with US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session in New York, the Foreign Office said in a statement on Sunday. "The prime minister will also participate in a meeting of select Islamic leaders with US President

Continued on Page 06

'US deal on Bagram airbase not possible'

NEWS DESK

KABUL: An Afghan Taliban government official said Sunday that a deal over Bagram air base was "not possible", after US President Donald Trump said he wanted the former US base back. Trump threatened the country Saturday with unspecified punishment, just days after he raised the idea of the US retaking control of the base while on a state visit to the United Kingdom. "If Afghanistan doesn't give Bagram Airbase back to those that built it, the United States of America, BAD THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN!" the 79-year-old leader wrote on his Truth Social platform. On Sunday, Fasihuddin Fitrat, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Defence, said

Continued on Page 06

Modi urges Indian to get rid of US products

DNA

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a public address on Sunday, asked citizens to stop using foreign-made products and instead use local ones, pushing for a self-reliant campaign when trade ties with the United States have soured. After US President Donald Trump imposed a 50 per cent tariff on imported Indian goods, Modi has been urging the use of "Swadeshi", or made-in-India goods.

Continued on Page 06

Despite Trump's Warning

Britain, Canada, Australia recognize Palestinian State

Trump, however, had personally warned the British leader against recognising Palestine at this stage. According to diplomatic sources, he insisted that recognition should only be considered once all hostages had been freed. But Starmer rejected this demand, telling Trump that recognition could not be indefinitely delayed and that Britain's decision aimed to restore credibility to the peace process

CENTRELINE REPORT

NEW YORK: In a landmark diplomatic development, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia have formally recognised the State of Palestine, marking a significant shift in Western foreign policy amid the nearly two-year-old Gaza conflict. The announcement comes despite opposition from former U.S. President Donald Trump, who had privately urged London to delay such a move until all hostages held in Gaza were released. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, in a statement posted on X, declared: "Today, to revive the hope of peace for the Palestinians and Israelis, and a two-state solution, the United Kingdom formally recognises the State of Palestine." Starmer said the decision was taken after repeated failures by Israel to meet conditions, including progress towards a ceasefire in Gaza and meaningful steps towards peace. Trump, however, had personally warned the British leader against recognising Palestine at this stage. According to diplomatic sources, he insisted that recognition should only be considered once all hostages had been freed. But Starmer rejected this demand, telling Trump that recognition could not be indefinitely delayed and that Britain's decision aimed to restore credibility to the peace process.

Australia and Canada joined Britain in making the announcement. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Canberra's recognition was intended to "revive momentum for a two-state solution that starts with a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of hostages." She added that Australia believed recognition would help shift the dynamics of the conflict from perpetual violence to meaningful negotiations. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney also issued a statement, declaring: "Canada recognises the State of Palestine and offers our partnership in building the promise of a peaceful future for both the State of Palestine and the State of Israel." Carney emphasised that Canada's recognition was aligned with its long-standing position in favour of a negotiated two-state solution. The coordinated move by three major Western powers is being seen as a challenge to Israel's current policies and a diplomatic signal that patience with the prolonged conflict is running out. It also reflects growing frustration with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where thousands have been killed and millions displaced since hostilities began nearly two years ago. While Israel has strongly rejected the recognitions, Palestinian leaders welcomed the decision as an "historic breakthrough," urging other countries to follow suit. The move also raises questions about Washington's next steps, as the U.S. remains hesitant to formally recognise Palestine without a negotiated settlement.

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Briefs

Indian team overpowers Pakistan in T20 match

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI, SEPT 21: India have inflicted a six-wicket defeat on Pakistan as bowlers failed to defend a competitive 172-run total in the Super Fours match at Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Dubai, on Sunday. Left-handed opener Abhishek Sharma's quickfire half-century led India to a comprehensive six-wicket victory over Pakistan in the ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup 2025 Super Four clash here at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Set to chase 172, the Men in Blue knocked the winning runs for the loss of four wickets and seven balls to spare.

Police probe killing of 3 transgender persons

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Police found the bodies of three transgender persons after midnight on Sunday on a roadside in Karachi's Memon Goth, which has prompted a thorough investigation. "Each victim sustained a single bullet wound, with two shots in the chest and one in the head," Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Malir Abdul Khaliq Pirzada said. He added that 9mm bullet spent casings, a purse, tissue papers and other items were recovered from the crime scene. Police said the crime scene unit had reached the site and investigations were underway.

Seven Indian-sponsored terrorists killed: ISPR

Seven terrorists, including three Afghan nationals and two suicide bombers, were gunned down, says ISPR

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Seven terrorists were killed by security forces during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the general area of Kulachi in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Dera Ismail Khan district, the Inter-Services Public Relations said on Sunday. According to the military's media wing, security forces conducted the IBO on September 20 on the reported presence of terrorists belonging to an Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij. "During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and as a result, seven khwarij, including three Afghan nationals and two suicide bombers, were sent to hell," the ISPR added. It further said sanitisation operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorists found in the area, reaffirming that the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of

Continued on Page 06

Afghan leaders stress need for talks

NEWS DESK

KABUL: The spokesperson for the Taliban government in Afghanistan Zabihullah Mujahid has said that leaders should refrain from making "provocative" statements and that his country could not be held responsible for attacks taking place in Pakistan. Mujahid's remarks come as Pakistan continues to raise alarm over terrorist outfits, particularly the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), using Afghan soil to carry out attacks across the border. Islamabad has repeatedly urged Kabul to choose between maintaining ties with its neighbour or harbouring terrorists,

Continued on Page 06

'Imran, Bushra instructed not to deposit Saudi gifts in Toshakhana'

Ex-military secretary says Saudi gifts were not deposited in Toshakhana as required

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A key witness in the Toshakhana II case has stated in a confidential statement to the court that PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, instructed him that the gifts received from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman should not be deposited into the Toshakhana. In his statement, former military secretary Brigadier (ret'd) Muhammad Ahmad said the gifts included a Bulgari jewellery set, bottles of oud, olive oil, dates, and a book. He maintained that all items were photographed under official protocol, with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs present during the Saudi visit in May 2021. The ministry, he added, formally informed

the Prime Minister's Office about the gifts in writing. Ahmad testified that while Bushra Bibi deposited a sum in exchange for the gifts, the Toshakhana Section raised no objection. The valuation and correspondence with Toshakhana, he said, were handled by the deputy military secretary on the orders of the then prime minister. According to him, the gifts were valued at Rs2,914,500, an amount deposited into the national treasury. However, FIA officials have argued that the actual value of the Bulgari set alone was far higher. They claim the former prime minister engaged a private appraiser who undervalued the set at Rs5.9 million, enabling him to deposit only Rs2.9 million.

Continued on Page 06

World Peace linked to settle Kashmir, Palestine issues

Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that after the defense agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, Israel's 'Greater Israel' dream has been shattered

DNA

LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council Coordinator National Paigham-e-Aman Committee Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that peace in the world will come from resolving the Palestine and Kashmir issues. While addressing press conference here on Sunday along with Ulemas Mashaykh in Lahore, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on the eve of the International Peace Day said that we should promise that we will give the oppressed their rights. Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that after the defense agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, Israel's 'Greater Israel' dream has been shattered Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi said that on September 22, many countries will announce the recognition of an independent Palestinian state. He said that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who repeatedly mentioned Pakistan's name, is completely silent following

the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia agreement. While holding a press conference with religious scholars and Ulemas Mashaykh in Lahore, Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, we should promise that we will give the oppressed their rights. He said that Pak-Saudi Arabia agreement will be a guarantor of peace in the whole world adding that the many Islamic and Arab countries are in contact with the Pakistani government. Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that September 22 is an important day in the United Nations in which Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and the Saudi Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman and the heads of other Islamic countries will address with UN session. He said that the Palestinian delegation was not allowed to come to America to attend this UN session. Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that the dream of "Greater Israel" has

been shattered by the Pak-Saudi Arabia defense agreement. He said that the most important countries are recognizing the independent state of Palestine. After Qatar, the Islamic world is thinking of making its own decisions. Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that Afghan brothers should think about how long blood will be shed in Pakistan. Pakistan has made countless sacrifices for Afghan brothers. He said that if our people are being targeted from Afghan soil, is it permissible? If any Pakistani has ever shed anyone's blood in Afghanistan, show it.

Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that Alhamdulillah, we are strong on the defense side and now we have to become strong economically. We have to moderate our differences, and moderate attitudes have to be strengthened in the society. Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said that the true message of Islam has to be brought to the world. Islam has nothing to do with extremism and terrorism.



ISLAMABAD: Children along with parents enjoying different kinds of swings at Japanese Children Park during pleasant weather in Federal Capital.

Global pharma leaders to gather for strategic dialogue on medicine exports

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will host a high-profile gathering of international pharmaceutical experts, regulators, and industry leaders at the 8th Pakistan Pharma Summit and the 4th Pharma Export Summit & Awards (PESA 2025) on September 24 here. The meeting takes place at a time when Pakistan's pharmaceutical exports have reached a record \$457 million in FY25, marking a 34% growth – the highest in two decades. Against this backdrop, the Summit will explore how the industry can build resilience, expand into regulated markets, and leverage innovation to strengthen its global standing. Sessions will feature global voices such as Jim Harris (Canada) on artificial intelligence in drug discovery, Dr Zakieh Al-Kurdi (USP, EMEA) on regulatory policy, Prof. Khalid Ahmad Sheikh (UCL, UK) on building a culture of quality, and Geoff Tsen, PhD (USP, Greater China) on resilience and standards. The programme will also include Laura Roche (Spain/Dubai), an international MC known for anchoring global forums, including Expo 2020 Dubai. The Summit will highlight compliance with international benchmarks, such as WHO, PIC/S, and MHRA certifications, which are now seen as essential for Pakistan's entry into advanced markets.—APP

Importance of promoting peace on 'World Peace Day' highlighted

ISLAMABAD: As the world observed the International Day of Peace on Sunday, a diverse chorus of voices from literary organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) came together to emphasize the urgent need to promote peace, tolerance, and dialogue in today's increasingly divided world. In an exclusive interview with APP, Director General of the National Language Promotion Department (NLPD), Prof. Dr. Mohammad Saleem Mazhar, said that as September 21 marked World Peace Day, it was being celebrated across the globe, including in Pakistan, to remind the general public that strengthening peace is a win-win situation for all and is essential for pro-

viding a better environment to future generations. "Today, what the world needs most is to emphasize spreading peace, love, harmony, mutual respect, coexistence, and an inclusive approach globally," he remarked. He also shared that the NLPD would host an event on Monday in connection with World Peace Day, as the actual day fell on a Sunday – a holiday – which is why the event was not scheduled on the day itself. "Pakistan is striving to establish peace throughout the world, particularly in the region," he noted. He expressed hope that by celebrating International Peace Day, we would be able to remind the general public – and ourselves – to spread peace and coex-

istence in our surroundings. In an interview with APP, Zohaib Ch., Director of Planning & Promotion at the Pakistan Sadequain Foundation, said that on World Peace Day, he, on behalf of the Foundation, extends a heartfelt message of unity, harmony, and compassion. "Peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice, understanding, and respect for human dignity," he added. He believes that literary organizations and NGOs play a pivotal role in nurturing minds, inspiring dialogue, and building bridges between communities. Through words, art, and collective action, he said, we can cultivate a culture of peace that transcends borders and differences.—APP

Submerged fields, soaring prices, starving livestock leave farmers helpless

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's flood-hit countryside is battling a triple crisis disaster that drowned the fields, profiteers who drove fodder prices sky-high, and the silent hunger now gripping livestock. The land lies smothered under stagnant water; crops and fodder suffocate, green fields vanish, and the hunger of buffaloes, cows, goats, and sheep has become a daily sight. Prices have soared to the sky while farmers, with tearful eyes fixed upward, wait for a miracle. What began as raging waters has now turned into a long war for survival. Triple crises in one glance: drowned fields, inflated markets, and starving cattle now define rural life. Stagnant water has destroyed green fields, leaving thousands of cattle without fodder and pushing prices to record highs. Pakistan's livestock buffaloes, cows, goats, and sheep rely on green crops like maize (makai), sorghum (jowar), barseem (Egyptian clover), and lucerne (alfalfa); dry fodder such as wheat straw (bhusa) and rice husk; and concentrated feed like wanda (grains, oilcakes, minerals, molasses). These were either swept away by floods or remain inaccessible due to waterlogging and broken supply chains. Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told Parliament the disaster displaced 2.1 million people, killed nearly 1,000, damaged over 9,000 homes, and led to the death of more than 7,000 livestock. Farmers now struggle to keep alive the animals they managed to save. In Jhang, farmer Imran stood by his starving cattle. "The floods took my crops, my fodder, my peace of mind. My cattle may die before help arrives," he said.—DNA

Govt committed for trade integration with potential African market: Envoy

ISLAMABAD, Sep 21 (APP): Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan has said that the government was committed to economic and trade integration with the African market according to the vision of "look African Campaign." He shared this in a roundtable with African envoys serving in Islamabad on "Pakistan Africa Connectivity – Engage Africa Policy of Pakistan" hosted by Center of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR) in collaboration with "Pakistan in the World" media group, said a release issued here on Monday. The event was chaired by H.E Hamid Asghar Khan while Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, President Pakistan Africa Institute for Development Research (PAIDAR) graced the event with his special appearance as keynote speaker. Saleem Ahmad Ranjha, renowned ex official and business consultant Ms Amna Malik Chairperson COPAIR, Zahid Lateef Khan Head of Diplomatic Committee of RCCI, Founder of Islamabad Stock Exchange, renowned spiritual personality Dr Afshan Malik and Tazeen Akhtar along with 10 Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and DHMs of African Embassies out of total 14 Missions participated in the roundtable. They included HE Dr. Ibrahim Romani of Algeria, Ms Harerimana Fatou of Rwanda, Salih Mohamed Ahmed of Sudan, HE Titus Melhiswa Johnathan Abu Basutu of Zimbabwe, HE Lt. General (R) Peter Mbogo Njiru of Kenya, Rudolph Pierre Jordaan of South Africa, Yushau Mohammed of Nigeria, Mahmmed Abdurahman Hersi of Somalia, DHM of Morocco, Umar Shahid Butt, Vice Consul Ghana. The envoys shared the present status of cooperation between their countries and Pakistan. They pointed out the gaps to bridge and suggested the measures, if taken, can enhance the level of trade between the sides. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has directed enhanced engagement with Africa, especially in trade, investment and commercial ties. The TDAP shall be holding a single country exhibition in conjunction with MoFA and Pak Embassy at Addis Ababa from 16-18 October, 2025 with participation of over 100 Pakistani exhibitors. Many African countries are willing to incentivize investment in industry and joint ventures to boost local manufacturing, said a release issued here on Sunday. Agricultural cooperation and health care are but two of the areas where tremendous scope for collaboration exists. Additional Secretary MOFA, Mr. Hamid Asghar Khan took note of the proposals and assured the envoys of every possible effort to do whatever is needful. Mr. Hamid Asghar Khan expressed his mind and vision on how to increase connectivity and cooperation with African countries implementing the engage Africa policy of Pakistan. He mentioned air connectivity between Pakistan and Ethiopia as a direct link with Africa. He referred to another promising project to connect Africa through the sea route." Pakistan authorities are working on establishing direct shipping and port connectivity between Pakistani and East African ports.—DNA

Over 3.02m rescued, as floods devastate Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Over 3.02 million people have been rescued in 5,768 operations, with more than 273,524 relief items distributed and 662,098 people treated in 741 camps established in flood-hit areas since June 26, under the coordinated efforts of NDMA, PDMA, the Pakistan Army, and other rescue teams, as relentless floods swept through most districts of Pakistan. According to the latest figures released by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), a total of 3,020,130 individuals have been rescued in 5,768 operations carried out in flood hit areas since June 26, as part of a coordinated response. In Punjab, 2,819,767 people were rescued in 4,749 operations. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa saw 14,317 rescues in 211 operations. Sindh reported 184,011 individuals rescued through 753 operations. Balochistan had 19 rescues in 4 operations, while Gilgit-Baltistan evacuated 1,027 people in 25 operations. Azad Jammu and Kashmir saw 940 rescues in 18 operations, and 49 individuals were rescued in 8 operations in the federal capital. According to the latest figures released by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), at least 1,006 people have lost their lives in flood-affected regions of the country due to torrential rains and flash flooding. The fatalities include 275 children, 568 men, and 163 women. At least 304 people have died in Punjab, including 110 children, 143 men, and 51 women. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the death toll has reached 504, with 90 children, 338 men, and 76 women among the victims. Sindh has reported 80 fatalities, comprising 35 children, 35 men, and 10 women. Flash floods have caused widespread devastation in most areas of country, with Balochistan reporting 30 fatalities—including 20 children, 6 men, and 4 women. In Gilgit-Baltistan, 41 people lost their lives, among them 6 children, 26 men, and 9 women. Azad Jammu & Kashmir recorded 38 deaths due to the deluge, comprising 9 children, 17 men, and 12 women. Meanwhile, in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 9 individuals perished, including 5 children, 3 men, and 1 woman. Flood-related incidents have left 1,063 people injured, including 321 children, 450 men, and 292 women. Punjab reported the highest number of injuries with 661 individuals affected, including 200 children, 258 men, and 203 women, highlighting the severe impact on vulnerable populations across the province.—APP

Cultural advisor meets Myanmar envoy to discuss cultural coop

Ambassador U Wunna Han expressed keen interest in enhancing cultural cooperation with Pakistan, particularly in the fields of Gandhara Civilization, community-based projects, and collaborative cultural activities

ISLAMABAD: Syed Usman Tahir, Honorary Advisor to the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division, held a meeting with the H.E. U Wunna Han, Ambassador of the Republic Union of Myanmar to Pakistan, in Islamabad. During the meeting, Syed Usman Tahir presented books published by the Heritage Ministry featuring miniature paintings, calligraphy, and other artistic works. He also briefed the ambassador about Pakistan's rich cultural traditions and diverse heritage, said a press release on Sunday. Ambassador U Wunna

Han expressed keen interest in enhancing cultural cooperation with Pakistan, particularly in the fields of Gandhara Civilization, community-based projects, and collaborative cultural activities. He highlighted the potential for future joint initiatives to deepen bilateral cultural ties. It was agreed that Ambassador U Wunna Han will soon call on Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, to further explore avenues of cooperation, including cultural exhibitions, workshops, and broader international cultural exchanges.—DNA



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SEPTEMBER

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Sept01/Tanzania Defence day

Sept01/Uzbekistan Independence Day

Sept07/Brazil Independence Day

Sept09/DPR Korea National Day

Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day

Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day

Sept16/Mexico National Day

Sept16/Papua New Guinea Independence Day


Sept18/Chile National Day

Sept21/Malta Independence Day

Sept23/Saudi Arabia National Day

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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


Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114


PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

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

RBJA election: Murtaza Malik re-elected president, Fiaz secretary

Former President RBJA Sardar Shoukat Mehmood congratulated the new leadership and said RBJA remains a strong voice for journalists in the twin cities. He expressed concern over the situation of the media in Pakistan, calling it one of the most difficult times in media history. He emphasized that even after the approval of repressive laws like the PECA Act, all journalist bodies must unite to safeguard press freedom

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi-Islamabad Bureaus Journalists Association (RBJA) has announced the results of its annual elections, re-electing senior journalist Ghulam Murtaza Malik as President for a second consecutive term. The election results were formally declared by Election Committee Chairman Mehboob ur Rehman Tanoli during a ceremony held at the National Press Club, Islamabad. Newly Elected Office Bearer, President Ghulam Murtaza Malik General Secretary Muhammad Fayyaz Chaudhry, Finance Secretary Syed Zahir Shah Kazmi. Vice Presidents Raheel Swati, Asad Mehmood, Chaudhry Niaz Haidri, Manzoor, Sehria Joint Secretaries Shakeel Paswal, Amir Lashari, Dr. Mubarak Babar Hussain, Nazia Altaf (Elected as Women's Joint Secretary) Information Secretary: Jameel Ahmad Malik Governing Body (20 Elected Members Sardar Shoukat Mehmood, Malik Siddique Awan, Ejaz Abbasi, Hussain Bangash, Shoukat Ali Satti, Aziz Butt, Tasawar Kamal, Waqar Yousafzai, Nouman Bashir, Hidayatullah Mehsood, Waheed uz Zaman, Zulfiqar Khattak, Umar Yasir, Malik Arif, Arshad Tanoli, Muhammad Azmat, and Bilal Azeemi were elected as members of the governing body. The announcement ceremony was attended by a large number of journalists from the twin cities. Distinguished guests included Tahir Khokhar



(former minister and President of Pasban-e-Watan Party), Syed Luqman Shah (President, Hazara Journalists Association), and Muzaffar Hashmi (Vice President, National Press Club). In his address, President Ghulam Murtaza Malik thanked members for their continued trust. He stated that he is well aware of the problems journalists face and

vowed to strengthen the organization on scientific lines to meet future media challenges. General Secretary Muhammad Fayyaz Chaudhry said that RBJA will work with clear future goals and continue its struggle for the rights of media professionals. Former President RBJA Sardar Shoukat Mehmood congratulated the new leadership and

said RBJA remains a strong voice for journalists in the twin cities. He expressed concern over the situation of the media in Pakistan, calling it one of the most difficult times in media history. He emphasized that even after the approval of repressive laws like the PECA Act, all journalist bodies must unite to safeguard press freedom.

PIDE seminar calls for gender-sensitive

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted a seminar titled "Understanding Gendered Vulnerabilities in Flood-Affected Areas of Pakistan," highlighting how disasters exacerbate existing social inequalities, particularly for women, minorities, and marginalized groups. The session, moderated by Dr. Rabia Manzoor, Deputy Chief (Policy) PIDE brought together experts and practitioners including Ms. Nilofer Afridi Qazi (social worker and disaster management specialist), Mr. Raza Narejo (Acting Country Director, Islamic Relief Pakistan), and Ms. Jayaa Jaggi (Minority Women Forum). According to the press release issued from the PIDE, Ms. Nilofer Afridi Qazi emphasized that disasters do not create vulnerabilities but amplify pre-existing ones such as poverty, illiteracy, and lack of resources. Drawing on her fieldwork in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, she shared striking cases where women could not be rescued during floods because cultural taboos prevented male rescuers from assist-

ing them. Similarly, women in purdah were often left out of aid distribution as they could not interact with male relief workers. She also highlighted neglected issues like menstrual health, pointing to her initiative on locally made reusable sanitary pads as a sustainable solution for displaced women. Speaking from Islamic Relief's decades-long humanitarian engagement, Mr. Raza Narejo stressed that women are systematically excluded during relief distribution. In conservative areas, aid was often handed only to men, leaving women without access to essentials such as clothing, hygiene supplies, and maternal health products. Pregnant and lactating women were particularly neglected. He underscored the urgent need for female rescue workers, noting that women in many communities were reluctant or unable to be evacuated by male responders. He also called for Pakistan to move beyond reactive disaster management and adopt long-term governance reforms in food security, water management, and resilience building. Ms. Jayaa Jaggi shed light on the intersectional vulnerabilities of minorities, persons with disabilities, and female-headed households. Relief points were often physically inaccessible for wheelchair

users and the visually impaired, while basic facilities such as toilets and water pumps were missing or unusable. She criticized Pakistan's disaster governance framework as underfunded and poorly implemented, with little attention to gender-sensitive and inclusive planning. She argued that women-led organizations and local communities must play a central role in shaping disaster policies, from early warning systems and evacuation plans to budgeting and governance. The seminar collectively underscored that floods are not merely environmental events but also social stress tests that expose deep-rooted inequalities. Cultural norms can turn emergencies into life-or-death barriers for women, institutional shortcomings in rescue and relief leave women's needs unmet, and systemic governance failures deepen exclusion for marginalized groups. Speakers called for a shift from reactive to proactive disaster governance that integrates gender sensitivity, cultural awareness, and inclusivity into every stage of planning and response. By centering the voices and needs of women, minorities, and vulnerable communities, Pakistan can transform its disaster management system into one that not only saves lives but also safeguards dignity.

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) has completed a portfolio of 16 major disaster resilience and preparedness projects worth over Rs 6.5 billion across Pakistan between 2018 and 2024. The initiatives were implemented in collaboration with leading national and international partners, targeting vulnerable districts in Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. They were designed to strengthen Pakistan's ability to cope with floods, landslides, droughts, and other climate-induced hazards, while also upgrading emergency rescue services at provincial and district levels. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the projects included both structural interventions, such as flood protection bunds, and non-structural measures, including early warning systems and community-based disaster risk reduction training. In Balochistan, a Rs 201.9 million project was executed to strengthen flood and drought mitigation structures in Quetta and Chagai districts. Another Rs 400.7 million was invested in Killa Saifullah to improve community disaster resilience.—APP

Chan emphasizes harmony amongst nations on Int'l Day of Peace

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Secretary Information Naadeem Afzal Chan, in his message on the occasion of International Day of Peace, emphasized the importance of harmony, understanding, and compassion among nations and communities across the globe. He said the day underlines the collective responsibility to promote peace and reduce conflicts. "The PPP has always raised its voice against tyranny and oppression. Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto stood firmly against dictatorship, and his voice still resonates today, while Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto led an unwavering struggle against dictatorship

and injustice," he stated. Highlighting the plight of people affected by wars, genocides, and human rights violations worldwide, Chan drew attention to the ongoing atrocities in Palestine, where people have suffered brutal occupation, displacement, and violence for decades, calling it a painful reminder of the failure to achieve sustainable peace. He further said that similar struggles are being faced by civilians in many conflict-ridden regions, including Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, where Narendra Modi's regime has unleashed severe oppression, likening Modi's role to that of Netanyahu with systemic vio-

lence, persecution, and even genocidal policies against Muslims. He added that Modi is attempting to conceal these atrocities from the global eye. Chan urged the international community to come together to resolve these crises, hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable, and extend support to those affected by conflicts. "The International Day of Peace demands justice, equality, and respect for human dignity. As we observe this day, let us renew our commitment to peace and justice, and pledge solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine, Kashmir, and all those struggling against tyranny," he concluded.

Call for gender-sensitive disaster response in flood-hit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A seminar on "Understanding Gendered Vulnerabilities in Flood-Affected Areas of Pakistan," hosted by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) collectively underscored that floods were not merely environmental events but also social stress tests that exposed deep-rooted inequalities. The speakers at the seminar highlighted how disasters exacerbate existing social inequalities, particularly for women, minorities and marginalized groups, said a press release issued by PIDE here Sunday. The session, moderated by Dr. Rabia Manzoor, Deputy Chief (Policy) PIDE brought together experts and practitioners including Ms. Nilofer Afridi Qazi, (social worker and disaster management specialist, Raza Narejo, Acting Country Director, Islamic Relief Pakistan, and Ms. Jayaa Jaggi, Minority Women Forum. Ms. Nilofer Afridi Qazi emphasized that disasters do not create vulnerabilities but amplify pre-existing ones such as poverty, illiteracy, and lack of resources. Drawing on her fieldwork in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, she shared striking cases where women could not be rescued during floods because cultural taboos prevented male rescuers from assisting them. Similarly, women in purdah were often left out of aid distribution as they could not interact with male relief workers. She also highlighted neglected issues like menstrual health, pointing to her initiative on locally made reusable sanitary pads as a sustainable solution for displaced women. Speaking from Islamic Relief's decades-long humanitarian engagement, Raza Narejo stressed that women are systematically excluded during relief distribution. In conservative areas, aid was often handed only to men, leaving women without access to essentials such as clothing, hygiene supplies, and maternal health products. Pregnant and lactating women were particularly neglected. He underscored the urgent need for female rescue workers, noting that women in many communities were reluctant or unable to be evacuated by male responders. He also called for Pakistan to move beyond reactive disaster management and adopt long-term governance reforms in food security, water management, and resilience building. Ms. Jayaa Jaggi shed light on the intersectional vulnerabilities of minorities, persons with disabilities, and female-headed households. Relief points were often physically inaccessible for wheelchair users and the visually impaired, while basic facilities such as toilets and water pumps were missing or unusable. She criticized Pakistan's disaster governance framework as underfunded and poorly implemented, with little attention to gender-sensitive and inclusive planning. She argued that women-led organizations and local communities must play a central role in shaping disaster policies, from early warning systems and evacuation plans to budgeting and governance. The seminar collectively underscored that floods are not merely environmental events but also social stress tests that expose deep-rooted inequalities. Cultural norms can turn emergencies into life-or-death barriers for women, institutional shortcomings in rescue and relief leave women's needs unmet, and systemic governance failures deepen exclusion for marginalized groups. Speakers called for a shift from reactive to proactive disaster governance that integrates gender sensitivity, cultural awareness, and inclusivity into every stage of planning and response. By centering the voices and needs of women, minorities, and vulnerable communities, Pakistan can transform its disaster management system into one that not only saves lives but also safeguards dignity and equality during crises.—APP

Rs 6.5b projects completed nationwide to cope with natural disasters

The projects were financed under the NDRMF framework, established with federal support to channel both domestic and international resources for disaster risk reduction

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) has completed a portfolio of 16 major disaster resilience and preparedness projects worth over Rs 6.5 billion across Pakistan between 2018 and 2024. The initiatives were implemented in collaboration with leading national and international partners, targeting vulnerable districts in Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. They were designed to strengthen Pakistan's ability to cope with floods, landslides, droughts, and other climate-induced hazards, while also upgrading emergency rescue services at provincial and district levels. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the projects included both structural interventions, such as flood protection bunds, and non-structural measures, including early warning systems and community-based disaster risk reduction training. In Balochistan,

a Rs 201.9 million project was executed to strengthen flood and drought mitigation structures in Quetta and Chagai districts. Another Rs 400.7 million was invested in Killa Saifullah to improve community disaster resilience. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, projects worth more than Rs 1 billion were undertaken for landslide control and flood mitigation in Poonch, Neelum, Bagh, Jhelum and Hattian districts. In Sindh, Rs 685 million was allocated for flood protection investments, including rehabilitation of Hajipur and Agani spurs and other bunds to safeguard vulnerable riverine communities in Larkana district. In Punjab, schemes worth over Rs 650 million were carried out, including the restoration of Bein Nullah and Jalalia flood protection bund in Narowal and the rehabilitation of DEG Nullah in Sheikhupura. One of the most significant interventions was the expansion of Rescue 1122 services in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pa-

khtunkhwa. Projects worth more than Rs 2.26 billion were implemented to equip and strengthen emergency response in all 10 districts of GB and 35 districts of KP, including merged tribal areas. These initiatives covered procurement of vehicles, rescue equipment, and infrastructure development to improve overall disaster response capacity. The projects not only reduced disaster vulnerabilities but also strengthened economic resilience by protecting agricultural lands, critical infrastructure, and local communities from climate shocks. The expansion of Rescue 1122 in KP and GB is expected to benefit millions of citizens by providing timely emergency response, life-saving services, and reducing economic losses during natural calamities. The projects were financed under the NDRMF framework, established with federal support to channel both domestic and international resources for disaster risk reduction.—APP

Briefs

Pakistani restaurant thrives in Nanning during China-ASEAN expo

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 22nd China-ASEAN Expo (CA-EXPO), currently under way in Nanning, Guangxi from September 17 to 21, has attracted over 3,200 enterprises from 60 countries and regions. Among the many success stories emerging from the international event is that of a local Pakistani restaurant that has experienced a remarkable surge in popularity thanks to the influx of global visitors, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro. Muhammad Umar Javed, owner of Barakah Pakistani Restaurant and CEO of Guangxi Bismilla Catering Co., Ltd., reported a significant boost in business during the expo, with a sharp increase in orders from Muslim visitors and exhibitors from various countries. "During the Expo, we received almost hundred takeaway orders per day for delivery to the exhibition center—even more than last year," said the owner. "Each evening after the Expo closed, our restaurant was filled with guests—including exhibitors from Pakistan and other countries—who came to dine in, relax and chat." Opened in 2021, Barakah offers an immersive cultural experience featuring traditional Pakistani music, handicrafts and décor. The walls are decorated with paintings depicting iconic Pakistani landscapes and cultural scenes such as majestic mosques, illustrations of daily life and vibrant streets of Pakistani cities. Authentic handicrafts, including traditional bronze and onyx ornaments and embroidered textiles, complement the atmosphere.

Minister links true peace with protecting oceans

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said on Sunday that real peace goes beyond the absence of conflict and must include protecting oceans and the marine species that inhabit them, from sharks and turtles to coral reefs and mangroves. Speaking on the occasion of World Peace Day, Junaid Chaudhry said peace "is about living in balance with nature," adding that Pakistan's coastal health is directly tied to the livelihoods of its people, said a press release. "If our oceans are not healthy, both marine animals and coastal communities suffer," he warned. The minister highlighted threats facing endangered turtles, overfished sharks, fragile coral reefs around Churna Island, and mangrove forests along shoreline. He noted that turtles are at risk from poaching, pollution and habitat destruction, while sharks including whale sharks need protection to preserve balance in ocean ecosystems.—APP

DC, ICCI President vow to promote business

Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry, Executive Member Waseem Chaudhry, and former Senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry also underlined the need for strong public-private cooperation to address civic challenges and sustain economic growth.

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, praised the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) for its proactive partnership in creating a business-friendly climate and addressing civic issues that matter to the community. Visiting ICCI to congratulate Sardar Tahir Mehmood on his unopposed election as President, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted that October and November are critical months for dengue outbreaks. He urged immediate preventive action, especially removal of stagnant water, and commended ICCI's initiative in alerting and mobilizing the business community. He assured full administrative support to curb dengue and safeguard public health. Memon further committed to tackling encroachments, waste management, and street beggary, alongside strict price controls on daily essentials, to ensure a clean, secure, and investment-friendly environment. Earlier, welcoming the guest, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood called for collaboration over coercion, emphasizing that preventive and corrective measures are more effective than punitive fines, arrests, or business closures. He reaffirmed ICCI's resolve



to run citywide awareness drives on dengue and other civic concerns, with the goal of positioning Islamabad as a hub of world-class business activity.

Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry, Executive Member Waseem Chaudhry, and former Senior Vice

Khalid Chaudhry also underlined the need for strong public-private cooperation to address civic challenges and sustain economic growth.

ISSI launches Book 'Pak and China: Connecting at People's Level'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised the launch of its latest book titled Pakistan and China: Connecting at People's Level. The event featured remarks by Ambassador Masood Khalid, Pakistan's former Ambassador to China; Ambassador Moin-ul-Haque, Pakistan's former Ambassador Pakistan to China; Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, Senior Associate Professor at Bahria University; Dr. Sundus Mustaqeem, Assistant Professor at NUST; and Ms. Aiza Azam, Lecturer at Air University. Mr. Xu Hangtian, Minister-Counsellor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China was the guest of honour. Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his welcome remarks, termed Pakistan-China relations as 'unique in inter-state relations,' based on mutual respect, strategic mutual trust, and mutual support on each other's issues of core interests. He highlighted that this all-weather strategic cooperative partnership has endured regional and global changes for more than seven decades, and continues to serve as a positive factor for peace, stability and development in the region and beyond. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized that the launch of this book is both timely and significant. He stressed that while CPEC and the Belt and Road Initiative have reinforced economic and physical connectivity, the human and cultural connectivity will secure the relationship for the future generations. He pointed out that the book makes a valuable contribution by shedding light on public diplomacy, cultural exchanges, academic linkages, tourism, and soft power, areas that need to be systematically strengthened. Referring to the recently adopted China-Pakistan Five-Year "Action Plan" (2025-29),

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood noted that a full chapter has been devoted to people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. He said this reflects the recognition at the highest levels that sustained friendship rests on social, cultural, and academic linkages. Looking ahead, he proposed that the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations in 2026 should be commemorated through special initiatives in these areas, with wider participation of the youth, students, artists, media professionals, and think-tanks. He also proposed closer collaboration in benefiting from China's immense expertise in the field of sports as well as in preservation of civilizational and cultural heritage. He concluded by stressing the importance of visa facilitation and enhanced air connectivity to foster deeper P2P links. Ambassador Moin-ul-Haq underlined that Pakistan-China relations remain the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. He highlighted the deep warmth and respect the Chinese people hold for Pakistan. He identified five priority areas for strengthening people-to-people ties: civilizational connections, cultural exchanges, economic partnerships, technological collaboration, and tourism. He highlighted the role of initiatives such as Gandhara civilization exhibitions and proposed establishment of joint IT parks in every province, as well as group tourism programs. He stressed that the forthcoming 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2026 provides an ideal opportunity to launch people-centric initiatives. Dr. Hassan Daud Butt noted that the book coincides with the second phase of CPEC, characterized by deeper institutional and societal linkages. He underlined that people-to-people interaction forms the backbone of sustainable partnerships and praised the book's contribution in showcasing cultural, educational, and social dimensions, from student exchanges to maritime tourism. He said the findings align with President Xi Jinping's Global Civilization Initiative and called for wider dissemination.

China, Pak forge deeper ties in toy industry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an effort to strengthen economic and trade cooperation, Sardar Muhammad, Consul of the Pakistani Consulate in Guangzhou, visited Chenghai, Shantou and held meetings with representatives from the local toy industry. This visit is viewed as a direct follow-up to a Chinese delegation's tour of Pakistan in August and highlights the

deepening bilateral engagement in the toy sector. During his visit, the Consul toured major toy enterprises, including Guangdong Hongteng Business Exhibition Co., Ltd., and Shantou Haiyang Toy Trading Co., Ltd. He also met with Huang Yixian, President of the Shantou Chenghai Toy Association, to discuss strengthening trade relations and promoting industrial collaboration. Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. The exchange highlights the evolving dynamics of the

global toy trade, with China maintaining its position as the world's leading manufacturer, while Pakistan emerges as both a growing market and a traditional manufacturing hub striving to revitalize its local industry. "Pakistan offers considerable opportunities due to its youthful demographic and strategic location," Consul Muhammad remarked during the meetings, emphasizing the complementary strengths of the toy industries in both countries.

ANF launches major crackdown, 129kg of drugs seized, six held

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has launched a major crackdown against drug traffickers, conducting seven operations across various parts of the country. Following the arrest of six individuals and the recovery of 129 kilograms of drugs with an estimated cost over Rs144.3 million. One of the key operations took place near the Islamabad Toll Plaza, where a woman was arrested with 400 grams of Ice and 50 grams of heroin. During questioning, she confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions. In other domestic operations, ANF recovered 8 kilograms of drugs from a motorcyclist near Railway Road in Peshawar. In the border area of District Kasur, ANF seized 3,352 kilograms of heroin along with six drone batteries, suspected to be used for smuggling. A massive haul of 97 kilograms of heroin was discovered hidden in bushes in the Hazarganji Ganji area of District Quetta. Meanwhile, in Karachi near Zero Point, 14.4 kilograms of drugs was confiscated. The ANF also intercepts inter-provincial drug trafficking attempts. Near the Attock Toll Plaza, 4.8 kilograms of hashish was recovered from a passenger, and another 1.5 kilograms was seized from a suspect near Ravi Toll Plaza.—DNA

Book 'Pakistan and China' launched in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has launched a new book titled "Pakistan and China: Connecting at People's Level." This carries a comprehensive study that underscores the importance of cultural, educational, and social linkages in sustaining the all-weather friendship between the two countries, according to Gwadar Pro. The book, produced by CPSC under the leadership of Dr. Talat Shabbir, coincides with the second phase of CPEC, which emphasizes institutional and societal linkages. It has been praised as a well-researched and timely contribution that showcases how education, tourism, media, cultural exchanges, and shared civilizational heritage can complement strategic and economic projects.—DNA

Experts for proactive climate adaptation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted a seminar on "Resilient Food Systems in Pakistan" today, emphasizing the urgent need for Pakistan to transition from reactive disaster management to proactive climate adaptation strategies to strengthen food security. Addressing the seminar, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, noted the irony that Pakistan, contributing less than 1% to global emissions, is among the most severely impacted by climate change. Citing cities like Lahore ranking among the world's most polluted, he stressed that "Pakistan's survival hinges on a new green revolution." Ms. Farrah Naz, Country Director of GAIN, highlighted South Asia's alarming nutrition crisis, pointing out that nearly half of women of reproductive age in the region suffer from anemia, one in four infants are born underweight, and stunting rates continue to rise. She urged the adoption of nutrition-sensitive policies to address these systemic challenges. Presenting data-driven insights, Dr. Zaffar Bukhari shed light on Pakistan's fragmented value chains, food safety concerns, and limited dietary diversity. He underlined the importance of dashboards in guiding evidence-based policy-

making for a more sustainable food system. Dr. Haroon Malik, representing the Ministry of National Food Security & Research, highlighted the struggles of Pakistan's smallholder farmers, who make up nearly 90% of the agricultural sector. He shared that the government is providing Rs. 10,000

per farmer in support, expanding mechanization and rental services, and enhancing the Kisan Package 2022. In the aftermath of the 2025 floods, he revealed that the government is exploring canola oil imports to reduce reliance on palm oil and strengthen resilience.



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Saudi–Pakistan Defence wall against tyranny

QAMAR BASHIR

THE Doha summit forced the Muslim world to confront its greatest weakness. What was meant to be another ritual of solidarity for Gaza instead exposed the Ummah's impotence in the face of systematic slaughter. The massacre of Palestinians, the destruction of homes, schools, and hospitals, and the displacement of millions have become recurring tragedies. From Bosnia to Burma, from Kashmir to Gaza, the blood of Muslims has been shed while their states, though wealthy and numerous, stood helpless. Doha stripped away excuses: the Muslim world possesses extraordinary resources, yet it has failed to transform them into a shield.

That is why the defence agreement signed between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is a turning point. More than a symbolic pact, it represents a union of wealth and capability – the Gulf's immense financial muscle combined with Pakistan's proven strategic and military strength. For the first time, a major Muslim monarchy and the only declared nuclear state in the Islamic world have pledged to stand together against threats. The presence of the Saudi Crown Prince, Pakistan's prime minister, and the army chief at the signing sent a signal that this was not a ceremonial gesture but a strategic compact with teeth.

Pakistan's contribution is far deeper than military manpower alone. It is a declared nuclear power with both tactical and strategic arsenals, backed by a sophisticated research and industrial ecosystem. Its nuclear infrastructure includes laboratories, universities, and training institutes that have produced generations of engineers, scientists, and technicians capable of sustaining and advancing complex weapons systems. Beyond nuclear deterrence, Pakistan has demonstrated resilience and readiness against a far larger neighbour, India, proving its ability not only to repel aggression but to deliver punishing counterstrikes. This institutional depth, married to Saudi Arabia's wealth, creates the basis for scaling both conventional and advanced capabilities – from missiles and drones to robotics and AI-driven defence systems.

Turkey brings another indispensable dimension: high-tech platforms, defence firms, and training institutions. Turkish companies have already joined the world's top tier of arms exporters, producing drones, avionics, naval systems, and electronic warfare suites that have been battle-tested in Libya, Syria, and Ukraine. Its Bayraktar drones have redefined modern conflict, while its aerospace and shipbuilding capacity can scale rapidly when supplied with Gulf funding. Turkey also

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possesses advanced academies for training pilots, engineers, and technicians, making it the natural hub for developing the technical backbone of an Ummah force. President Erdo an has long urged the creation of a collective Muslim defence mechanism, and Turkey has the industrial wherewithal to make that vision real.

The Ummah must break its chains of dependency. For decades, Muslim nations have hosted foreign bases justified as protective umbrellas. In practice, these installations often served other strategic purposes. When Gaza was bombarded and when sovereign airspace was violated, these bases stood silent. Worse, they sometimes enabled aggression rather than preventing it. No collective Muslim force can rise while strategic autonomy is compromised by dependency on external patrons. The Saudi–Pakistan pact challenges that old paradigm, but it must be followed by broader moves to reduce foreign military footprints and replace them with joint Muslim institutions.

Modern warfare also demands forward-looking investment. AI-guided drones, cyber capabilities, autonomous vehicles, and satellite surveillance now define the battlefield. If Muslim states pooled even a fraction of their estimated \$3.5 trillion in sovereign wealth funds into defence innovation, they could leapfrog into the cutting edge of military technology.

The structure of such a force must be carefully designed. It should begin with an Ummah Defence Council to draft doctrine and oversee pooled financing. Within two years, a rapid deployment brigade could be fielded for humanitarian rescue and deterrence missions.

Yet power without legitimacy can be as dangerous as weakness. This force must be accountable to peoples, not just rulers. Democracies should involve parliamentary oversight; monarchies should seek consultative legitimacy through representative bodies. Rules of engagement must prioritise civilian protection and humanitarian rescue. Without such safeguards, the project risks becoming another tool of oppression rather than a shield against it.

The stakes could not be higher. The humiliation of watching Israel, a state of fewer than ten million, impose its will on 57 Muslim nations with a combined population of two billion is intolerable. The continued slaughter of Palestinians, the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya, the marginalisation of Indian Muslims, and the insecurity of Muslim minorities worldwide are not just tragedies but indictments of Muslim leadership. If leaders fail to act, history will remember their silence more harshly than their speeches. Wealth will be seen as squandered opportunity, and populations will inherit only shame.

But if leaders seize this moment – if the Saudi–Pakistan pact becomes the nucleus of a wider force, if Turkey's technology is scaled with Gulf capital, if manpower is organised into disciplined, accountable units – then the Ummah could finally reclaim its dignity. Doha revealed the weakness. Riyadh and Islamabad have begun the remedy. The rest of the Ummah must now decide: will this be another moment of rhetoric, or the beginning of a historic transformation? The answer will determine whether Muslims remain spectators of their own tragedies or become agents of their own security and defenders of universal human dignity.

Saudi-Pakistan defense pact: A historic strategic alliance

Dr. Ali Awadh Asseri



MORE than half a century of defense partnership between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan reached a new peak when Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signed a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement in Riyadh on Wednesday. The agreement declares that “any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both.” The defense pact mirrors collective security arrangements traditionally associated with regional alliances such as NATO and the Gulf Cooperation Council, designed to deter potential aggressors. According to the joint statement, it “reflects the shared commitment of both nations to enhance their security and to achieving security and peace in the region and the world, aims to develop aspects of defense cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression.”

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan share a distinctive and enduring relationship, often demonstrated through exceptional solidarity in critical moments. For Saudi Arabia, security and stability in the Arab Gulf are of paramount significance. Pakistan also cannot overlook this crucial factor, given its unique relations with the Kingdom. Though concluded soon after the Arab-Islamic emergency summit in Doha, the agreement marks the outcome of years of sustained dialogue between the two allied states. It is not a reaction to any particular country or event, but the institutionalization of a deep and resilient partnership between Riyadh and Islamabad.

The joint statement also refers to this partnership, highlighting “shared strategic interests and close defense cooperation” as the foundation of the agreement, whose real value, in my opinion, lies in the historic bond that exists between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It takes their time-tested military-to-military ties to a whole new level. The agreement represents the logical conclusion of decades of steadfast and sincere efforts by successive

leaders and governments, with unwavering support from both the Saudi and Pakistani people. It should therefore be understood not merely in the context of current regional tensions but through the broader lens of shared history. This extraordinary camaraderie was visibly symbolized on Wednesday, when Sharif's aircraft entered Saudi airspace escorted by Royal Saudi Air Force F-15s – a gesture of honor previously accorded only to leaders such as Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. The grandeur of the moment was further underscored by Pakistani flags adorning the streets of Riyadh and Saudi flags flying across Islamabad. As the news spread, social media in both countries lit up with pride and celebration, reflecting the shared sentiment of witnessing a landmark in bilateral ties. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan share an enduring relationship, often demonstrated through exceptional solidarity in critical moments. Having served in Pakistan as the Kingdom's envoy for nearly a decade, I can readily imagine the depth of public feeling, even as the country continues to suffer from devastating monsoon floods. For Pakistanis, Saudi Arabia holds a special place: millions travel there annually for Hajj and Umrah, while millions more have contributed to the Kingdom's prosperity through their labor and dedication.

Within the framework of Vision 2030, the crown prince has prioritized deepening Saudi Arabia's political, economic, defense and cultural engagement with Pakistan. This priority has found an equal response in Islamabad. Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakistan's army chief, has, like Sharif, maintained regular engagement with Saudi leaders and developed close ties with Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, who was awarded the Nishan-e-Pakistan last year. This rare compact between leadership and people is deeply rooted in history, predating both the establishment of the Kingdom and the creation of Pakistan, and flourishes with each passing decade. While I examine this unique relationship and its underlying rationale in detail in my forthcoming book, “Saudi Arabia and Pakistan: An Enduring Relationship in a Changing World,” a brief outline of key milestones in the defense sphere is useful here to explain the historical significance of the agreement.

Saudi-Pakistani defense cooperation began to take shape in the 1960s, during the leadership of King Faisal and President Ayub Khan. At that stage, Pakistan provided training and advisory support to the Royal Saudi Air Force, laying the first formal foundations of a relationship that would steadily expand. In 1967, the first formal defense cooperation agreement, signed in Islamabad by Defense Minister Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz, marked the beginning of Pakistan's sustained role in Saudi Arabia's defense.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, this agreement was translated into large-scale exchanges of military personnel and expertise. Hundreds of Pakistani officers served in Saudi Arabia as trainers, advisers and engineers, while thousands of Saudi soldiers and aviators were trained in Pakistan under structured contracts. By the early 1970s, Pakistan had extended technical cooperation to civil aviation and airlines, while simultaneously building Saudi defensive fortifications along the Yemeni border. The cooperation was not limited to training alone: it created the nucleus of a Saudi military establishment that drew heavily on Pakistani experience and professionalism.

The 1980s brought a major expansion in the scale and scope of bilateral defense ties. Regional turbulence, including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq War, prompted Riyadh and Islamabad to institutionalize their military collaboration through a 1982 protocol agreement. This protocol established the Saudi-Pakistan Armed Forces Organization and authorized the large-scale deployment of Pakistani forces in Saudi Arabia. At its peak, more than 20,000 Pakistani troops, including divisions and brigades, were stationed in sensitive regions such as Tabuk and the Eastern Province, performing both training and operational roles, while also reassuring Saudi Arabia against any threats. Cooperation remained steady through the Gulf War of 1990-91, when Pakistan dispatched more than 11,000 troops to Saudi Arabia at Riyadh's request. These forces were deployed primarily in defensive positions to protect borders and holy sites, in line with the 1982 protocol.

This is not an abrupt development but the culmination of decades of steady, evolving cooperation built on mutual trust. In the 1990s and 2000s, the focus of collaboration shifted to counterterrorism and intelligence sharing, particularly in the fight against Al-Qaeda and in managing instability in Afghanistan. The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, highlighted the shared security concerns of both states and reinforced the need for continued military and intelligence cooperation, even as both countries worked alongside the US during the War on Terror. The past decade and a half have seen a further diversification of defense relations, adapting to new regional and global realities. Pakistan's former army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif assumed command of the Saudi-led Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition in 2017, reflecting Riyadh's trust in Pakistan's leadership of collective security. Since then, joint army, naval and air force exercises have become a regular feature, complemented by growing cooperation in defense production and technology. The deployment of Pakistani troops and military advisers in Saudi Arabia has also continued under the framework

of the 1982 agreement, primarily in training and advisory roles, while new avenues of collaboration in defense industries have emerged. This historical trajectory shows how the new agreement is not an abrupt development but the culmination of decades of steady, evolving cooperation built on mutual trust and shared security needs.

It will play a critical role in ensuring credible defense, as well as in charting a sustainable security framework for the future. The evolving regional security environment and global geopolitical challenges require Riyadh and Islamabad to strengthen their defense coordination. Joint exercises, advanced training and co-production in defense industries can form the backbone of this next phase, aligning with Vision 2030's goal of building Saudi Arabia's self-reliance, while drawing on Pakistan's battle-hardened military expertise. Equally important is the political significance of the pact. It reflects recognition of Pakistan's rising diplomatic profile in recent months. After the US' withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan's strategic utility declined in Washington under President Joe Biden. However, Islamabad has since reopened channels of engagement with the US under the Trump administration, signaling a cautious revival of strategic ties, while maintaining its enduring partnership with China, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

At the same time, Pakistan has strengthened political, security and economic relations with Türkiye and Azerbaijan, while also gaining visibility in multilateral diplomacy. As president of the UN Security Council in July 2025, Islamabad successfully mobilized support for a resolution on the peaceful settlement of disputes and played an active role in the UN High-Level Conference on the Two-State Solution in New York, co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia. Collectively, these developments have enhanced Pakistan's standing in the eyes of the Kingdom and underscored the logic of a binding defense pact. Finally, the defense pact also reflects Pakistan's appreciation of Saudi Arabia's steadfast support in difficult times – whether through soft loans, deferred oil payments or sustained humanitarian and political assistance. Against this backdrop, the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement represents both continuity and renewal: continuity of a defense relationship forged over decades and renewal in adapting that partnership to the demands of an uncertain future.

– **Dr. Ali Awadh Asseri served as the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan (2001–2009) and to Lebanon (2009–2017). He is currently Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees at Rasanah, the International Institute for Iranian Studies in Riyadh.**

New Saudi-Pakistan defense deal will have implications for entire region

Dr. Jamal Al Harbi



The timing of the agreement reflects the increasingly complex security environment. The Middle East remains a theater of regional rivalries and shifting alliances, while South Asia faces persistent instability linked to India–Pakistan tensions and the aftermath of the Afghan conflict

IN a momentous step that highlights the enduring friendship and shared security concerns of two key Muslim nations, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have signed a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement. The accord, finalized by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, establishes a framework for comprehensive defense cooperation and a mutual pledge that any aggression against one country will be considered an attack on both.

The announcement has been described by officials and analysts alike as a landmark agreement, not only for its binding commitment to collective security, but also for its broader implications for stability in the Middle East and South Asia. The newly signed agreement aims to expand military cooperation on multiple levels. Key elements include joint military exercises to improve operational readiness and interoperability, intelligence sharing to counter emerging threats, particularly terrorism and cross-border insurgencies. Additionally, it includes defense industry collaboration, with potential for technology transfer and co-production of military equipment, as well as capacity building and training, building on the longstanding tradition of Pakistani military personnel working with Saudi forces.

By formalizing these areas of cooperation, the agreement transforms decades of informal support into a structured alliance. The pact represents a significant elevation of the Saudi–Pakistani relationship, aligning it closer to strategic defense partnerships found in other regions.

The timing of the agreement reflects the increasingly complex security environment. The Middle East remains a theater of regional rivalries and shifting alliances, while South Asia faces persistent instability linked to India–Pakistan tensions and the aftermath of the Afghan conflict.

For Saudi Arabia, the deal reflects its determination to diversify its strategic partnerships. While historically aligned with Western powers, Riyadh has, in recent years, sought greater autonomy in shaping its security policy. Pakistan, with its sizable military, nuclear capabilities, and geostrate-

gic position, emerges as a natural partner.

For Pakistan, the agreement provides reassurance at a time of economic fragility and diplomatic challenges. The pact with one of the world's wealthiest and most influential states strengthens Islamabad's international standing and offers potential avenues for investment in defense modernization. The accord is likely to reshape security calculations in both regions. By committing to act jointly in the face of aggression, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan send a clear deterrent message. This commitment may reduce the likelihood of hostile actions against either nation, knowing that retaliation could involve two powerful states acting in unison.

The success of the pact will depend not only on the strength of Saudi–Pakistan ties but also on the diplomatic agility of both nations in managing external pressures. Internationally, the agreement underscores Saudi Arabia's evolving role as a security guarantor not only for itself but also for its partners. For Pakistan, the deal reinforces its image as a key Muslim-majority state with the capacity to contribute to global and regional security.

Observers point out that the pact could influence broader alliances. In South Asia, it may heighten India's caution in dealing with Pakistan. In the Gulf, it could affect the strategic calculus of Iran and other regional players. On the global stage, the United States, China and Russia are likely to monitor closely how this partnership evolves, given their deep interests in both regions.

Saudi–Pakistan relations are not new. Over the decades, Riyadh has consistently provided economic support to Islamabad, while Pakistani military personnel have long contributed to Saudi defense programs. The relationship has been nurtured through cultural and religious ties with millions of Pakistani expatriates living and working in the Kingdom. This agreement, however, marks a qualitative shift. While past cooperation was often ad hoc or issue-based, the new pact institutionalizes the relationship, embedding defense into the very fabric of bilateral ties.

Given the Vision 2030 reforms in Saudi Arabia and Paki-

stan's growing expertise in defense manufacturing, there is potential for mutually beneficial industrial partnerships in emerging security fields such as cybersecurity, drone technology, and space-based defense systems.

Despite the optimism, challenges remain. Pakistan's economic difficulties may limit its ability to invest heavily in expanding its defense commitments. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, must carefully balance this alliance with its efforts to maintain dialogue with other regional actors.

Additionally, the agreement may invite scrutiny or unease from some global powers. The US, a long-standing partner to both nations, may view the accord through the lens of its own shifting regional policies. Meanwhile, China, already a close ally of Pakistan and a growing partner of Saudi Arabia, could see opportunities for trilateral cooperation.

The success of the pact, therefore, will depend not only on the strength of Saudi–Pakistan ties but also on the diplomatic agility of both nations in managing external pressures. The Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan represents a milestone in bilateral relations. It cements decades of friendship, economic cooperation, and cultural ties into a formal security alliance with far-reaching implications.

By pledging to defend one another against aggression, Riyadh and Islamabad have set the stage for a new era of strategic collaboration— one that extends beyond defense into political, economic, and technological domains.

If effectively implemented, the agreement could redefine the security landscape of the Middle East and South Asia, offering both nations greater stability while reshaping the regional balance of power. More importantly, it reaffirms that in a world of shifting alliances, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan remain steadfast partners, bound by trust, shared interests, and a collective vision for a more secure future.

– **Dr. Jamal Al Harbi is a writer on international affairs and a media attaché at the Saudi Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. The article first published in the Arab News**

Briefs

'US deal on Bagram airbase...

FROM PAGE 01
"some people" want to take back the base through a "political deal". "Recently, some people have said that they have entered negotiations with Afghanistan for taking back Bagram Air base," he said in comments broadcast by local media. "A deal over even an inch of Afghanistan's soil is not possible. We don't need it". Bagram, the largest air base in Afghanistan, was a linchpin of the US-led war effort against the Taliban, whose government Washington toppled following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) troops chaotically pulled out of Bagram in July 2021 as part of a Trump-brokered deal with Taliban insurgents.

Modi urges Indian to get rid of ...

FROM PAGE 01
His supporters have started campaigns to boycott American brands, including McDonald's, Pepsi and Apple, which are hugely popular in India. "A lot of products we use daily are foreign-made, we just don't get rid of them," Modi said in an address to the nation ahead of Monday's implementation of wide-spread consumer tax cuts. "We should buy products that are made in India," he added, without naming any country. India's population of 1.4 billion is a major market for American consumer goods, often purchased from US online retailer Amazon. Over the years, the reach of US brands has expanded deep into smaller towns.

'Imran, Bushra instructed...

FROM PAGE 01
The set – comprising a necklace, bracelet, earrings, and a ring – was allegedly worth Rs75 million. Ahmad, who served as military secretary from May 2020 to April 2022, said he was present during the Saudi visit from May 7–10, 2021, when the gifts were handed over. New revelations in court, from earlier this week, have also implicated the PTI founder's former personal secretary, Inamullah Shah, and private appraiser Sohaib Abbasi. Shah admitted to pressuring Abbasi into undervaluing the jewellery set, telling the court: "I asked Abbasi to reduce the value of the jewellery set." He further claimed that he was later dismissed from his post due to Bushra Bibi's displeasure.

India must decide if we remain...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan and India should be spent on the development and prosperity of people," he added. The premier vowed that the blood of millions of Kashmiris would not go in vain. Turning to international crises, he spoke about Gaza, where more than 64,000 Palestinians have died, saying that the region is linked forever, whether people like it or not. He once again emphasised that Pakistan wanted talks with India, but only on equal terms. Fairness and respect, he said, must guide any dialogue.

PM to attend meeting...

FROM PAGE 01
Trump to exchange views on issues pertaining to regional and international peace and security," the FO said. The FO, in its statement, said Premier Shehbaz will lead Pakistan's delegation to the high-level segment of the UNGA, scheduled to begin on 22 September 2025. "He [the PM] will be accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, as well as other ministers and senior government officials," the statement added.

Rising Stars Hockey Club hosts farewell match for Australian envoy Neil Hawkins

Pakistan is gifted with enormous hockey potential which needs to be explored and nurtured," he said, adding that he sincerely hoped to see Pakistan reclaim its historic position at the top of the global hockey arena

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The Rising Stars Hockey Club, Islamabad, organized a warm farewell reception in honor of Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins, who is set to leave Pakistan next month upon completion of his diplomatic tenure. Mr. Hawkins, who developed a close association with the Rising Stars Hockey Club during his stay in Pakistan, was lauded for his active engagement with young hockey players and his consistent support for sports diplomacy. The event was attended by club officials, players, and distinguished guests, who gathered to

bid him and his wife an affectionate farewell. In his remarks, the Australian envoy expressed deep gratitude to the club for giving him the opportunity to interact closely with the country's budding hockey talent. "Pakistan is gifted with enormous hockey potential which needs to be explored and nurtured," he said, adding that he sincerely hoped to see Pakistan reclaim its historic position at the top of the global hockey arena. Reflecting on his time in Islamabad, Hawkins noted that his association with the club had provided him not only with sporting engagement but also with cherished memories that he would carry back home. He thanked the club management and players for arranging

what he described as an "excellent and heart-warming farewell" for himself and his wife. The outgoing High Commissioner made special mention of Rising Stars' Chief Patron Asif Bhatti, President Mehmood Ahmed, Secretary Sohail Janjua, and former President Ansar Mahmood Bhatti. He acknowledged their continued support, hospitality, and facilitation throughout his association with the team. He also mentioned his colleagues from the diplomatic corps and members of the Club namely Kamal Ahmed High Commissioner of Brunei and Eduard Preda Deputy Head of Mission of the Romanian embassy. Club's President Mehmood Ahmed praised

Hawkins for his enthusiasm in promoting hockey and for becoming an active part of the Rising Stars family. They highlighted his efforts in encouraging youth participation in the sport and described him as a true friend of Pakistan and its national game. The ceremony concluded with the presentation of souvenirs to the High Commissioner and his wife, symbolizing the bond of friendship created through sport. As Neil Hawkins prepares to depart, members of the Rising Stars Hockey Club expressed their best wishes for his future endeavors and conveyed hope that he will remain an ambassador of goodwill for Pakistan's hockey on international platforms.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "ASEAN DA Fun Invitational Golf 2025 brought together ambassadors from Indonesia, Japan, and Myanmar, alongside DA representatives from the USA, Germany, Australia, and Kazakhstan. Diplomats from ASEAN nations, South Korea, Germany, and Pakistan also joined, making it a truly global gathering on the greens." – DNA

Afghan leaders...

FROM PAGE 01
but Afghan authorities have consistently denied the allegations. He made these remarks during an interview with Imtiaz Gul, the executive director of Islamabad-based think tank Centre for Research and Security Studies.

Seven Indian...

FROM PAGE 01
Indian-sponsored terrorism from the country. "Pakistan expects the interim Afghan government to uphold its responsibilities and deny its soil for terrorist activities," it added. Country has witnessed a surge in cross-border terror incidents since Taliban rulers returned to Afghanistan in 2021.

Briefs

Jordan partially reopens West Bank crossing after deadly attack

AMMAN: Jordan said it partially reopened its border crossing with the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Sunday, three days after closing it following an attack that killed two Israeli soldiers.

"The crossing reopened Sunday for travelers only, while the movement of cargo trucks remains suspended until further notice," an official statement said.

State broadcaster Al-Mamlaka reported heavy traffic in both directions from early in the morning.

The Allenby crossing is the only gateway Palestinians in the West Bank can use to travel abroad without passing through Israel, which has occupied the territory since 1967.

On Thursday, a Jordanian truck driver carrying aid for Gaza opened fire at the crossing, killing an Israeli soldier and a reserve officer with the civil administration before being "neutralized," according to Israel.

Following the attack, the Israeli military asked Jordan to suspend the transfer of aid through the terminal.

Jordan said it had launched an investigation and identified the assailant as Abdel Mutaleb Al-Qaissi, 57.

It described him as "a civilian who had been working for three months as a driver delivering aid to Gaza," which the UN says is suffering from a humanitarian crisis after nearly two years of devastating war.

Amman condemned the attack, calling it "a threat to the kingdom's interests and to its ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip."—APP

Qatar's emir heads to New York to participate in UN General Assembly

CAIRO: Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad AlThani has left for New York to participate in an upcoming meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, Qatar's Amiri Diwan said on Sunday. World leaders are gathering in New York as the war between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip approaches two years. A humanitarian crisis is worsening in the Palestinian enclave, where a global hunger monitor has warned that famine has taken hold and is likely to spread by the end of the month.—APP

Lebanon says one dead in Israel strike on south

BEIRUT: Lebanon said an Israeli strike killed one person in the south on Saturday, the latest deadly attack despite a months-old ceasefire between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group.

An AFP correspondent saw first responders attending the scene in the Marjayoun area, where the partially burnt-out wreckage of a white vehicle sat beside the road "The Israeli enemy strike on a vehicle on the Al-Khardali road killed one person," the health ministry said in a statement. Israel has continued to carry out attacks on Lebanon despite the November truce that sought to end more than a year of hostilities with the Iran-backed group. It has also maintained troops in five areas of the south it deems strategic. The Israeli military has said previous strikes targeted suspected Hezbollah militants or facilities. On Friday, Israeli strikes killed two people in the south the military said were Hezbollah operatives. A day earlier, the Israeli military said it struck Hezbollah weapons storage facilities in several areas after urging civilians to flee.

In the face of heavy US pressure and fears of expanded Israeli strikes, the Lebanese government is seeking to disarm Hezbollah. Foreign Minister Youssef Raggi has said the army will complete the disarmament of its militants in the border area within three months. The army said Thursday's strikes took Israeli violations of the ceasefire to 4,500 and warned they risked slowing down Hezbollah's disarmament.—APP



FAISALABAD: PM's Political Adviser Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan offering dua after inaugurating the renovation of FCCI complex.

Israel kills 34 people in Gaza ahead of UN meeting

The latest Israeli operation, which began this week, further escalates a conflict that has roiled the Middle East and likely pushes any ceasefire further out of reach. The Israeli military, which says it wants to "destroy Hamas' military infrastructure" and has urged Palestinians to leave, hasn't given a timeline for the offensive, but there were indications it could take months

CAIRO: Israeli strikes killed at least 34 people in Gaza City overnight, including children, said health officials on Sunday, as Israel presses ahead with its offensive in the famine-stricken city and several countries prepare to recognize a Palestinian state Health officials at Shifa Hospital, where most of the bodies were brought, said the dead included 14 people killed in a late-night strike Saturday, which hit a residential block in the southern side of the city. Health staff said a nurse who worked at the hospital was among the dead, along with his wife and three children. The latest Israeli operation, which began this week, further escalates a conflict that has roiled the Middle East and likely pushes any ceasefire further out of reach. The Israeli military, which says it wants to "destroy Hamas' military infrastructure" and has urged Palestinians to leave, hasn't given a timeline for the offensive, but there were indications it could take months. Several countries to

recognize a Palestinian State Saturday night's strikes come as some prominent Western countries prepare to recognize Palestinian statehood at the gathering of world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly on Monday. They include the UK, France, Canada, Australia, Malta, Belgium and Luxembourg. Portugal's Foreign Affairs Ministry said it will recognize a Palestinian state on Sunday. Ahead of the UN assembly, peace activists in Israel have hailed the planned recognition of a Palestinian state. On Sunday, a group of more than 60 Jewish and Arab peace and reconciliation organizations, known as It's Time Coalition, called for an end to the war, the release of the hostages and the recognition of a Palestinian state. "We refuse to live forever by the sword. The UN decision offers a historic opportunity to move from a death trap to life, from an endless messianic war to a future of security and freedom for both peoples," said the coalition in a video

statement. Yet a ceasefire remains elusive. Israel bombardment over the past 23 months has killed more than 65,000 people in Gaza, destroyed vast areas of the strip, displaced around 90 percent of the population and caused a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with experts saying Gaza City is experiencing famine. Israel claims killing a Hamas sniper Israel didn't respond to the strikes overnight Saturday. In a statement Sunday, the military said it killed Majed Abu Selmiya, who it said was a sniper for Hamas' military wing and was preparing to carry out more attacks in the Gaza City area, without providing evidence. The alleged militant is the brother of the director of Shifa hospital, Dr. Mohamed Abu Selmiya, who called the allegations a lie and said Israel was trying to justify the killing of civilians. Dr. Selmiya told The Associated Press that his brother, 57, suffered from hypertension, diabetes and had vision problems. As the attacks continue, Israel has ordered hundreds of thousands

of Palestinians sheltering in Gaza City to move south to what it calls a humanitarian zone and opened another corridor south of the city for two days this week to allow more people to evacuate. Palestinians were streaming out of Gaza City by car and on foot, though many are unwilling to be uprooted again, too weak to leave or unable to afford the cost of moving. Along the coastal Wadi Gaza route, those too exhausted to continue stopped to catch their breath and give their children a much-needed break from the difficult journey. Aid groups have warned that forcing thousands of people to evacuate will exacerbate the dire humanitarian crisis. They are appealing for a ceasefire so aid can reach those who need it.

Families of hostages still held by Hamas are also calling for a ceasefire, accusing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of condemning their loved ones to death by continuing to fight rather than negotiating an end to the war.—Agencies

Trump to lead tributes at memorial for US conservative leader Kirk

GLENDAL: US President Donald Trump and top officials in his administration will lead tributes to Charlie Kirk on Sunday at a stadium gathering in Arizona, after the influential conservative activist was gunned down last week.

Kirk, 31, was fatally shot in the neck on September 10 while speaking at a Utah university as part of his popular public debate series Authorities arrested a suspect after a 33-hour manhunt, with prosecutors seeking the death penalty in the case. The killing of the young conservative leader, founder of the Turning Point USA right-wing youth action campaign, has further deepened acrimonious political divisions in the United States. Authorities say the suspected 22-year-old gunman cited the "hatred" he believed was stoked by Kirk — who was a vitriolic critic of transgender people, Muslims and others. Kirk used his millions of social media followers, the massive audience of his podcast and appearances at universities to bolster Trump with young voters and fight for a nationalist, Christian-centric political ideology. Even before the alleged killer was identified or arrested, Trump called Kirk "a martyr for truth and freedom" and blamed the rhetoric of the "radical left."— The US president has lauded Kirk's role in helping him get re-elected in November last year. In Phoenix, outside Turning Point USA's headquarters, hundreds marched on Saturday to lay flowers, American flags, and red, white and blue balloons. NThe sidewalk was filled with tributes to Kirk, depicted in photos with the slogan "Faith, Family, Freedom.—APP

Pak eyes \$30–40b annual revenue through tourism: Yasir

ISLAMABAD Prime Minister's Coordinator for Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas has said that Pakistan, with its natural beauty, historic monuments, rare cultural heritage, ancient festivals, and diverse religious sites, is a paradise for travelers and has the capacity to generate \$30–40 billion annually through tourism. In an exclusive interview with APP, he announced that Pakistan will host its first international "Tourism Road Expo" in November, showcasing local attractions, traditional cuisine, and cultural diversity. The event will feature cooking competitions with international chefs, while similar expos are also planned for London, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Saudi Arabia. Calling Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's decision to declare tourism an industry a "historic and visionary step," he said the move would not only strengthen the economy but also enhance Pakistan's image abroad. He added that tourism had long been neglected, especially after the 18th Amendment, when provinces pursued individual efforts. To ensure national-level coordination, the government is reviving and restructuring the National Tourism Coordination Board. To attract investment, Sardar Yasir revealed that unused government properties will be leased to local and foreign investors for 50–60 years to establish modern tourist facilities. In parallel, digital e-portals are being developed to provide tourists with details of destinations, hotel bookings, weather updates, and travel guidance. A new branding slogan — "Pakistan: Where Beauty Greet, History Speaks, and Adventure Leaves" — will be launched to highlight Pakistan's diverse opportunities in medical, religious, adventure, and eco-tourism. However, he cautioned that deforestation and climate change are major threats to tourism. "Large-scale plantation drives and removal of encroachments along rivers and lakes are necessary to preserve our environment and protect tourism," he stressed. Highlighting upcoming initiatives, he said new projects under consideration include food streets at F-9 Park and Lake View Park in Islamabad, three mini-parks, and a safari forest in Fateh Jang. On religious tourism, he said the government is committed to providing more facilities for Sikh pilgrims, while gurdwaras and Buddhist heritage sites will be restored and handed over to respective communities for care and upkeep. He further said Pakistan has greatly simplified its visa regime. Tourists from 126 countries can now apply online, visa fees have been abolished, and further steps are being taken to ease travel access. "Foreign visitors are often amazed by Pakistan's landscapes, cultural richness, and hospitality. Our aim is to help more people discover this 'hidden paradise,'" he remarked. Noting that Pakistan has never marketed its tourism potential effectively, he pointed out that Central Asian states like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan attract millions of visitors annually despite offering less diversity. "Pakistan, with its four seasons and greater geographical variety, has far more to offer," he emphasized. He also underlined the role of social media and vloggers in promoting Pakistan's image worldwide. Turning to the country's youth, Sardar Yasir urged them to gain expertise in e-commerce, crypto, and emerging technologies, while also exploring opportunities in the hospitality and tourism sector. "Tourism is a powerful driver of employment and economic growth, and an important way to showcase Pakistan's positive global image," he concluded.—DNA

Future bleak unless Ukraine invests in young sporting talent: athletics chief

Not only was it a way of safeguarding the future of track and field in Ukraine, it also provides "a way to help children escape the harsh realities of war, giving them a sense of happiness and warmth during these dark times", she said

TOKYO: Ukraine needs to "invest in youth sports now" despite the ongoing war with Russia or "there may be no-one to represent" the country at future international events, the president of its athletics federation has told AFP. Olha Saladukha, a former triple jumper who won world gold in 2011, said despite the grinding conflict Ukraine was looking to the future. "What matters most to us is the next generation," she told AFP by email. "We are aware that many children have left Ukraine due to the war, and it is uncertain if they will return," while others had been killed or abducted. Ukrainian coaches and athletes across all sports have been killed and a massive amount of infrastructure destroyed in the war. "If we do not invest in youth sports now, we risk losing an entire generation, and in a few years, there may be no one to represent Ukraine at the world championships or the Olympic Games," she added. Saladukha said Ukraine was creating pro-

jects for children's athletics, developing clubs, and offering training and workshops for youth coaches. "We regularly organise exciting competitions for kids," she said. Not only was it a way of safeguarding the future of track and field in Ukraine, it also provides "a way to help children escape the harsh realities of war, giving them a sense of happiness and warmth during these dark times", she said. Ukraine sent a 23-member team to the world championships in Tokyo and have been represented at every major global event since Russia invaded in February 2022. Yaroslava Mahuchikh, the Olympic women's high jump champion, won Ukraine's only medal in Tokyo, a bronze. Her height of 1.97 metres was 13cm below the world record she set last year although the competition was affected by torrential rain. World Athletics president Sebastian Coe has been Ukraine's most steadfast supporter in the sporting world. Unlike some sports in which

Russia and Belarus, regarded as Moscow's allies, are allowed to compete as neutral athletes, they are barred outright from athletics, even at the Olympics. Saladukha, who admits "it is difficult to predict how much of (the infrastructure) can be rebuilt, but we will do everything possible", said sending young athletes to international events was crucial.

"For these young competitors, participating in international events is also about finding meaning and hope for themselves," She highlighted how Ukrainian under-18 and under-20 coach Anna Ryzhykova had taken a group of more than 100 young athletes to compete in Brno, in the Czech Republic. Ryzhykova, a two-time European championships 400m hurdles silver medalist, told AFP she was "emotionally exhausted by the war" and needed a change as she had lost the joy of competing. She admits her coaching role "is a huge responsibility" but she feels ready to bring through the next generation of Ukrain-

ian talent. "The most important thing is for to give talented children a chance in life through sport," she told AFP. "When you have lost almost everything, sport can be the pathway to achieve your dreams through your own effort.

"Beyond the medals, this is about building hope and resilience for the next generation. "By investing in young athletes now, we're not only nurturing future champions but also keeping alive the spirit of Ukraine, building a strong society." Ryzhykova said athletics was an unforgiving world and even after experiencing constant bombardments, athletes still had to perform. "In Ukraine we live in a distorted reality where, after a night of attacks, everyone still turns up to training and competitions as if nothing happened," said the 35-year-old.

"Fear and sleepless nights are never an excuse for poor performance.

"For someone living abroad, it's difficult to understand what we feel. "After four years of full-scale war, it has become almost 'normal'. Children are afraid of loud sounds, they study and sleep in basements, and they can tell by ear whether it's a drone or a missile." — APP

OEC starts Japanese language course for skilled workers

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) has launched a short Japanese language course for skilled workers to get jobs in Japan as basic knowledge is must for job seekers who were interested to work in Japan.

An official source told APP, he said that OEC as a manpower promotion public agency which was playing a vital role to provide maximum jobs to Pakistanis abroad to generate the huge remittances. In this regard, OEC seeking application from eligible candidate to apply for the Japanese language course, should have minimum education middle, 18-39 age limits and one year experience must for relevant field.

Course fee was Rs 10000 non-refundable and course duration around three months and two session one in morning and other in an evening. He said, "All interested candidates those are seeking jobs in Japan could visit jobs.oec.gov.pk/jlt_form."—APP

ISNET to conduct international training courses this month

ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology (ISNET), established under COMSTECH, is set to organize two international training courses this month in collaboration with Pakistan's national space agency, SUPARCO.

The initiative aims to strengthen technical expertise in applying space science and technology for sustainable development among member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

As a founding and host member of ISNET, SUPARCO continues to play a central role in advancing the network's mandate of capacity building, knowledge exchange, and promoting the peaceful use of space science.

The first course, Programming for Web GIS Development Using Open-Source Technologies, will be held in Lahore from September 22–26.

The program will provide hands-on training in cartography, Web GIS, spatial databases, user interface development, spatial analysis, and report generation. Given the growing importance of Web GIS in disaster management, climate monitoring, agriculture, and urban planning, the training will emphasize practical applications.

A special session by an international expert from Azerbaijan on "GeoServer 2.0 for Space Applications" will highlight the integration of open data, cloud AI, and machine learning for advanced Earth insights. Delegates from Sudan, Senegal, Iraq, Tunisia, Türkiye, and Libya are participating in the training.—APP

Egyptians outraged after ancient pharaoh's bracelet was stolen

CAIRO: Egyptians reacted with outrage this week after officials said that a 3,000-year-old bracelet that had belonged to an ancient pharaoh was stolen from Cairo's famed Egyptian Museum and then melted down for gold. Tourism and Antiquities Minister Sherif Fathy said in televised comments late Saturday that the bracelet was stolen on Sep. 9 while officials at the museum were preparing artifacts for an exhibit in Italy. He blamed "laxity" in implementing procedures at the facility and said that prosecutors were still investigating the theft. The bracelet, containing a lapis lazuli bead, belonged to Pharaoh Amenemope, who reigned about 3,000 years ago. Authorities said it was taken from a restoration lab at the museum and then funneled through a chain of dealers before being melted down. The minister said the lab didn't have security cameras.—APP

Briefs

White House
says H1B visa
fee one time

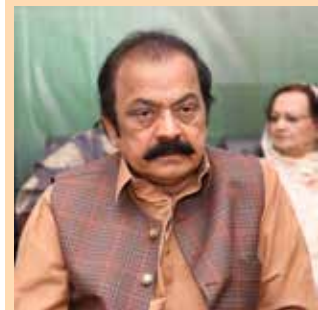
WASHINGTON: The White House issued a major clarification Saturday to its new H-1B visa policy that had rattled the tech industry, saying a \$100,000 fee will be a "one-time" payment imposed only on new applicants. US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, in announcing the major fee increase on Friday, said it would be paid annually, and would apply to people seeking a new visa as well as renewals. But White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt issued a clarification on Saturday, hours before the new policy was to go into effect. "This is NOT an annual fee. It's a one-time fee that applies... only to new visas, not renewals, and not current visa holders," she said in a social media post. The executive order, which is likely to face legal challenges, comes into force Sunday at 12:01 am US Eastern time (0401 GMT), or 9:01 pm Saturday on the Pacific Coast. — Agencies

CM takes
notice
of rising
fodder prices

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed authorities to ensure provision of fodder for livestock in flood-affected areas, saying the government is committed to protecting both human lives and animals during natural calamities. Taking notice of reports regarding rising fodder prices, the chief minister ordered immediate measures to provide silage, vanda and other feed in flood-hit districts. Provincial Minister for Livestock Ashiq Hussain Kirmani briefed the Chief Minister that 4.7 million livestock were affected by floods across Punjab, out of which 2.2 million had been safely shifted to secure places, 500,000 were treated in affected areas, and 2 million vaccinated. He added that 824 livestock had been reported missing so far. — APP

Pak-Saudi pact signals emerging
joint Muslim 'superpower'

PM's aide says agreement strengthens Pak's standing as other countries increasingly look to it for defence support



ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations have taken a historic step with a new agreement that, according to Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs, Rana Sanaullah, represents the materialisation of a long-held dream of Muslim unity. Speaking on Geo News programme "Jirga", Sanaullah said the pact signals the coming together of two major powers — Pakistan's nuclear strength and Saudi Arabia's economic influence — creating a potential "superpower" presence. He described the agreement as a "good omen" for the Muslim world and said it includes provisions to enhance defence production. He added that any attack on Pakistan would be treated as an attack on Saudi Arabia and vice versa, underscoring the pact's strategic depth. The PM's aide also emphasised that Pakistan had always maintained a defensive stance. "Our position has been clear: we do not initiate aggression. 'If India attacks, we will respond,'" he said, noting Pakistan's strong responses in past conflicts. "Pakistan's stance has always been defensive," Sanaullah emphasised. Sanaullah suggested that the deal was unprecedented outside the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) and indicated that even US would have no objections.

FBR announces crackdown
against wealthy individuals

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has decided to launch a crackdown against wealthy individuals who are potential tax dodgers and those involved in massive misdeclaration of their assets and income. The idea of launching a crackdown was triggered when the FBR found that only 1,100 individuals have declared a net worth of Rs1 billion. This number further shrinks to just 100 people who have declared assets or income worth Rs3 billion across the country. "The FBR has assigned a team for social media monitoring to identify potential tax dodgers in major urban centres of Pakistan and has found hundreds of such individuals," top official sources in the FBR confirmed while talking to the publication. "A dedicated team under the supervision of the FBR's Intelligence and Investigation Inland Revenue Service director general has been tasked to identify and then launch a crackdown against those who are shown to be worth billions of rupees but declared much less or even nil income in their filed tax returns," the sources added. The official sources said that the FBR identified event managers in one of the major urban centres who managed a wedding event where Rs148 million was spent. This

one event management company arranged four to six marriages per month. The whole idea of launching a crackdown against potential tax dodgers was triggered when the FBR scrutinised the tax returns of 2024 and found that only 1,100 people across Pakistan declared assets worth Rs1 billion. When the criteria were further narrowed and the benchmark was set at holding assets or income worth Rs3 billion, the number decreased to just 100 individuals out of a total population of 240 million in the country. The FBR, the official sources said, has deputed 450 Inland Revenue Service (IRS) inspectors across the country who have been assigned to conduct on-ground surveys to verify and check those who declared significantly fewer assets and income than they actually possess. Initially, the FBR has identified three to four major areas. For instance, social media monitoring will be closely watched to identify those involved in showing off their wealth. The FBR has secured information from event management companies to identify potential tax dodgers and found hundreds of individuals who have spent multi-million rupees on arranging marriage functions. They have spent millions on buying jewellery and organising wedding events. The FBR also identified a showroom owner whose assets are worth billions of rupees but who showed negligible income in his filed return.

Bagram airbase: the happy
invasion, the Humiliating Exit

Simultaneously, President Trump has publicly declared his intention to reclaim Bagram Air Base, emphasizing its strategic location near China's nuclear facilities

ABDUL WAHEED WAHEED

Recent U.S. policy signals point toward a potentially disruptive new phase in Afghanistan's fragile political landscape. The U.S. House of Representatives has approved an amendment to the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, instructing the Pentagon to share intelligence with remnants of the former Afghan army, police units, and other designated resistance forces in order to counter the Taliban. Simultaneously, President Trump has publicly declared his intention to reclaim Bagram Air Base, emphasizing its strategic location near China's nuclear facilities. Taken together, these moves suggest that Washington's interest in Afghanistan is being rekindled—not solely for counterterrorism purposes but also for broader geostrategic calculations involving China's rise and Afghanistan's vast mineral wealth. Trump's claim that America must hold Bagram to "check China" resonates with his political base, but the reality is far more complex. On the surface, reoccupying Bagram fits neatly into his narrative of strength: the U.S. lost it in a "shameful" withdrawal in 2021, and regaining it would restore pride while countering Beijing's influence. Yet translating this rhetoric into reality would mean violating Afghanistan's sovereignty, navigating a hostile Taliban-led government, and risking another open-end-

ed military entanglement. It would also provoke direct tensions with China, Russia, and other regional powers that now view Afghanistan as part of their security sphere. Trump's bold framing masks the deeper geopolitical consequences of such a move. Although Washington retains overwhelming military power, history shows that conquering territory is far easier than sustaining it. Bagram, both symbolic and strategic, has humbled great powers before. The Soviets held it in the 1980s, and the U.S. occupied it for two decades, yet neither succeeded in converting military presence into durable political control. Afghanistan's unforgiving geography, fractured politics, and fiercely independent people have long resisted foreign domination. Even if Washington were to reestablish a foothold at Bagram, maintaining it would demand immense political will, vast financial resources, and, above all, local legitimacy—none of which are assured after America's chaotic 2021 withdrawal. The true challenge lies not in seizing territory, but in governing and sustaining influence in a land that has historically defied external rulers. Meanwhile, the Taliban continue consolidating power at home. From Kandahar to Badakhshan, they have restored a measure of order, curtailed corruption, and established a functioning—if harsh—system of justice. Yet international recognition remains elusive, while relations with Pakistan are fraught. The unresolved Durand Line, decades of mistrust, and Pakistan's persis-

tent interference collide with the Taliban's anti-Pakistan rhetoric, creating a cycle of hostility that undermines regional stability. The U.S. decision to share intelligence with anti-Taliban forces further complicates the situation. Framed as counterterrorism support, it bolsters resistance groups, undermines the Taliban's domestic authority, and risks reigniting civil conflict. Coupled with Pakistan's strategic maneuvers, these developments threaten to destabilize a country whose people are weary of endless war. Ordinary Afghans, hardened by decades of conflict, remain determined to resist any renewed attempt—by a superpower or a neighbor—to impose turmoil on their land. Regional dynamics add another layer of fragility. The Taliban claim to restrict militant activity, yet neighbors—including Pakistan, China, Iran, and Uzbekistan—remain deeply concerned about foreign fighters finding refuge on Afghan soil. The failure of the August 20 trilateral meeting of China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to issue a joint communiqué underscored both the limits of Taliban control and the difficulty of forging regional consensus on counterterrorism. Afghanistan's challenges are therefore not merely internal but deeply entangled with regional rivalries and global power plays. For the Taliban, the test lies in consolidating authority at home while engaging constructively with neighbors and demonstrating tangible commitments to counterterrorism. For the United States, the dilem-

ma is whether backing anti-Taliban forces can genuinely produce stability—or risks plunging Afghanistan into renewed conflict. For Pakistan, the imperative is to abandon short-term proxy strategies and work toward durable, mutually beneficial relations that prioritize stability over leverage.

Afghanistan once again stands at a crossroads. Whether it consolidates fragile peace or slides back into turbulence depends on the actions of the Taliban, the United States, Pakistan, and other regional powers. But above all, it depends on the Afghan people—who, after generations of conflict, demand peace, stability, and economic security. Any external maneuver that ignores these aspirations is likely to face resistance from the very population it claims to protect. A pragmatic way forward requires responsibility on all sides. The Taliban must move beyond rhetoric and implement credible steps toward fulfilling the Doha Agreement. The United States must resist the temptation of unilateral intelligence operations that risk reigniting proxy wars, instead investing in diplomacy, economic incentives, and reconstruction. Pakistan must reckon with its history of miscalculations, recognizing that long-term stability lies not in grievances or militant leverage, but in fostering cooperation. History has shown that Afghanistan resists being reduced to a chessboard for external ambitions. Respecting that truth—and the resilience of its people—is central to shaping a stable and sustainable future.



URUMQI: President Asif Ali Zardari being seen off at Kashgar's Laining International Airport by CPC Party Secretary of Kashgar and Vice Governor of Xinjiang, Mr. Nie Zhuang. — DNA

Panic among H1B
visa holders after
Trump announcement

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Panic, confusion, and anger reigned as workers on H-1B visas from India and China were forced to abandon travel plans and rush back to the US after President Donald Trump imposed new visa fees, in line with his wide-ranging immigration crackdown. Tech companies and banks sent urgent memos to employees, advising them to return before a deadline of 12:01am. Eastern Time Sunday (4:01 am GMT), and telling them not to leave the country. A White House official on Saturday clarified that the order applied only to new applicants and not holders of existing visas or those seeking renewals, addressing some of the confusion over who would be affected by the order. But Trump's proclamation a day before had already set off alarm bells in Silicon Valley. Fearing they would not be allowed back once the new rule took effect, several Indian nationals at San Francisco airport said they cut short their vacations. "It is a situation where we had to choose between family and staying here," said an engineer at a large tech company whose wife had been on an Emirates flight from San Francisco to Dubai that was scheduled to depart at 5:05pm local time (12:05am GMT). The flight was delayed by more than three hours after several Indian passengers who received news of the order or memos from their employers demanded to deplane, said person who spoke on condition of anonymity.

EU envoy vows strong advocacy
for human rights in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The European Union's Ambassador to Pakistan, Raimundas Karoblis, has reaffirmed the EU's commitment to promoting and safeguarding human rights in Pakistan, emphasizing that democratic health is closely linked to the ability of civil society and watchdog organisations to work without intimidation. Speaking at his first public engagement in Pakistan, Ambassador Karoblis chose to address an audience of leading human rights defenders and organisations, including the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). He said it was an honour to dedicate his maiden interaction to those who play a vital role in upholding the rights of citizens. "The ability of HRCP and other organisations to monitor and raise human rights issues without fear of reprisals is a crucial indicator of the country's democratic health," Ambassador Karoblis stated. He further underscored that the European Union would remain a steadfast partner of Pakistan in this domain. "The EU will continue to diligently advocate for human rights in Pakistan during my tenure, and the upcom-



ing GSP+ monitoring mission plays an important role in that regard," he added. The Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) status allows Pakistan preferential access to EU markets, contingent upon compliance with international human rights and labour standards. The envoy noted that the monitoring mission later this year would be a significant milestone in assessing Pakistan's progress on its commitments. Human rights activists welcomed the envoy's remarks, describing them as a timely reassurance of international support for civil society in Pakistan, where rights groups have often faced mounting pressure. Diplomatic observers say the ambassador's decision to prioritize human rights in his first public engagement signals the EU's determination to keep the issue central to its engagement with Pakistan.

Govt to
capture
African
market

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan has said that the government was committed to economic and trade integration with the African market according to the vision of "look African Campaign." He shared this in a round-table with African envoys serving in Islamabad on "Pakistan Africa Connectivity - Engage Africa Policy of Pakistan. The event was chaired by H.E Hamid Asghar Khan while Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, President Pakistan Africa Institute for Development Research (PAIDAR) graced the event with his special appearance as keynote speaker. Saleem Ahmad Ranjha, renowned ex official and business consultant They included HE Dr. Ibrahim Romani of Algeria, Ms Harerimana Fatou of Rwanda, Salih Mohamed Ahmed of Sudan, HE Titus Mehliwa Johnathan Abu Basutu of Zimbabwe, HE Lt. General (R) Peter Mbogo Njiru of Kenya, Rudolph Pierre Jordean of South Africa, Yushau Mohammed of Nigeria, Mahomed Abdirahman Hersi of Somalia, DHM of Morocco, Umar Shahid Butt, Vice Consul Ghana. The envoys shared the present status of cooperation between their countries and Pakistan. They pointed out the gaps to bridge and suggested the measures, if taken, can enhance the level of trade between the sides.

DG ISPR
visits Cadet
College
Palandri

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, visited Cadet College Palandri and held a special session with the students and faculty members. According to a news release issued by ISPR, the students and faculty paid glowing tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces for inflicting a humiliating defeat on India in Marka-e-Haq. They also thanked the DG ISPR for giving comprehensive answers to their questions. Speaking on the occasion, the Principal said, "The DG ISPR's words and resolve have further strengthened our morale." He said that as responsible citizens, it is essential to verify news circulating on social media. The students and faculty members remarked that India would once again face humiliation if it attempted any aggression. "As Kashmiris, we firmly believe that Kashmir is the jigsaw vein of Pakistan," they said. They further said that Pakistan and Kashmir are inseparable, and no power could divide them. "As per Quaid-e-Azam's vision, Kashmir was, is, and will remain a part of Pakistan," they asserted.

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