



Islamabad POST

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Kazakh President keen to have rail link with Pakistan

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Pak-Australia ties cordial, says Gilani

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Uzbek-Pak relations excellent

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Invites investors to Pakistan

PM for formulation of roadmap to boost trade, investment

Premier orders reform agenda to be devised with future in mind for organised progress towards goals

DNA

LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed authorities to develop a comprehensive roadmap and a reform agenda with practical projects to promote investment and trade in all key sectors. Chairing a high-level meeting on enhancing investment volume, economic and trade activities in Pakistan, the premier emphasised that agriculture, IT, minerals, tourism, and renewable energy were important sectors that could attract foreign investment. Along with investment, he said, promoting trade was also part of the government's policy to significantly increase exports of the country. PM Shehbaz said that targets had been given to the ministries to utilise all available resources to ensure the timely completion of all ongoing projects. He also instructed all ministers to identify feasible projects and take immediate steps to put them into practice. For this purpose, he said a roadmap and a reform agenda should be devised with the future in mind, so that progress toward our goals can be made in an organised manner. The prime minister emphasised that the private sector will play a pivotal role in the economic roadmap and its participation will be ensured. "Our ongoing economic and financial reform policies have given a new direction to the economy, and due to the innovation and transparency, the country is now on the path of development," he added. The meeting, held via Zoom from London, was attended by Federal Minister for Environment Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervez Malik, Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Jehanzeb, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal, Federal Minister for Information Attaulah Tarar, and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema. The premier's remarks come as he reached the UK after signing a historic mutual defence pact with Saudi Arabia. The PM is now set to lead Pakistan's

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PM Shehbaz leaves for New York

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday departed for New York from London to participate in the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Premier Shehbaz — accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, as well as other ministers and senior government officials — will lead Pakistan's delegation to the high-level segment of the UNGA, scheduled for today. During his visit, the prime minister is scheduled to address the 80th session of the UN General Assembly. On the sidelines of the UNGA session, the prime minister is also expected to hold meetings with several world leaders. In a statement issued earlier, the Foreign Office had mentioned that PM Shehbaz will participate in a meeting of "select" Muslim leaders with US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UNGA session. "The prime minister will also participate in a meeting of select Islamic leaders with US President Trump to exchange views on issues pertaining to regional and international peace and security," the FO said. At UNGA, PM Shehbaz will urge the international community to resolve the situations of prolonged occupation and denial of the right to self-determination from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Palestine. "He will draw the attention of the international community towards the grave crisis in Gaza, and call for decisive action to end

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Briefs

UAE bans visas for 9 countries

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates has enforced a visa ban for 2026 that impacts nine nations across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Citizens of these countries are temporarily barred from applying for both tourist and work visas, according to an official immigration circular. The restrictions apply to citizens of Uganda, Sudan, Somalia, Cameroon, Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen, Lebanon, and Bangladesh. Applications from these nations will not be processed until further notice. However, the UAE has clarified that residents already holding valid visas are not affected by the decision. While the UAE government has not provided an official explanation, reports link the ban to security concerns, strained diplomatic ties, and lingering health-related protocols introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dar attends meeting in New York

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Senator Ishaq Dar, participated in consultations hosted by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar, H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in New York today. Other participants included the Deputy Prime Ministers of Jordan and UAE, and Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The Ministers exchanged views and coordinated positions for unified approach on some of the key issues at the UN General Assembly Session. DPM/PM Dar underscored the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation that existed between Pakistan and Islamic countries.

Tit-for-Tat

Russia offers to extend nuclear arms limits with US

Putin says measure needed to prevent strategic arms race with Washington

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday offered to keep abiding by nuclear warhead limits agreed with the United States once a key treaty expires, but only for one year and if Washington did the same. The New START treaty, signed in 2010, limits the number of nuclear warheads each side can deploy and is the last major arms proliferation agreement between the two nuclear powers. It is set to expire on February 5, 2026, and neither side has agreed to an extension. "Russia is prepared to continue adhering to the central quantitative limitations of the New START Treaty for one year after February 5, 2026," Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a televised meeting. He said the measure was needed to prevent "a strategic arms race" with Washington. "We believe that this measure will only be viable if the United States acts in a similar manner and does not take steps that undermine or disrupt the existing

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Trump will sign order on Tik-Tok

NEWS DESK / DNA

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump will sign an executive order later this week declaring that a deal to divest TikTok's US operations from its Chinese owner, ByteDance, will meet requirements set out in a 2024 law, a White House official said on Monday. Washington is confident that China has approved the deal and does not plan further talks with Beijing about its details, the official told reporters on a conference call, but added that additional paperwork is required from both sides to finalise the deal.

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Mustafa to challenge returning of his plea

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Tehreek-i-Tahafuz-i-Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) leader Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar on Monday said he would file an appeal against the Supreme Court (SC) registrar's move of returning the former senator's plea seeking the apex court's intervention for the fixation of pending petitions challenging the 26th Constitutional Amendment before the full court. "This amounts to undermining and closing the doors of justice. Will file an appeal," Khokhar said on X. The 26th Constitutional Amendment takes away the SC's suo motu powers, sets the chief justice of Pakistan's (CJP) term at three years and empowers a special parliamentary committee to

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JCC on CPEC to take place in Beijing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has departed for China to attend the 14th Joint Coordination Committee meeting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, scheduled in Beijing on Friday. Before leaving for China, in a statement, the Minister underlined the strategic significance of the meeting in shaping the future of Pakistan-China economic cooperation. He said China has always stood by

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FOUNDATION DAY OF CHINA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gilani, Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi, Ambassador of China and others cutting cake to celebrate the 76th Anniversary of Founding of People's Republic of China. — DNA

Amidst UN curbs

Hardline MPs in Iran demand nuclear bomb

Seventy members of parliament sign a letter calling for a 'change in the defence doctrine' of the nation

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Hardline lawmakers in Iran have once again demanded the country start building a nuclear bomb as Western powers are days away from reimposing United Nations sanctions amid concerns war could restart with Israel. Led by a lawmaker from the ultraconservative holy Shia city of Mashhad in northeastern Iran, 70 members of parliament signed onto a letter calling for a "change in the defence doctrine" of the theocratic establishment. The letter, published by the state-run Fars news website, was not directly addressed to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei because his commands cannot be second-guessed by other authorities. Instead, it was directed at members of the Supreme National Security Council, which is in charge of the nuclear file and includes the president, judiciary and parliament chiefs. Iran has long

argued that its nuclear programme is for civilian purposes and it has no intention of pursuing an atomic bomb, even though archrival Israel is known to be the only nuclear-armed power in the region. The lawmakers argued that a fatwa, or an ultimate religious ruling, issued by Khomeini about two decades ago that prohibits the use of nuclear bombs does not technically forbid building or keeping them as deterrence. They warned that Israel "has reached the brink of madness", "attacks without respecting any international obligations and kills innocent people". Such rhetoric has intensified significantly among the more hardline elements of Iran's establishment in the aftermath of Israel's surprise attacks on Iran in June that triggered a 12-day war and also saw Washington intervene on Israel's behalf and bomb Iran's main nuclear facilities.

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Fresh polio case reported in Sindh

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tops list for reported cases with 18 detections in ongoing year

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A new polio case has been detected in Sindh's Hyderabad district, raising the total number of reported cases to 27 this year, authorities confirmed on Monday. The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at Islamabad's National Institute of Health (NIH) said that the fresh case involved an eight-month-old girl from the province. The latest detec-

tion takes the total tally of cases in Sindh to seven this year. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) tops the list with 18 polio cases, followed by Sindh's seven cases. Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan have reported one case each this year so far. The detection of the case comes just weeks before a nationwide polio vaccination campaign, set to begin on October 13 and run through October 19. The drive — with participation from

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US push for Bagram Air Base raises questions

Yet, observers point out that the Taliban remain bound by certain obligations under the well-known Doha Accord signed on February 29, 2020. One clause of the agreement—widely believed to be classified—obliges the Taliban to honor specific US requests that ensure American strategic security in the region. With Qatar and Saudi Arabia as guarantors of the Doha Accord, the Taliban may find it difficult to completely ignore Washington's demands

SHAMIM SHAHID

AMIDST fast-moving global and regional developments, the administration of US President Donald Trump has demanded the return of Afghanistan's most vital military installation—the Bagram Air Base. Officially, Washington argues that regaining control of Bagram is necessary to counter what it calls the "nuclear expansion" of the People's Republic of China. However, analysts believe the move is far more complex than simply a China-centric strategy. So far, the Taliban leadership has firmly rejected the American request. Yet, observers point out that the Taliban remain bound by certain

obligations under the well-known Doha Accord signed on February 29, 2020. One clause of the agreement—widely believed to be classified—obliges the Taliban to honor specific US requests that ensure American strategic security in the region. With Qatar and Saudi Arabia as guarantors of the Doha Accord, the Taliban may find it difficult to completely ignore Washington's demands. The timing of this announcement is also noteworthy. It coincides with the signing of a landmark Pakistan-Saudi Arabia defense treaty, which has stirred debate across the region. Many analysts argue that the pact is designed to counter Israel's growing influence in the Middle East. Against this backdrop, Washington's renewed

interest in Bagram is being viewed as a direct reaction to shifting alliances. The strategic importance of Bagram cannot be overstated. Located in Parwan province, north of Kabul, the base is considered the gateway to the Afghan capital. During the Soviet era, Bagram played a decisive role in enabling successive pro-Moscow regimes—from Noor Muhammad Taraki to Dr. Najibullah—to defend Kabul until their final days. After 2001, it became the hub of US-led coalition operations, keeping the Taliban at bay for nearly two decades. Should Washington succeed in re-establishing its presence there, it would trigger significant politico-strategic changes across the region. Though Washington frames its renewed interest in Bagram as a response to Chi-

na's nuclear trajectory, geography tells another story. The base is far closer to Pakistan than to China, suggesting broader strategic intentions. For many, this reaffirms that Afghanistan remains a chessboard where global powers continue to play out their rivalries—this time with China, Pakistan, Iran, and the Gulf states at the center. It is worth recalling that before the Doha Accord, the US had also attempted to secure a bilateral deal with former Afghan president Hamid Karzai, who refused to comply. Today, despite their outward confidence, the Taliban are balancing between independence and the constraints of past commitments. Some factions appear determined to free themselves from old obligations, while others remain cautious of provok-

ing international isolation. At a time when China is expanding its economic and strategic footprint across Asia, the US faces an uphill battle to safeguard its own interests. Washington's recent redeployment in Bangladesh further signals its intent to reinforce influence in the Muslim world—a development that serves as a timely reminder for Pakistan, which is still celebrating the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime. For now, whether Bagram once again becomes the centerpiece of US regional strategy remains an open question. What is clear, however, is that Afghanistan's soil continues to host the great game of global powers—leaving its war-weary people once more at the mercy of outside ambitions.

CM, Turkish CG, BD HC, stress investment coop

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday held separate meetings with the newly appointed Consul General of Türkiye, Ergül Kadak and the newly appointed Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Muhammad Sakib Sadakat, at CM House. Welcoming both diplomats, the Chief Minister reaffirmed the Sindh government's full support and emphasised the importance of strengthening relations with brotherly Muslim countries. During his meeting with Kadak, Shah highlighted that Pakistan and Türkiye enjoy strong historical ties and stressed the need to further enhance bilateral trade. He briefed the Consul General about ongoing mega projects in Sindh, particularly in roads, energy, and water sectors, and invited Turkish investors to explore opportunities in public transport projects in Karachi, a city of over 21 million people. The Turkish Consul General appreciated Karachi's hospitality, calling it a "great city with loving people," and expressed a keen interest in investment opportunities. It was agreed that the head of Sindh's Investment Department would hold a follow-up meeting with the Turkish Consul General to discuss prospective projects. In his meeting with Sadakat, the Chief Minister said that Bangladesh and Pakistan are brotherly Muslim nations and emphasised the need to boost trade cooperation. Both sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations and exchanged views on Pakistan's recent flood situation. Shah reiterated that Sindh values its ties with both Türkiye and Bangladesh and looks forward to expanding cooperation in trade, investment, and development projects. _APP

Kundi highlights role of sports in journalism

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday emphasized the importance of sports and healthy activities for the journalistic community while addressing the final of the Inter-Media Cricket Tournament organized by the Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA). The final match, played at a local cricket ground, saw RISJA's team outplay Dawn News to claim the championship title. A large number of journalists, media professionals, and individuals from different walks of life enjoyed the match. Governor Kundi distributed prizes among the winning team and outstanding performers. He praised RISJA's efforts, saying that such events not only provide journalists with opportunities to engage in healthy activities but also contribute positively to the promotion of sports culture. He further said that sports and journalism share a common spirit of teamwork, discipline, and integrity. Just as athletes inspire society through their performance on the field, journalists serve the nation by presenting facts and raising awareness with responsibility and dedication. The Governor added that holding tournaments among media professionals strengthens bonds within the journalistic community and encourages a culture of unity, fitness, and positive competition. _APP

Health Minister vaccinates daughter live to counter myths

With this rollout, Pakistan becomes the 149th country to add the HPV vaccine to its national immunization program—an important step towards a cervical cancer-free future for millions of women and girls.



KARACHI: In a landmark move to protect millions of girls against cervical cancer, Pakistan has launched its first-ever nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign, targeting nearly 13 million girls aged 9–14 years. The campaign, which began on September 15 and will continue until September 27, initially covers Punjab, Sindh, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) in its first phase. At a national press briefing in Karachi, Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, set a powerful example by having his own daughter vaccinated live on stage. The gesture, aimed at dispelling misinformation, underscored the vaccine's safety and effectiveness while bolstering public trust in the campaign. "Cancer is a deadly disease that affects not just an individual but entire families, and prevention remains the best path forward," the Minister said. "In my 30-year political

career, I have never brought my family into the public eye. But to put an end to these baseless rumours, I took this step." The Minister was joined on stage by Dr. Aminah Khan, Country Director of Jhpiego Pakistan, Dr. Khurram Shahzad, Director Technical of the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI), and Dr. Zareef Uddin Khan, National Technical Focal Person, RIZ Consulting. D. Aminah Khan praised the symbolic act, calling it a "historic moment" for Pakistan's health sector. "By choosing to have his daughter vaccinated publicly, the Minister has sent a bold message of trust and commitment. This step will go a long way in debunking myths and reinforcing the importance of protecting the health of girls and women across Pakistan," she said. As a key technical and communication partner, Jhpiego has been instrumental in preparing for the campaign. Ahead of the rollout, it conducted a survey of nearly 4,700 caregivers of girls aged 9–14 years. Findings

revealed that only 19% of caregivers had heard of cervical cancer, and just 2% knew about the HPV vaccine. These insights have guided the campaign's communication strategies. To close awareness gaps, Jhpiego has trained teachers, civil society groups, and journalists through orientation programs and media briefings, while also producing Pakistan's first animated video on HPV vaccination. The campaign is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of National Health Services, the FDI, Gavi, WHO, UNICEF, and provincial health departments. Girls are being reached through schools, fixed EPI centers, outreach sites, and mobile vaccination teams. With this rollout, Pakistan becomes the 149th country to add the HPV vaccine to its national immunization program—an important step towards a cervical cancer-free future for millions of women and girls. —DNA

Shaza highlights modern facilities for young entrepreneurs

HYDERABAD: The National Incubation Center (NIC) Hyderabad, established under the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication's Ignite initiative, celebrated its third anniversary and held the graduation ceremony of 32 startups from its 4th and 5th cohorts on Monday. Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja was the chief guest on the occasion. The ceremony was attended by senior officials of the Ministry, Ignite, LMK, PTCL, Vice-Chancellor University of Sindh Prof. Dr. Khalil-ur-Rehman Khoumbati, Vice-Chancellor of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology Prof. Dr. Tauha Hussain Ali as well as representatives of the business community. Addressing the participants, the federal minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that Hyderabad's startups were a testament to the talent and determination of the country's youth. She noted that eight incubation centers across Pakistan were providing modern facilities and opportunities to young entrepreneurs, enabling the launch of multi-billion-rupee projects. She added that, on the directives of the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, special focus was being placed on fundraising and entrepreneurial training for startups. More than 300,000 youth were being trained annually under various programs to initiate their business ventures, she said. —APP

Peace in region not possible without resolving Kashmir dispute

SWABI: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, SAFRON, and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, here Monday said that peace in this region cannot be established without resolving the Kashmir dispute. He said Jammu and Kashmir is the lifeline of Pakistan, and this relationship is based on the statement of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said that the Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust (KORT) has now become a seven-star welfare model. He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony during his visit

to the modern complex of Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust in Swabi. The Federal Minister visited the modern complex of KORT in Swabi and addressed a special event held in honor of orphan children. On this occasion, he appreciated the services of the institution and said "KORT has provided facilities to orphan children beyond their imagination. This institution has become a seven-star welfare model." He paid tribute to the Chairman of KORT, Chaudhry Muhammad Akhtar, saying that everyone who has contributed to this noble cause deserves appreciation, and their efforts are commend-

able. He shared a personal experience of helping a child severely injured during floods in Shangla, saying such acts of kindness bring spiritual peace. Engineer Amir Muqam reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir is Pakistan's lifeline, and this is the foundation of our bond as per Quaid-e-Azam's statement. He said that the affiliation of KORT with Kashmir further strengthens its mission and ideology. He remarked that the services of KORT remind him of the Danish Schools initiated by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, where quality education, food, and accommodation are provided to underprivileged and orphaned children. The Federal Minister added that the children studying here will play an important role in shaping Pakistan's future. He recalled witnessing the devastation of the 2005 earthquake firsthand, which caused widespread destruction in five districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Kashmir. Now, when he visits those areas, he sees how the nation came together for their rehabilitation and rebuilding. KORT, which began its journey from Mirpur, Azad Kashmir, after the 2005 earthquake to support orphan children, is now also operating in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and taking care of orphan children there as well. —DNA

Balochistan to develop Civil Service Academy

QUETTA : Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti announced plans to elevate the Balochistan Civil Service Academy into a premier training institution for officers from across the country. Addressing a group of trainee assistant commissioners and section officers, Sarfraz Bugti shared his vision of transforming the academy into a center of excellence. "The day officers from Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and other regions come here for training will mark the realization of our dream," he said. Congratulating the trainees on their merit-based selection, Sarfraz Bugti praised the academy's evolution from humble beginnings into a thriving institution. He expressed confidence that it would soon be recognized nationwide for its quality and uniqueness. "This academy has grown from a small plant into a mighty tree," Bugti remarked. "It will become a place where officers from all provinces are proud to train." The Chief Minister urged the trainees to embrace their roles not just as officials, but as public servants and leaders. He emphasized that true success lies in serving the people, especially the most vulnerable. Bugti encouraged the officers to make service to the underprivileged their defining legacy, noting that while promotions are routine, it is meaningful service that earns lasting respect. — Reaffirming his commitment to the academy's development, Sarfraz Bugti pledged to provide all necessary resources to ensure its growth, just as support is being extended to other sectors. "My dream is for this institution to become so exemplary that officers from all provinces consider it an honor to train here," he stated. "We are here to guide you, and you must dedicate yourselves to public service." Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Bugti inaugurated the academy's new teaching and administrative block. The ceremony was attended by Parliamentary Secretary Abdul Majeed Badini, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Director General Dr. Abdul Hafeez Jamali, and other senior officials.

Army Act needs legislative intervention, rules Supreme Court

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has ruled that while the Army Act provides formal due process protections, it remains constitutionally incomplete in its application to civilians due to the absence of an independent right of appeal in civilian courts. In May 2025, the SC's constitutional bench gave its go-ahead for civilians to be tried in military courts. The apex court, in its short order, had delivered the verdict with a 5-2 majority. Justices Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Naeem Akhtar Afghan dissented. The case pertains to the military trials and the subsequent sentencing of civilians for their role in attacks on army installations during the riots that followed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's arrest on May 9, 2023. In its detailed order issued on Mon-

day, the apex court noted that the provisions of the Pakistan Army Act, 1952, were "not inherently unconstitutional," but underscored that the lack of a statutory right of appeal to the High Courts required legislative intervention. The court referred the matter to parliament, directing the government and lawmakers to enact suitable amendments in the Army Act and allied rules within 45 days. It stressed that the amendments must establish an independent appellate forum for civilians convicted by Court Martial or Military Courts under offences specified in Section 2(1)(d)(i) and (ii), read with Section 59(4) of the Act. The bench further observed that such institutional deference to parliament was necessary and expressed the expectation that the legislature would accord due respect to its directions while safeguarding civilian rights in the military justice framework.

Citing international law, including Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the court held that military tribunals are not inherently unconstitutional, provided they afford minimum guarantees of fairness, particularly an independent appellate process. The court rejected the argument that military courts violate Article 175(3) of the Constitution, which deals with separation of judiciary from executive. It said military courts operate under a distinct constitutional and statutory pathway, are limited in scope, and do not usurp the jurisdiction of ordinary courts. While acknowledging that sections 133 and 133-B of the Army Act provide internal avenues of appeal, the court found them inadequate for civilians. It held that, in light of Pakistan's constitutional evolution and obligations under international treaties such as the ICCPR, an inde-

pendent statutory right of appeal to the High Courts is necessary. The judgment also recorded that during proceedings, the attorney general had sought time from the bench to consult the government on introducing an independent right of appeal for civilians tried under the Army Act. He assured the court that any recommendation for statutory reform would be respected and seriously considered. Earlier in May, Justice Mandokhail and Justice Afghan dissented from the majority view, rejecting the appeals in a separate order and upholding the earlier judgment that had invalidated military trials of civilians. That ruling, delivered on October 23, 2023, by a five-member bench headed by Justice Ijazul Ahsan and comprising Justices Munib Akhtar, Yahya Afridi, Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Ayesha Malik, had declared such trials unconstitutional by a 4-1 majority.

KP CM reviews healthcare commission performance

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chaired a meeting of the Health Department here on Monday to review the performance of the Healthcare Commission over the past six months. According to a spokesperson for the Chief Minister's House, the meeting was attended by the Advisor to CM on Health, senior officials of the Health Department, and representatives of the Healthcare Commission Officials briefed the CM on the commission's performance from January to June 2025. It was informed that all decisions taken in

the previous meeting under the CM's chairmanship had been implemented. To enhance capacity, 24 new inspectors were recruited, and 10 new offices of the Healthcare Commission were established. Licensing rules were also approved by the provincial cabinet to strengthen the commission's legal framework. As of December 2024, the total number of registered private health facilities in the province was 18,911. During the past six months, another 1,218 facilities were registered. The commission conducted 7,474 inspections of private health centers, issued 2,692 notices, temporarily sealed 1,218 facilities,

and permanently sealed 395. Fines were imposed on 977 facilities. The meeting was also informed that 448 public complaints were received regarding private health centers during this period, all of which were addressed. A large-scale awareness campaign was carried out for both service providers and the general public. Expressing satisfaction over the commission's overall performance, CM Ali Amin Gandapur stressed further improvements. He said that public health remains the top priority of the provincial government, and no compromise would be made in this sector. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

Sept01/Libya Revolution Day

Sept01/Tanzania Defence day

Sept01/Uzbekistan Independence Day

Sept07/Brazil Independence Day

Sept09/DPR Korea National Day

Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day

Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day

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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

Kazakh President keen to have rail links with Pakistan: Envoy

Kazakhstan Envoy highlights expanding ties with Pakistan in IT, connectivity and trade

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, underscored the growing momentum in bilateral relations between the two countries, with a special focus on digital cooperation, trade, connectivity, and interfaith dialogue. Speaking at a press conference, the envoy said that Kazakhstan was entering a new era of partnership with Pakistan, marked by tangible initiatives and high-level engagements. Ambassador Kistafin noted that this year's State of the Nation address by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev placed special emphasis on Kazakhstan's IT sector and digital transformation. He highlighted that for the first time, Pakistan was directly mentioned in the presidential speech, reflecting the importance Kazakhstan attaches to cooperation with Islamabad. He recalled that in September, the first in-person session of the Kazakhstan-Pakistan Joint Working Group on IT and Digital Communications took place in Islamabad. A delegation from Kazakhstan's Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development, along with national IT firms, held extensive talks with their Pakistani counterparts, including leading technology organizations. "This platform is expected to lay the foundation for long-term digital collaboration, including AI integration, digital education, and technology transfer," the ambassador said. The envoy highlighted President Tokayev's announcement of a proposed railway line from Turgundi to Herat (Afghanistan), designed to link Kazakhstan with Pakistani seaports, particularly Gwadar and Karachi. He described the project as a



game-changer that would elevate connectivity between Central and South Asia to "an entirely new level." He further stressed the importance of regional initiatives such as the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project, which would serve as a vital corridor connecting Central Asian economies with South Asian markets. "Regional connectivity is the backbone of future cooperation," he said, adding that such projects could significantly expand trade volumes. Ambassador Kistafin also spoke about the 8th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, held in Astana earlier this month, which drew 100 delegations from major faiths and international organizations. He praised Pakistan's participation in the event, where leaders highlighted the role of spirituality in fostering peace amid global conflicts. Messages from religious figures, including Pope Leo XIV and Patriarch Leopold III of Jerusalem, underlined the urgent need for interfaith dialogue in light of ongoing crises, particularly in the Middle East. "This dialogue is not symbolic—it carries real responsibility to heal divisions and strengthen

shared human values," the envoy remarked. On the economic front, Ambassador Kistafin said the past year had been "historic" for Kazakhstan-Pakistan relations. In April, the two countries co-hosted their largest-ever business forum in Karachi, with around 500 participants, including 150 delegates from Kazakhstan. Commercial contracts worth \$200 million were signed in a single day. The following day, the 30th session of the Intergovernmental Joint Commission convened, yielding agreements in trade, culture, sports, and investment.

He also disclosed that Kazakhstan's sovereign wealth fund, Samruk-Kazyna, held talks with Pakistan's Fauji Foundation, paving the way for major corporate partnerships. The ambassador revealed that in early November, the President of Kazakhstan will undertake a state visit to Pakistan, the first such visit since 2003. "We believe this historic visit will elevate our bilateral cooperation to a new height," he said. Earlier this month, Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Murat Nurtleu, led a large delegation to Islamabad, including

ministers of trade, transport, agriculture, and AI, as well as senior officials from the sovereign wealth fund. "Almost half of our government was in Pakistan," Ambassador Kistafin noted, stressing the seriousness Kazakhstan attaches to this partnership. Ambassador Kistafin emphasized that Kazakhstan and Pakistan are on the cusp of a transformative era in their relations. With progress in IT, connectivity, and trade, coupled with a shared commitment to interfaith dialogue, the two nations are poised to become pivotal partners in linking Central and South Asia.

Pilot project planned for instant cash aid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A pilot project has been planned to provide instant, targeted cash assistance to families living in disaster-affected areas through the integration of the National Catastrophe (NatCat) Model with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the initiative forms part of a broader plan to develop a shock-responsive social protection framework that can respond swiftly to emergencies caused by floods and other natural disasters. The project seeks to strengthen Pakistan's disaster management system by ensuring timely cash transfers to vulnerable households when calamities strike. Under the proposed mechanism, functionalities of the NatCat model will be fully aligned with BISP's payment system to enable real-time cash disbursements. It has been proposed that the pilot programme be rolled out initially in selected flood-prone districts, with lessons learned from the trial shaping the design of a nationwide expansion. A key feature of the plan is the development of a shock response matrix, which

will spell out the roles of different stakeholders, timelines for intervention, and the allocation of financial and human resources. Alongside this, a real-time monitoring dashboard will be created, allowing Parliament to directly track disbursements and ensure accountability and transparency in emergency support. The National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), working in partnership with the Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) and backed by technical support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), had developed the NatCat model in 2024. The model provides scientific, evidence-based insights for disaster risk management, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk financing. BISP Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid, while speaking to Wealth Pakistan, underlined the importance of institutional preparedness for disaster response. She said Pakistan already has strong institutions in place, but the experience of recent floods highlighted the need for a more coordinated and pre-planned system. "I recommend constituting a technical group that brings together all stakeholders, including BISP, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial

Disaster Management Authorities (PD-MAs), the Ministry of Climate Change, and the Meteorological Department. This group should operate at federal, provincial, and regional levels, covering Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the merged districts," she stressed. Senator Rubina Khalid noted that international experience shows disaster response becomes more effective when supported by pre-arranged financing mechanisms and coordinated institutional setups. She said the integration of NatCat with BISP would allow Pakistan to build such a system tailored to its vulnerabilities. The documents reviewed by Wealth Pakistan revealed that during the first nine months of FY2024-25, the BISP has disbursed Rs385.6 billion to around 9.87 million households, demonstrating the programme's strong operational outreach and capacity to deliver large-scale financial support. In addition, the government's broader Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) expenditures stood at Rs4.25 trillion, equivalent to 3.43% of GDP, during the July-March FY25 period. These expenditures were spread across sectors including social protection, health, education, welfare.

Promoted cops pinned rank

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police organized a promotion ceremony in which Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq, pinned new ranks to officers recently promoted to higher positions. Families of the promoted officers were also specially invited to the event. An official told APP on Monday that in September, on the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, a large-scale departmental promotion process was carried out in ICT Police. Under this, four inspectors were promoted to the rank of DSP, 62 head constables were promoted as ASIs, while more than 200 constables were elevated to the rank of head constable. The announcement of promotions created a wave of happiness within the force. He said the DIG attended today's ceremony as the chief guest and decorated the promoted officers with their new ranks in the presence of senior police officials including SSP Operations Islamabad Muhammad Shoaib Khan, SP Saddar Zone, and others. DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq congratulated the officers and extended best wishes for their future responsibilities, while also welcoming their families and acknowledging their support. Addressing the gathering, he said: "Your hard work, dedication, bravery, courage, and commitment deserve our salute. This is a sacred department and every responsibility within it must be fulfilled without fail. My prayer is that you do justice to the ranks you have been blessed with, that your children see you as heroes, and that your parents feel pride in you." DIG Tariq further remarked that promotions were a trust from Allah and urged officers to renew their pledge to eradicate crime, ensure speedy justice, and protect the lives and property of citizens. "This is the department of Ghazis and martyrs. We do not fear becoming Ghazis, nor do we fear martyrdom. Our purpose is only to write stories of bravery. Always remember, promotion is a trust given by Allah, and responsibilities must be fulfilled at any cost," he added. The DIG Tariq concluded by stating that departmental promotion was the basic right of every police officer, and termed the ceremony a morale-boosting step for the force.—APP

OGDCL launches Hepatitis C elimination drive with free screening

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has announced the launch of free screening and treatment camps in Punjab and Sindh as part of its campaign to eliminate Hepatitis C. According to an OGDCL spokesperson, the first phase of the initiative will run from September 23 to December 11, 2025. The camps will offer free tests, medical examinations, medicines, and consultations. In Punjab, the facilities will be set up at OGDCL health centres in Chakwal, Attock, Gujranwala, and Dera Ghazi Khan. In Sindh, camps will operate in Hyderabad, Sanghar, and Ghotki. The spokesperson highlighted OGDCL's contributions to healthcare services in the past, including 35 free eye camps, three mobile operation theatres, 45 mammography camps, 100 ambulances, and six mobile health units across the country. The company urged citizens to actively participate in the Hepatitis C elimination campaign, stressing that timely diagnosis and treatment are vital for a healthy and prosperous life.

Police put fake cops behind bars

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested a fake police officer who was impersonating law enforcement personnel on social media and displaying weapons. Sangani Police team recovered a wireless set, police uniform, and a rifle with ammunition from his possession. An official told APP on Monday that the action was taken under the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, as part of ongoing indiscriminate operations against criminal elements in the federal capital. He said the Sangani Police, using technical and human intelligence, apprehended the suspect identified as Adnan. A case was registered against him under the relevant laws, while further investigation was underway. He said the recovered

items included a wireless set, a police uniform, and one rifle with ammunition. The suspect is being interrogated further to determine whether he was involved in other unlawful activities. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad, Muhammad Jawad Tariq, said that protecting the lives and property of citizens was the foremost duty of the ICT Police and negligence in this regard would not be tolerated. He added that all resources were being fully utilized to ensure peace and security in the capital. Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police achieved a major breakthrough as Khanna Police, under the supervision of SHO Amir Hayat, arrested two record-holder criminals involved in robbery and street crimes, recovering weapons from their possession. An official told on

Monday that the first accused was identified as Imran Khan, son of Arifullah, caste Patkiwal, resident of Kuri Road Islamabad, with permanent address in Ramdas, Peshawar. He had previously been jailed in robbery and arms cases under sections 392 PPC and Arms Ordinance 13/20/65. A pistol was recovered from his possession, and a case was registered under FIR No. 1619/2025 Arms Ordinance at Khanna Police Station. He said the second accused, Afzal Ali alias Panni, son of Ihsan Ali, caste Mughal, resident of Ghauri Town Islamabad, with permanent address at Sheikhupura, was also arrested. The 23-year-old, reported to be a drug addict, had earlier been jailed in Sheikhupura in a brawl case.—APP

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Briefs

Pakistani scientist in China wins Tamgha-e-Imtiaz for innovation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Shaukat Ali, a Pakistani academician long based in China, has been awarded the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, one of Pakistan's highest civil honors, in recognition of his work in agricultural innovation and his role in strengthening scientific ties between China and Pakistan, according to report published by China Economic Net on Monday. Dr. Ali, an Associate Professor and master's supervisor at Engineering Research Center of Biological Control Ministry of Education, College of Plant Protection, South China Agricultural University (SCAU), earned his Ph.D. there in 2009 and has been a faculty member ever since. His research focuses on developing biological pest control methods, particularly using insect-pathogenic fungi and natural predators, to support sustainable farming practices. As the only researcher in China to receive the award this year, Dr. Ali described the honor as a "lifetime achievement" that validates his two decades of scientific and cross-border efforts.

"It highlights the unique value of contributing to agricultural innovation within the context of Sino-Pak cooperation," he told CEN.

China-Pakistan collaboration pioneers sustainable tomato farming

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's tomato fields may soon be greener and healthier, thanks to a groundbreaking collaboration between scientists in Pakistan and China that has shown farmers can slash pesticide use by over 40% without sacrificing yields, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. In field trials just wrapped up in Sargodha, researchers from the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF) and China's Yunnan University tested a pioneering eco-friendly pest management system that promises to transform how Pakistan grows one of its most important crops. The project, conducted under the framework of the Yunnan Fruit-Vegetable-Flower IPM International Joint Lab, targets one of Pakistani agriculture's toughest challenges: pests like the invasive Tuta absoluta, which devastate tomato fields, particularly in Punjab's blistering heat. Tomatoes are cultivated year-round across around 150,000-hectare area in Pakistan, where open-field grown tomato crops yield approximately 4-6 tons per acre, which is far below the world average of more than 10 tons per acre. A 2024 study by Agriculture University Peshawar has concluded that the lack of knowledge among farmers and the absence of proper management contribute to infestations of pests, leading to decreased tomato crop yields. "With no officially recommended pesticides available, many farmers resort to heavy, unregulated chemical spraying—fueling pest resistance, degrading soils, threatening biodiversity, and putting human health at risk," Dr. Abid Ali, a Pakistani agriculturist told CEN.

Gilani emphasis cementing bilateral ties with Australia

He lauded the outgoing Australian High Commissioner's services, particularly in strengthening educational and cultural cooperation as well as development programmes

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Mr. Neil Hawkins called on Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani at the Parliament House on Monday, where both sides held detailed discussions on advancing bilateral relations and exploring new avenues of cooperation in diverse fields.

The meeting covered a wide range of subjects, including trade, education, defence, parliamentary collaboration, cultural exchange, climate change, and people-to-people linkages. Chairman Senate Gilani underlined the historic nature of Pakistan-Australia ties, recalling that diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1948 and have steadily grown stronger over the decades. He emphasized that both nations share democratic values and traditions of a bicameral parliamentary system, which serve as a foundation for closer cooperation. He lauded the outgoing Australian High Commissioner's services, particularly in strengthening educational and cultural cooperation as well as development programmes. Stressing the need to make parliamentary friendship groups more effective, Gilani highlighted that regular exchange of parliamentary delegations would further enhance mutual understanding and goodwill.

On trade and economic ties, the Chairman Senate noted that the current bilateral trade volume of USD 2.5 billion has considerable room for expansion. He proposed enhanced cooperation in agriculture, renewable energy, mineral resources, and information technology. Gilani said Pakistan is keen to boost its exports, particularly in textiles, surgical instruments, IT services, and food products, while also calling for the establishment of a joint forum for chambers of



commerce and private sector stakeholders from both sides. In the area of defence, Gilani called for deeper collaboration between Pakistan and Australia. He also appreciated Australia's development assis-

tance to Pakistan. On climate issues, he pointed out that Pakistan is among the most climate-vulnerable countries, having recently suffered devastating floods and rains. He stressed the need for inter-

national cooperation and a joint strategy to tackle climate challenges effectively. The Chairman Senate further noted that Pakistan and Australia enjoy strong people-to-people ties, with a vibrant Pakistani diaspora residing in Australia and contributing to the country's economy through remittances. He recalled his own official visit to Australia as Speaker, which he said added momentum to parliamentary engagement between the two nations. Gilani also stressed the urgency of expediting high-level exchanges, institutionalizing annual joint parliamentary sessions, and creating thematic working groups. He underscored the importance of innovation, green transition, inclusive growth, and enhanced parliamentary coordination. Expressing solidarity, the Australian High Commissioner conveyed his condolences over the loss of lives and damages caused by recent floods in Pakistan and assured continued cooperation. Mr. Gilani also informed the Australian High commissioner about his visit to different areas of South Punjab where devastating flood floods have left thousands homeless. He called upon the philanthropists and welfare organisations to come forward and assist the flood affected people. Chairman Senate Gilani also briefed the High Commissioner about the upcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC), scheduled to be held in November this year. He extended a formal invitation to the Australian parliamentary leadership to participate in the conference, terming their participation crucial for its success. Ms. Misbah Khar, Ambassador to ISC and Advisor to Chairman Senate informed the Australian High commissioner about the theme of ISC and overall aim of the conference. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-Australia relations and working together for global and regional peace.

US-Europe alliance hierarchical when it comes to Middle East: Experts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an webinar, organized by Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad, experts analyzed the ramifications of "snapback sanctions" on Iran. Dr. Sika Sadoddin, former fellow at Portland University (USA) was of the view that the US had always treated Europe as a secondary partner in the Middle Eastern affairs. She analyzed Europe's quest for strategic autonomy as aspirational but limited in practice due to the financial and security

dependence on the US. Dr. Sadoddin pointed out that the US exploited secondary sanctions as a leverage against Iran and left little room for European diplomacy. Dr. Sadoddin explained that any attempts by Europe to trade with Iran while bypassing US sanctions were rather symbolic. That's why Europe criticized Trump's withdrawal from JCPOA but was forced to adopt the sanctions regime against Iran. While comparing the approaches of different US presidents towards Iran, Dr. Sadoddin

mentioned that apart from Obama who preferred multilateral diplomacy, both Trump and Biden adopted unilateralism and US dominance in diplomatic spheres. Ms. Silvia Boltuc, Founder and Managing Director of Special Eurasia (Italy) argued that Europe's policy towards Iran was contradictory. Europe's silence on Israeli attacks against Iran but condemnation of Iran's retaliatory attacks created mistrust in Europe-Iran relations, she mentioned. Ms. Boltuc also alluded to the fact that giving space to

banned opposition of Iran like National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) in Europe's public spheres would further complicate the relations with the Islamic Republic. Within Europe, the views varied as Italy intended to keep more commercial ties with Iran while Germany and France despised the policy of appeasement, she said. However, Europe's insistence on negotiations was because of its own strategic interests to access Iran's energy reservoirs especially after the Ukraine War and sanctions on Russia.

POL import bill declines by 4.65% to \$2.538b in 2 months

ISLAMABAD: The imports of the overall petroleum group decreased by 4.65 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The total imports of the petroleum group during July-August (2025-26) were recorded at \$ 2,538.463 million against the imports of \$ 2,662.217 million during the same month of last year. Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products increased by 17.77 percent, from \$ 840.488 million last July to \$ 989.832 during current year whereas the import of petroleum crude declined by 6.11 percent from \$944.709 million to \$887.029 million. Similarly, the imports of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) decreased by 28.81 percent from \$ 713.081 million last year to \$ 507.648 million while the import of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) went down by 6.06 percent in the first two months and stood at \$ 153.937 million as compared to \$ 163.874 million during the corresponding month of last year. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed a decrease of 14.67 percent and was recorded at \$1,192.667 during the month of August as compared to the imports of \$1,397.643 million in August 2024. On a month-on-month basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed a decrease of 11.38 percent during the month of August as compared to the imports of \$ 1,345.797 million in July 2025. It is pertinent to mention here that the overall exports from the country witnessed an increase of 0.65 percent during the first two months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding month of last year. The exports in July-August (FY2025-26) were recorded at \$5.102 billion as compared to the exports of \$5.069 billion in July-August (FY2024-25). The imports during July-August 2025 also increased by 14.53 percent and were recorded at \$11.144 billion against the imports of \$9.730 billion last year. Based on the figures, the trade deficit increased by 29.63 percent by going up from \$4.661 billion last year July to \$6.042 billion, this year.—DNA

Call for global action on Gaza, welcomes growing recognition of Palestine

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the Senate, Irfan-ul-Haq Siddiqui, on Monday called on the international community to take decisive and result-oriented action to end Israel's brutal assault and state-sponsored violence in Gaza. In a post on X, Siddiqui, also chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, urged global powers to intervene immediately to stop the ongoing massacre and ensure the strict enforcement of measures to prevent further atrocities. "There is an urgent need for the international community to move beyond formal statements, impassioned speeches, and emotional appeals," Siddiqui said. "It must take concrete, effective, and results-driven steps to halt Israel's brutal aggression, its role in global terrorism, and the savage massacre unfolding in Gaza. These measures must be implemented without delay and enforced with unwavering resolve.—APP

900 tons of condensed buffalo milk exported to China

ISLAMABAD: In collaboration with Chinese company Royal Cell Biotechnology (Pakistan), Royal JW holding and Royal JW foods, 900 tons of condensed buffalo milk have been exported to China last week. Dr. Nassar of JW food told Gwadar Pro, "We plan to further export around 1500 tons of condensed buffalo milk to China next month and it is highly likely that more to be followed in coming months," he added. Condensed milk is a thickened, partially dehydrated milk where the fat content is no less than 7.5%. The dry matter of the substance is no less than 25%. In this form, the milk is stored and transported more easily. Condensed milk may contain sugar or be unsweetened. This dairy product is colored from light yellow to caramel. It has a thick, creamy consistency. The taste is gentle and enjoyable. The scent is delicate, barely noticeable. Condensed milk is a product widely used in the confectionery industry. Chefs often infuse it in creams, cakes and other sweet temptations. Royal Cell Biotechnology (Pakistan) Dr. Qaisar Shahzad said that all condensed Buffalo milk exported to China is unsweetened. "The composition of condensed milk contains notable amounts of carbohydrates, fats and proteins. It is a source of calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium and sodium. You will also find vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, vitamin B3, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin D and vitamin E," he said. In China, thick and creamy consistency of condensed Buffalo milk allow for its use in all sorts of culinary ways. It is a preferred product in many creams, puddings, ice creams, mousses, cakes, cheesecakes, rolls and more. Condensed milk is recommended for vegetarians especially, since it has the ability to compensate for the absence of meat in their diet. The global condensed milk market size was valued at \$9.9 billion in 2021, and is projected to reach \$15.2 billion by 2031.—DNA

Gwadar starts receiving 2 MGD water from Shadi Kaur Dam

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has started supplying water from Shadi Kor Dam to the city's main transmission line, adding two million gallons per day (MGD) to the system after nearly three and a half years, officials said, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Monday. The 83-kilometer-long pipeline was reactivated on the directive of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, following day-and-night efforts by GDA's water division under the supervision of Director General Moin-ur-Rehman Khan. Chief Engineer Haji Syed Muhammad, Project Director Water Mir Jan Baloch and Site Engineer Kamran inspected the resumed flow. The move follows Bugti's September 17 meeting in Gwadar, where it was decided to transfer the city's entire water distribution network to GDA. Since then, GDA has

accelerated installation of new household connections, urging residents to promptly submit applications. Gwadar has been facing an acute water crisis for more than a year and a half due to prolonged drought. Ankara Dam dried up four months ago, while Sawad Dam is on the verge of depletion. "One of the main dams has completely dried up, while the other is close to running out," said GDA Director General Moin-ur-Rehman Khan. To diversify supply, work is progressing on a 1.2 MGD desalination plant and a 0.5 MGD sensor boring project. These efforts complement the China-assisted 1.2 MGD desalination facility at the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), a flagship initiative under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is being pushed toward full capacity. Gwadar's daily requirement stands at 3.5 MGD. According to Khan, another 1.5 MGD will soon be added to the system, further reducing the shortfall. The combined inflows from Shadi Kor Dam, desalination.

China-Pak scientific collaboration thrives in Citrus orchards

ISLAMABAD: In the heart of Pakistan's citrus belt, a transformative collaboration between Chinese and Pakistani scientists is helping farmers break a decades-long cycle of crop loss and market rejection, offering new hope for the country's agricultural export-based economy, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. At the center of this change is Dr. Shaukat Ali, an Associate Professor at Engineering Research Center of Biological Control Ministry of Education, College of Plant Protection, South China Agricultural University, whose work through the China-Pakistan Joint Research Center for Integrated Citrus Pests Management is directly tackling the pest epidemics and quality issues that have long held

back Pakistan's citrus industry. "The single biggest challenge is the industry's inability to meet strict international phytosanitary standards," Dr. Ali told CEN. "Shipments are frequently rejected due to endemic pests and diseases—this has trapped farmers in a cycle where they cannot access the markets that would fund the very improvements they need." Established in 2018 with Pakistan's University of Sargodha, the research center has become a practical example of technology transfer under the Belt and Road Initiative, focusing on sustainable, eco-friendly solutions tailored to local conditions. Supported by a RMB one million grant from the Guangzhou Science and Technology Bureau, Dr. Ali and his team

have introduced integrated pest management (IPM) strategies that are already showing scale. These include yellow sticky traps, sex pheromones, specific-wavelength LED light traps, mass release of insect natural enemies and biological pesticides. "We've identified 134 species of ladybugs from 46 genera in Pakistan (including several previously unrecorded) and a considerable number of strains of insect pathogenic fungi," said Dr. Ali. "This isn't about importing solutions, it's about adapting knowledge and empowering local systems." The project has established demonstration orchards across Sargodha District in Punjab province, where farmers can see firsthand the benefits of reduced pesticide use, improved fruit quality,

and higher export compliance. Still, the path hasn't been smooth. Differences in pest behavior, underdeveloped bio-agent production infrastructure, and farmer skepticism initially slowed adoption. Regulatory barriers also complicated the cross-border exchange of biological samples. Through close collaboration with Pakistani academic institutions and ministries, the center helped establish local insectaries and pushed for policy facilitation. Side-by-side field comparisons and clear economic incentives eventually won over growers. With Pakistan's 2025 citrus harvest expected to see a 10-15% increase, driven largely by natural cyclical patterns, the persistent threat of Huanglongbing (HLB) and fruit flies remains a ceiling on growth.—APP

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Hard lessons for Pakistan after humbling defeat to India

PAKISTAN'S much-anticipated clash with India in the Asia Cup T20 turned into a one-sided affair, exposing once again the glaring weaknesses in the national cricket setup. Despite posting what looked like a competitive total of 171, Pakistan's bowling attack collapsed under pressure, allowing India to chase with ease. The result was not just a defeat—it was a reminder of the gulf that currently separates the two sides. India, ranked No. 1 in the world, showcased why they are regarded as a compact and formidable team. With multiple match-winners across all departments—batting, bowling, and fielding—they looked calm, composed, and clinical in execution. In contrast, Pakistan, languishing at No. 7 in the rankings, appeared disjointed, without a single player capable of turning the game on his own. The comparison was stark: where India had depth, strategy, and consistency, Pakistan displayed inexperience, poor planning, and tactical errors. Much of the blame for the defeat must be placed on captain Salman Ali Agha, who, though talented, lacks the experience required to lead at the highest level. His decisions on the field reflected nervousness and a lack of vision. Allowing the opposition to dictate terms, misusing bowlers, and failing to respond tactically were costly mistakes. Leadership in cricket, especially in high-pressure games against India, requires maturity and foresight—qualities Salman is still developing. His appointment, therefore, raises questions about whether the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) acted prematurely in entrusting him with such responsibility. Another questionable decision by the management was sidelining proven performers like Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan. Whatever criticisms these senior players have faced, they remain Pakistan's most reliable batsmen in crunch situations. Replacing them wholesale with relatively inexperienced players deprived the team of the balance and stability needed in high-stakes encounters. Senior players provide the backbone around which juniors can grow; without that spine, the team appears fragile and exposed. This defeat also highlights a deeper malaise: the flawed selection and management process. Too often, Pakistan's cricketing decisions seem influenced by favoritism, internal politics, or experimentation rather than merit and long-term planning. A team cannot be built on hand-picked choices or short-term gambles. What Pakistan needs is professionalism, vision, and above all, meritocracy. Only the right men in the right jobs—both on the field and in the management—can restore Pakistan's standing in world cricket. It is time for serious introspection. Senior, proven players must be reintegrated into the squad to provide guidance. At the same time, structural reforms in the team's management are urgently required. If Pakistan cricket is to move forward, there must be accountability at all levels—selectors, coaches, and administrators included.

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The Saudi-Pakistan Defense Pact

THE Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA), signed on September 17, 2025, marks a pivotal moment in the evolving geopolitics of the Middle East and South Asia. This pact, forged amid regional instability and shifting global alliances, underscores a deepening of the historic ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan while introducing new complexities to an already volatile region. It is a bold move that reflects both nations' strategic imperatives but also raises questions about its long-term implications for regional stability, particularly concerning India and the broader Gulf dynamics. The agreement's timing is critical. The Middle East is reeling from Israel's aggressive actions, including its war on Gaza, strikes on neighboring states, and the unprecedented attack on Doha. These events have eroded confidence in the U.S. as a reliable security guarantor for Gulf states, despite the presence of 40,000–50,000 American troops in the region. Saudi Arabia's decision to formalize a mutual defense pact with Pakistan, the Muslim world's only nuclear power, signals a pragmatic diversification of its security partnerships. For Pakistan, the deal strengthens its regional relevance at a time when its economy is fragile and its rivalry with India is escalating. The pact's clause treating aggression against one as aggression against both is a powerful political statement, even if its operational details remain ambiguous. However, this agreement is not without risks. For Saudi Arabia, aligning closely with Pakistan risks entangling it in South Asia's nuclear-armed tensions, particularly with India, which has been cultivating stronger ties with Riyadh. The pact could complicate Saudi Arabia's balancing act with Iran, a regional rival, and strain its cautious diplomacy with other neighbors. For Pakistan, the deal enhances its strategic leverage but may draw it into the Middle East's complex rivalries, potentially at odds with its own interests, especially given its historically neutral stance in regional conflicts like the Saudi-Iran rivalry. The suggestion of a "nuclear shield" for Saudi Arabia, while speculative, is a particularly sensitive issue. Although analysts like Sahar Khan clarify that the agreement does not explicitly extend nuclear assurances, the perception of such a possibility could alarm the U.S., India, and others, given Pakistan's nuclear capabilities and Saudi Arabia's interest in nuclear technology. This perception alone could trigger a new wave of alliance politics and arms races in both regions. For India, the pact is a strategic setback. The May 2025 skirmish with Pakistan already heightened tensions, and this agreement strengthens Pakistan's position by aligning it with a powerful Gulf ally. India's response, as articulated by its foreign ministry, suggests a cautious but vigilant approach, likely intensifying its own regional and global diplomatic efforts to counterbalance this development.

Trump's Want Bagram Base Back to Protect Israel

Qamar Bashir



This urgency — presented as if the cost could be traded away for strategic advantage — deserves a sober pause. Ask plainly: why, at this perilous moment, should the United States risk lives and treasure to re-establish control over a base it abandoned amid humiliation just four years ago? The calculus offered is blunt and chilling: the perceived need is to neutralize threats before they can reach Israel, to blunt Iranian influence that allegedly “barter” through Afghan soil, and to deter Pakistan’s conventional and nuclear capabilities from shaping the outcome of conflicts in the Middle East. That rationale, if true, places Israel’s security...

WE begin with a prayer for sound judgment and for the protection of innocent lives: May those who hold the levers of power choose restraint over rashness, and may the suffering of ordinary families be spared the thunder of renewed war. President Trump's recent declaration that the United States “wants [Bagram] back” — and his warning that “bad things are going to happen” if the demand is not met — is not merely a rhetorical flourish. It is a public ultimatum aimed at a sovereign state now governed by a regime that has repeatedly insisted on its independence and territorial integrity. To speak of “getting it back” without acknowledging the scale of what that implies is to invite a darkness of consequence that cannot be measured simply in dollars or troop rotations. This urgency — presented as if the cost could be traded away for strategic advantage — deserves a sober pause. Ask plainly: why, at this perilous moment, should the United States risk lives and treasure to re-establish control over a base it abandoned amid humiliation just four years ago? The calculus offered is blunt and chilling: the perceived need is to neutralize threats before they can reach Israel, to blunt Iranian influence that allegedly “barter” through Afghan soil, and to deter Pakistan’s conventional and nuclear capabilities from shaping the outcome of conflicts in the Middle East. That rationale, if true, places Israel’s security at the center of an American sacrifice that would demand fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers be risked abroad — a moral choice that must be argued openly, not imposed as an off-hand strategic fait accompli. The president's public boast that the base “belongs to those that built it” treats sovereignty like a ledger entry rather than a lived reality; it treats bodies and futures as collateral. We should be brutally honest about the price. Bagram is not a symbolic hangar you re-enter with a small contingent; it was the logistical heart of a two-decade campaign — runways for the largest transports, detention facilities, hospitals, administrative complexes and entire life-support systems for tens of thousands of troops. The base was vacated during the chaotic U.S. withdrawal in July 2021; the departure remains a potent symbol of the limits of force and of the human cost of occupation. Any serious attempt to retake and hold Bagram would require a force posture that looks very much like re-invasion: large troop footprints, air defenses, long-term occupation forces and an open-ended commitment to secure supply lines against insurgents and regional spoilers. History warns that

such ventures rarely end on the schedules or terms imagined by their planners. Beyond the arithmetic of troops and treasure lies a web of regional dynamics that transform a tactical objective into a geopolitical tinderbox. China has quietly deepened its engagement with Kabul — courting mining contracts, infrastructure deals and incremental Belt-and-Road integration. Pakistan claims a deep strategic interest in Afghanistan; Iran watches its western neighbour for any shift that might threaten its influence; and a resurgent Taliban now trades in a complex mix of domestic control and international overtures. An American kinetic return to Bagram would not be an isolated operation; it would be a whiplash event that could provoke asymmetric retaliation from militant actors, diplomatic pushback from regional capitals, and a strategic confrontation with Beijing over the very infrastructure China is trying to build through soft power. The result would not be merely a regional skirmish; it would be a cascade of destabilising moves with human costs that ripple across borders. There is also a moral dimension that many in Washington seem eager to elide. If the objective of recapturing Bagram is to create a buffer for Israel — then that aim must be debated openly in Congress and with the American public. Sacrificing American lives to serve another nation's perceived buffer-zone preferences is a weighty judgment that should not be made in a propagandistic press moment. The American people deserve the facts, the alternatives, and the hard accounting of costs in blood and treasure before such a choice is made. To present threats in cinematic soundbites while concealing the true toll is a betrayal of democratic responsibility. There is a better, more realistic path — and it is one the United States can actually afford both morally and strategically. Influence without occupation is not naïve; it is prudent. Jobs, roads, hospitals, schools and transparent investment frameworks win long-term leverage in fragile states far more effectively than boots do. Rather than threatening to seize territory, Washington should marshal humanitarian aid, underwrite infrastructure projects with strict governance and environmental protections, fund vocational training and support rule-of-law institutions that make communities resilient to extremist sway. Where extractive industries are concerned, revenue-sharing and oversight can reduce corruption and blunt local grievances that fuel insurgency. In short: rebuild with dignity, not coerce with force. Such an approach may be slow-

er and less theatrical, but it matches moral legitimacy with strategic durability. We must also confront the bitter irony: if the United States is prepared to pay any price to protect another country's security ambitions, that willingness will be visible to regional powers and will seed resentment. It will feed narratives that the U.S. acts selectively, that American lives are expendable in service of foreign agendas, and that occupation is a policy tool rather than a last resort. Those narratives will be used by opponents to rally recruits and justify asymmetric attacks that will claim the very lives Washington professes to protect. The choice facing Washington is, disturbingly, both strategic and moral. It can choose to replay the mistakes of the recent past — thunderous ultimatums, rushed deployments, and the false promise that territory can be held without hearts and minds — and thereby invite a long, painful entanglement whose costs are incalculable in mere budgets. Or it can choose to invest in reconstruction, partnerships and patient diplomacy that respect Afghan sovereignty and build durable influence. The latter requires humility, long-term funding commitments, and a willingness to measure success by human flourishing rather than by signage at a runway. President Trump's rhetoric — alternately promising peace and threatening occupation — sends the wrong signal to allies and adversaries alike. Tough talk may score at home; abroad it hardens resistance, rallies rivals, and complicates the very diplomacy Washington will need if it truly seeks influence in South and Central Asia. The moral urgency here is not merely about strategy; it is about responsibility to the families who will bear the cost if the sirens call of occupation is answered. Let us end where we began: with a prayer for restraint, for wisdom, and for leaders who place human life before spectacle. The path that leads through reconstruction, coalition-building and respect for sovereignty is harder, less glamorous and slower — but it is the path that will spare the greatest number of lives and build a legacy worth defending. If America is to remain influential in a changing region, it must learn the hard lesson of Bagram: boots can seize terrain, but they cannot buy the consent that makes security last.

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

Pakistan–Saudi Arabia: A Bond Forged in Faith and Brotherhood

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The partnership grew deeper during General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's era. In 1982, a protocol agreement 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...

WHEN the crescent and star flag of Pakistan was first raised in 1947, among the earliest nations to embrace the new state was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Bound by faith, geography, and destiny, the two countries wove a relationship that was never merely diplomatic, but fraternal—rooted in Islam and nurtured by trust. From the first days of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to the present premiership of Shehbaz Sharif, the ties have weathered storms, celebrated triumphs, and stood resilient as a beacon of Muslim solidarity. In the annals of this relationship, the role of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz al Saud shines with particular radiance. It was under his patronage, alongside Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, that the second Islamic Summit Conference was held in Lahore in 22-24 February 1974. The gathering of Muslim leaders from across the world, hosted with grandeur by Pakistan, marked a turning point in Islamic unity. King Faisal's stirring address in Lahore called upon the Muslim world to rise above division and reclaim dignity through collective strength. His vision became a cornerstone of Pakistan–Saudi friendship, and his memory endures in Islamabad through the Shah Faisal Mosque, whose construction was a gift of Saudi Arabia and remains one of the largest mosques in the world, a symbol of faith and fraternity. That trust between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan was further enhanced in November 1979, when extremists seized the Grand Mosque in Makkah. At Riyadh's request, Pakistan dispatched commandos who joined Saudi forces in the delicate and dangerous operation to liberate the holiest mosque of Islam. The courage of Pakistani soldiers cemented the Kingdom's confidence that Pakistan stood as guardian not only of its own borders, but of the spiritual heart of the Muslim world. The partnership grew deeper during General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's era. In 1982, a protocol agreement established the Saudi-Pakistan Armed Forces Organ-

ization 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. Economically too, Saudi Arabia proved a steadfast benefactor in Pakistan's hours of need. From 1970s to more recent crises, Riyadh extended generous facilities, often deferring payments or granting oil on favorable terms. During the balance-of-payment crises of the 1990s and again in the 2010s, Saudi Arabia's loans and oil concessions helped Pakistan avoid collapse. Following the devastating 2005 earthquake, Saudi aid flowed generously, funding rehabilitation projects and shelters. Again, when floods submerged Pakistan in 2010 and in later years, Saudi relief agencies were among the first to arrive, sending medicines, tents, food supplies, and financial assistance. The bond was personal as well as political. When Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his family faced exile after the events of 12 October 1999, it was Saudi Arabia that extended sanctuary. The Sharif family resided at Saroor Palace in Jeddah, hosted with royal courtesy. This gesture of brotherhood went beyond diplomacy—it was family extending refuge to family. The Kingdom has also invested in Pakistan's development. Saudi capital has supported refineries, petrochemical ventures, and infrastructure projects. The Pak-Saudi Oil Refinery project, agreements in Gwadar, and various energy sector investments are testament to a relationship that is not merely sentimental but strategic. On the security front, ties reached a new dimension in 2015 when Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition based in Riyadh. The coalition, comprising over

forty Muslim nations, symbolized Saudi recognition of Pakistan's military professionalism and leadership in defending the Muslim world against extremism. The present era has seen the friendship elevated further. In June 2024 and again in early 2025, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief, Field Marshal General Asim Munir, worked closely with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to forge new agreements. The Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was signed on September 17, 2025, in Riyadh. This pact formalizes a long-standing security partnership and includes a key clause stating that “any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both”. This agreement represents continuity of the pledge first made in Zia's time for the protection of Harmain Shari-fain, but with broader scope for regional stability. The friendship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has endured over seventy-five years, marked by shared prayers at Makkah and Madinah, common stands in international forums, and unwavering assistance in calamities. It is a relationship sanctified by faith, fortified by trust, and dignified by sacrifice. From King Faisal's immortal presence in Lahore in 1974 to Prince Mohammed bin Salman's vision of modern partnership, from the construction of Shah Faisal Mosque to the signing of the 2025 mutual security pact, the two nations have walked together through history. As Pakistan continues to navigate challenges of economy and security, and as Saudi Arabia pursues its ambitious Vision 2030, their destinies remain intertwined. In the corridors of Islamabad and Riyadh alike, the conviction endures: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are not merely allies, but brothers bound by the eternal covenant of Islam, standing shoulder to shoulder today as they did in 1947, and as they shall tomorrow in the unfolding chapters of Muslim unity.

Briefs

PM for
formulation
of roadmap
to boost...

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delegation at the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, set to commence on Monday (today). During his time in the US, the PM, as per the Foreign Office, will participate in a meeting of select Islamic leaders with US President Trump to exchange views on issues pertaining to regional and international peace and security. Meanwhile, at the UNGA, the premier will urge the international community to resolve the situations of prolonged occupation and denial of the right to self-determination to the people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Palestine. Apart from holding bilateral meetings on the UNGA sidelines with several world leaders, he will also attend multiple high-level events, including important meetings of the UN Security Council, a high-level meeting of the Global Development Initiative (GDI), and a Special High-Level Event on Climate Action, among others.

PM Shehbaz
leaves for
New Yourk

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the suffering of the Palestinians,” the FO statement read. The statement said that PM would also highlight Pakistan’s perspective on the regional security situation, as well as other issues of international concern, including climate change, terrorism, Islamophobia, and sustainable development. The premier will further attend several high-level events on the sidelines of the UNGA session, including important meetings of the UN Security Council, a high-level meeting of the Global Development Initiative (GDI), and a Special High-Level Event on Climate Action, among others, it added.

Russia
offers to
extend...

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balance of deterrence potentials,” Putin added. Russia froze its participation in New START in 2023 but has continued to voluntarily follow the numerical limits in the treaty. The agreement restricts both sides to a maximum of 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads each, a reduction of nearly 30 percent from the previous limit set in 2002.

Trump will
sign order...

FROM PAGE 01
Trump is trying to keep the short video app with 170 million US users from being banned after Congress passed a law that ordered it shut down by January 2025 if its US assets were not sold by ByteDance. Trump has delayed enforcement of the law through mid-December amid efforts to extract TikTok’s US assets from the global platform, line up American investors and ensure the new ownership qualifies as a full divestiture needed under the 2024 law. Last week’s progress toward a deal on TikTok marked a rare breakthrough in months-long talks between the world’s two biggest economies that have sought to defuse a wide-ranging trade war that has unnerved global markets.

JCC on
CPEC to...

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Pakistan in every difficult time. Ahsan Iqbal said the 14th JCC meeting will serve as a platform to operationalize the vision for CPEC Phase II, focusing on industrial collaboration, technological innovation, and sustainable development. The Minister for Planning said Pakistan is now on a new journey of economic development and national prosperity and economic indicators have shown marked improvement in recent months.

‘Not a rivalry anymore’, says
Indian captain Suryakumar
after outplaying Pakistan

Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha says Green Shirts fell around 15-20 runs short of desired target

DNA

DUBAI: India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav played down the hype around the cricket rivalry with Pakistan after beating their bitter rivals by six wickets in the Asia Cup in Dubai on Sunday. India rode on a blazing 74 from opener Abhishek Sharma as they chased down a target of 172 in 18.5 overs in the Super Four clash, where they again refused to shake hands with their opponents. It was India’s second win in the T20I tournament over Pakistan in a week after their group stage clash. It was also their

12th in 15 T20I internationals. Asked if this dominance showed that the rivalry was waning, Suryakumar replied: “You guys should stop asking questions about the rivalry between India and Pakistan. “According to me, if two teams play 15-20 matches, and if it is even, then it is a rivalry. 13-0, 10-1, I don’t know what the stats are, but this is not a rivalry anymore.” Pakistan’s last of three T20I wins over India came in the Asia Cup in Dubai in 2022. India and Pakistan only play in multinational tournaments as their bilateral ties have been stalled since 2012 over political tension. Pakistan rode on a brilliant 45-ball 58 from

opener Sahibzada Farhan but managed 171-5 after romping to 93-1 in 9.3 overs.

Suryakumar said that India played better cricket as Abhishek and Shubman Gill put on a rapid 105 for the opening stand in 9.5 overs. “I think we were better than them (Pakistan), and also from a bowling point of view,” said Suryakumar. “The catch drop percentage at this venue is so high, and that is part and parcel of the game.” Suryakumar praised Sharma’s talent. “He knows what is required of him, what bowlers are going to bowl, that’s a plus point for him. He is learning with every game,” said Suryakumar of the 25-year-old left-hander.

Pakistan captain Salman Agha said that his team had come up 15-20 runs short.

“We have yet to play a perfect game in this event,” said Agha, whose team next faces Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. “After being 91 in 10 overs, we lost way but still feel 171 was a challenging total.” Agha acknowledged that his bowlers could not control the Indian openers. “We need to play a perfect game, do well in all three departments,” said Agha. “We look forward to playing Sri Lanka in the next game.” Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka by four wickets in their Super Four match in Dubai on Saturday.

Haris Rauf taunts Indian
trolls with ‘6-0’ gesture

Backing fast bowler’s gesture, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif says India will never forget PAF’s victory in Marka-e-Haq



SPORT DESK

DUBAI: In a fiery Super Four clash of the Asia Cup 2025, Pakistan’s fast bowler Haris Rauf made headlines off the field as much as on it. While patrolling the boundary during India’s innings, Rauf responded to jeers from some Indian spectators with a hand gesture that immediately drew attention. Rauf, standing there at the boundary, lifted his fingers to show “60” and then, in a sort of dramatic hand move, pretended to fly a plane up and then crash it down. Of course, anyone watching instantly

thought of Pakistan Air Force’s big win back in May, the one where six Indian jets, mostly French Rafales, were reportedly taken down in a historic air battle. Unsurprisingly, the clip spread like wildfire on social media. Pakistani fans jumped on it, calling it bold, cheeky, even a little bit glorious. Indian fans, on the other hand, were furious, typing out their anger faster than a T20 run rate. This, yet again, proves something everyone watching knows too well: in the India-Pakistan rivalry, nothing stays small. Not a boundary, not a gesture, not even a shrug. Everything can explode into headlines in a heartbeat.

Haris’ gesture also garnered a response from Defence Minister Khawaja Asif who took to social media saying that India would never forget the PAF’s 6-0 victory against the Indian Air Force during the Marka-e-Haq — the title given to the military conflict with India in May where New Delhi launched cross-border attacks inside Pakistan prompting Islamabad to retaliate via “Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos.

Handshake controversy lingers on: The Sunday’s showdown between India and Pakistan wrapped up with more frost than friendship, as players once again left without the usual post-match handshake. India successfully chased down a 172-run target to defeat Pakistan by six wickets at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Sanju Samson and Hardik Pandya scored the winning runs in the penultimate over. However, neither Indian nor Pakistani players stepped forward to shake hands. The absence of the traditional handshake at the conclusion of the match has drawn attention, with observers pointing to a lack of sportsmanship and game spirit between the two arch-rivals. Neither team offered clarification, but the incident underscored the lingering tension surrounding one of cricket’s fiercest rivalries.

Riyadh horseracing
season kicks off
on October 16

RIYADH: Horseracing resumes at King Abdulaziz Racecourse in Riyadh next month after the new season schedule was revealed by the Jockey Club of Saudi Arabia, culminating with the \$20 million Saudi Cup on Feb. 14, 2026. The new campaign gets underway on Oct. 16 and is the first of 50 meetings for thoroughbred and purebred Arabian horses, which for the first time will end with The Saudi Cup meeting. The change in schedule is to accommodate Ramadan, which falls around Feb. 28, 2026.

The seventh running of The Saudi Cup coincides with a significant moment for Saudi Arabia as the 41st Asian Racing Conference, titled “Honouring Tradition — Shaping The Future”, takes place in the country from Feb. 9 and closes at The Saudi Cup. The season finale gets underway on Feb. 13 and features the popular International Jockeys’ Challenge, The Sarawat and Tuwaiq Cups and builds to the \$1.5m Group 1 Al Mneefah Cup for purebred Arabians held over 2,100m on the turf course. Nine races will be held the following day as The Saudi Cup enters its seventh year with the G2 Neom Turf Cup, G2 Riyadh Dirt Sprint and the Red Sea Turf Handicap offering a host of opportunities on turf and on dirt for the world’s best equine athletes.

Before that, the new Riyadh season begins next month and will be staged in its familiar format with 12-race cards taking place every Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The most significant meeting outside the season finale is the Saudi Cup trials weekend on Jan. 16-17, which features The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Cup and King Abdulaziz Cup. American challenger Rattle N Roll landed The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Cup for trainer, Kenny McPeck and jockey Joel Rosario to qualify for The Saudi Cup in 2025, and the winner of the Group 3 next January will also guarantee themselves a starting position in the world’s richest race. Qualifiers for The Neom Turf Cup, 1351 Turf Sprint, Red Sea Turf Handicap, Riyadh Dirt Sprint and the G1 Obaiyah Classic and G1 Al-Mneefah Cup will also be held over those two days. — Agencies

Quinton de Kock
Returns: SA Announces
Pakistan Tour Squads

DNA

MUMBAI: Cricket South Africa on Monday announced squads for the upcoming tour of Pakistan, with wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock coming out of ODIs retirement and set to play in the white-ball series. Test captain Temba Bavuma, who led South Africa to lift the World Test Championship, has been ruled out of the tour due to calf strain. In Bavuma’s absence, Aiden Markram will lead the side in the Test series set to begin from October 12. Matthew Breetzke and David Miller have been named as captains for ODIs and T20Is, respectively. De Kock — who had retired from ODIs after the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 and last represented South Africa in the T20 World Cup 2024 final — came out of retirement. The wicketkeeper-batter has been named in the ODIs and T20Is squads. “Naturally, we are disappointed not to have Temba available,” South Africa coach Shukri Conrad said. “He has been such an important leader and batter for us in the Test side, and his presence on and off the field will be missed.” The tourists will take four spinners on tour, though Keshav Maharaj will only be available for the second test as he recovers from a groin problem. Simon Harmer has earned a recall, with Senuran Muthusamy and Prenelan Subrayan the others. Aiden Markram will lead the test side in Bavuma’s absence with an otherwise settled selection from the squad that won the mace in the final against Australia at Lord’s in June.

Asia Cup 2025
Pakistan’s qualification
scenario after India defeat

Pakistan’s challenge is made more difficult by defeat against India in Super Four clash

PAKISTAN remain in contention for the Asia Cup 2025 final, but their path is uncertain and could depend heavily on net run rate (NRR). Even two wins from their remaining fixtures may not be enough, while in some scenarios a single victory could suffice. If India sweep all three Super Four matches, and Pakistan defeat Bangladesh but lose to Sri Lanka, then India advance with three wins and the other teams finish level on one each — leaving NRR to decide the second finalist. Another possibility sees Pakistan beating both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, India defeating Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh upsetting India. In that case, three teams would end with two wins apiece, again pushing qualification to NRR. If both Pakistan and India were to win all of their remaining fixtures, they would make it to the final to be played on September 26. In this case, India would have three wins,

Pakistan two, Bangladesh one and Sri Lanka none, providing the most straightforward path to the final.

Pakistan’s challenge is made more difficult by the defeat against India. In the Super Four clash in Dubai on Sunday, Pakistan posted 171-5 but fell as India chased the target in 18.5 overs. Abhishek Sharma’s 74 off 39 and Shubman Gill’s 47 off 28 set up India’s six-wicket win, strengthening their NRR advantage.

In the other Super Four match, Bangladesh defeated Sri Lanka in a close contest.

Chasing 169, Bangladesh secured victory by four wickets with one ball to spare, thanks to half-centuries from Saif Hassan (61) and Towhid Hridoy (58). Mustafizur Rahman led their bowling effort with 3-20, while Sri Lanka’s Dasun Shanaka fought back with an unbeaten 64 off 37.

The result has opened up qualification pathways and ensured NRR will likely prove crucial.

Remaining fixtures

September 23: Pakistan vs Sri Lanka (Abu Dhabi)

September 24: India vs Bangladesh (Dubai)

September 25: Pakistan vs Bangladesh (Dubai)

September 26: India vs Sri Lanka (Dubai)

Tokyo worlds: Stahl leaves it late to
win discus gold in delayed final

Revving up the remaining crowd at the arena where he won the Olympic title in 2021, the 33-year-old sent the disc soaring in to the sky and past the 70-meter line for his season’s best throw of 70.47m and a third world title

DNA

TOKYO: Former Olympic champion Daniel Stahl of Sweden won the last gold medal of the 2025 World Athletics Championships on Sunday with the penultimate throw of a men’s discus final delayed for more than two hours by rain. World record holder Mykolas Alekna managed the only legal throw before the heavens opened at the National Stadium and the athletes were removed from the arena for safety reasons. They returned after all the other events and the official closing ceremony had been completed, an army of volunteers wiping down the throwing circle with towels between attempts as the rain persisted. “I have trained for many years in the rain and know that it usually rains in Tokyo in September-October,” Stahl told Swedish broadcaster SVT Sport. “It’s important to keep the focus because there can be delays and it can take a few hours.” Lithuanian Alekna laid down a marker with a throw of 67.84m on his second at-

tempt which led the final until Stahl took to the circle for his last shot at the title.

Revving up the remaining crowd at the arena where he won the Olympic title in

2021, the 33-year-old sent the disc soaring in to the sky and past the 70-meter line for his season’s best throw of 70.47m and a third world title. “Mentally, I was ready for



the last throw. I prepared myself for it,” Stahl said. “This is my favorite arena of all time. It was special in 2021, and it has been special again tonight.”

Alekna, 22, fouled his last attempt and finished second to add to his bronze at the last world championships and silver in 2022 but remained without a title to match the two his father Virgilijus won in discus in 2003 and 2005. “Having the men’s discus throw as the last event of the championships, I don’t think it ever happened before,” Alekna said. “At first, after the competition finished, I was a little disappointed. But I know I did everything I could to fight for the gold.” Alex Rose took bronze with a throw of 66.96m on his fifth attempt to knock Australia’s Matt Denny out of third place and give Samoa a first world championship medal. “This is one of the greatest moments of my entire life and it’s been 20 years in the making,” Rose said.

“To come back here and do what I just did, there is no feeling like it. The young Pacific Island athletes never give up. I work a full-time job and took time off to from my company to compete here.”

Fresh
polio case
reported
in Sindh

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over 400,000 workers — is aimed at vaccinating around 45.4 million children across the country for protection against polio. The upcoming vaccination campaign will follow the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) for Polio Eradication’s Sub-National Polio Vaccination Campaign, which took place earlier this month. The vaccination drive was conducted across 88 districts of the country, including Hyderabad, reaching approximately 21 million children under the age of five. Polio is a highly infectious and incurable disease that can cause lifelong paralysis. The only effective protection is through repeated doses of the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) for every child under the age of five during each campaign, along with the timely completion of all routine immunisations.

Mustafa to
challenge
returning...

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nominate the next CJP from among the three most senior SC judges. Invoking the inherent jurisdiction of the apex court for the enforcement of fundamental rights under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, Khokhar had pled the apex court on September 4 for the immediate fixation of the pending challenges to the 26th Amendment before the full court, in compliance with the Oct 31, 2024, decision of the judges’ committee under the 2023 Practice and Procedure Act — which called for fixing challenges to the 26th Amendment before a full court. However, the registrar returned the petition in a September 19 notice to Syed Rifaqat Hussain Shah, the advocate-on-record for the petitioner, saying that Khokhar had “not pointed out as to what questions of public importance in the instant case are involved with reference to enforcement of any of the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution, so as to directly invoke jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 184(3) of the Constitution”.

Hardline
MPs in Iran
demand...

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The European powers, known as the E3, are remaining signatories of Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal with world powers that United States President Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned in 2018 and followed with tough sanctions. Despite strong opposition by China and Russia, which also negotiated and signed the 2015 nuclear agreement, the E3 triggered the “snapback” mechanism of the landmark accord and secured a vote at the UN Security Council last week. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in New York early on Monday as the head of a delegation to hold negotiations with European and other powers. President Masoud Pezeshkian will be heading there on Tuesday to participate in the UN General Assembly, which will be heavily focused on Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza and recognition of a Palestinian state.

American
track stars
bid golden
farewell to
worlds

TOKYO: American stars Melissa Jefferson-Wooden, Noah Lyles and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone battled through the rain to add another gold to their tally and bring the curtain down on the world championships in Tokyo. For Jefferson-Wooden it was her third of the week, for Lyles and McLaughlin-Levrone their second. Their compatriot Cole Hocker had hoped for two but made up for his disqualification in the 1,500 metres to win the 5,000m. Jefferson-Wooden swept the women’s sprint titles at these championships as the United States won the 4x100m relay, to become only the second woman to achieve that feat. — Agencies

Briefs

Tax bar seeks extension in filing income tax returns

MULTAN: The Pakistan Tax Bar Association has urged Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, to extend the deadline for filing income tax returns.

In a letter signed by President Anwar Kashif Mumtaz Siddiqui and General Secretary Muhammad Rehan, the bar cited the impact of devastating floods and heavy rains across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, and other regions, which have disrupted the ability of many taxpayers to file their returns on time. The association requested that the current deadline of September 30, 2025, be extended by at least one month—to October 31, 2025—with the possibility of further extension if adverse conditions continue.

The letter also highlighted persistent technical issues with the Federal Board of Revenue's IRIS software, which frequently crashes and hinders timely filing.

The Tax Bar expressed hope that the finance minister would grant the extension to ease the burden on taxpayers and help them avoid legal or financial penalties.—APP

Gold price ups by Rs.3,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24-karat gold per tola rose by Rs3,400 on Monday, reaching Rs393,700 compared to Rs390,300 the previous day, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA).

Similarly, the rate of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs2,915, now priced at Rs337,534, against Rs334,619 a day earlier. The price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold also moved up by Rs2,672, reaching Rs309,417, compared to Rs306,745 on the previous trading day.

In the international bullion market, gold prices rose by \$34 per ounce to settle at \$3,719, up from \$3,685 recorded a day ago.

Silver prices also experienced an upward trend. The price of 24-karat silver per tola increased by Rs63, reaching Rs4,595 compared to Rs4,532. Likewise, 10 grams of silver rose by Rs54, now available at Rs3,939, up from Rs3,885.

On the global front, silver prices climbed by \$0.63, standing at \$43.68 per ounce compared to \$43.05 a day earlier.—APP

PSX loses 482 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 482.71, showing an increase of 0.31 percent, closing at 157,554.66 points against 158,037.37 points on the previous trading day.

A total of 1,665,972,171 shares valuing Rs.60,902 billion were traded during the day as compared to 2,047,812,574 shares valuing Rs. 69.273 billion on the last trading day, showing an increase in both volume and value.

As many as 483 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 209 recorded gains and 252 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 22 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 236,012,044 shares at Rs.6.11 per share, followed by Bank of Cnergyco PK with 158,719,962 million shares at Rs.8.54 per share, and Bank of Punjab with 126,794,196 shares at Rs.25.98 per share.

The top gainers were PIA Holding Company LimitedB, which increased by Rs.431.62 to close at Rs.24,801.15, and Super-net Technologies Limited, which rose by Rs.107.50 to close at Rs.1,182.52.

The major losers were Khyber Textile Mills Limited, which declined by Rs.91.32 to close at Rs.2,251.50, and Raffhan Maize Products Company Limited, which fell by Rs.47.10 to close at Rs.9,542.07. In the futures market, 463,633,000 shares were traded as compared to 405,170,000 shares on the previous trading day, while the total value stood at Rs.33,247 billion against Rs. 18.168 billion previously.—APP

What would wider recognition mean for Palestinians, Israel?

A delegation representing the State of Palestine has observer status at the United Nations — but no voting rights. No matter how many countries recognize Palestinian independence, full UN membership would require approval by the Security Council, where Washington has a veto

NEWS DESK

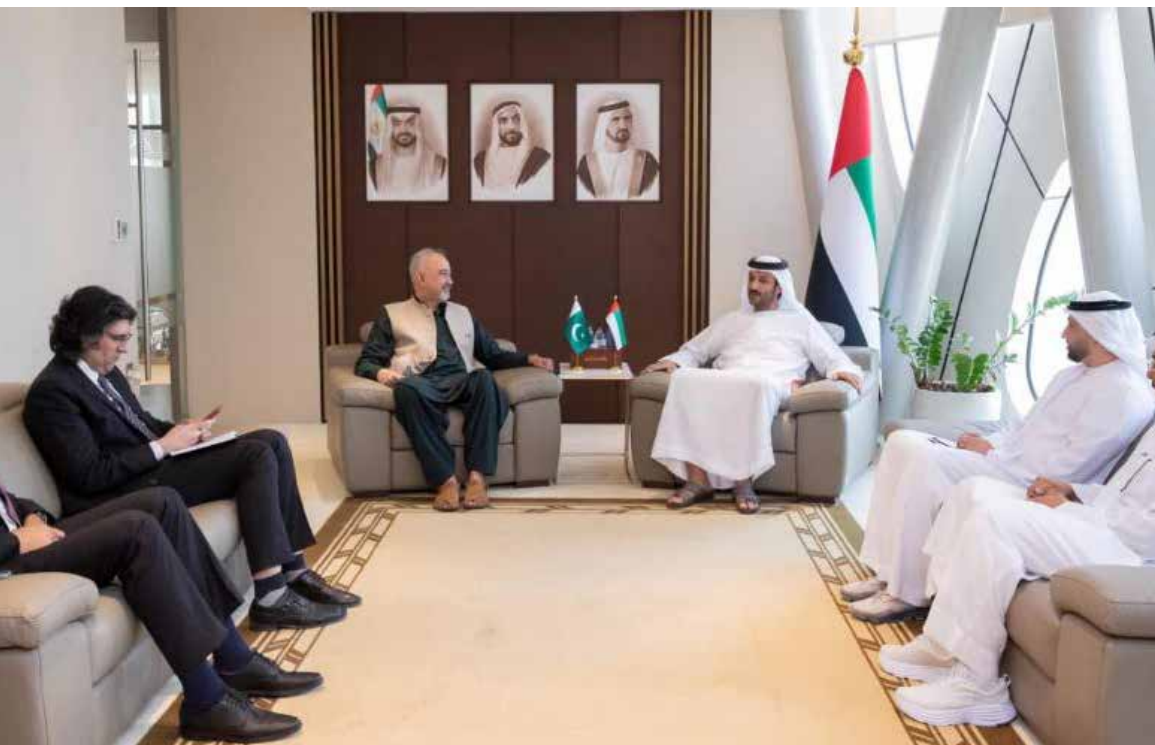
LONDON: Britain, Canada and Australia all recognized a Palestinian state on Sunday, with other countries expected to follow suit this week at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The Palestine Liberation Organization declared an independent Palestinian state in 1988, and most of the global South quickly recognized it. Today, about 150 of the 193 UN member states have done so. Israel's main ally, the United States, has long said it supports the goal of a Palestinian state, but only after the Palestinians agree with Israel on a two-state solution. Until recent weeks, the major European powers shared this position. However, no such negotiations have been held since 2014, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has now said there will never be a Palestinian state. A delegation representing the State of Palestine has observer status at the United Nations — but no voting rights. No matter how many countries recognize Palestinian independence, full UN membership would require approval by the Security Council, where Washington has a veto.

Palestinian diplomatic missions worldwide

are controlled by the Palestinian Authority, which is recognized internationally as representing the Palestinian people. The PA, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, exercises limited self-rule in parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank under agreements with Israel. It issues Palestinian passports and runs the Palestinian health and education systems. The Gaza Strip has been administered by the Hamas militant group since 2007, when it drove out Abbas's Fatah movement after a brief civil war. Most major powers, with the exception of the US since President Donald Trump moved its embassy to Jerusalem, have their main diplomatic missions in Tel Aviv because they do not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. However, about 40 have consular offices in Ramallah in the West Bank, or in East Jerusalem — an area whose annexation by Israel is not internationally recognized and which the Palestinians want as their capital. They include China, Russia, Japan, Germany, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and South Africa. Countries planning to recognize a Palestinian state have not said what difference that would make to their diplomatic representation. Britain, Canada and Australia have recognized a Palestinian state ahead of the UN General Assem-

bly this month. Other countries, including France and Belgium, said they would follow suit. Countries such as Britain say recognition of a Palestinian state is intended to put pressure on Israel to end its devastating assault on Gaza, curtail the building of new Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and recommit to a peace process with the Palestinians. French President Emmanuel Macron, the first leader of a major Western power to endorse recognition, said the move would be accompanied by a commitment by the PA to enact reforms, which would improve Palestinian governance and make it a more credible partner for the post-war administration of Gaza. Those who see recognition as a mere gesture point to the limited influence in the conflict of countries such as China, India, Russia and many Arab states that recognized Palestinian independence decades ago. Without a full seat at the UN or control of its own borders, the PA has only limited ability to conduct bilateral relations. Israel restricts access for goods, investment and educational or cultural exchanges. There are no Palestinian airports. The landlocked West Bank can be reached only through Israel or through the Is-

raeli-controlled border with Jordan, and Israel controls all access to the Gaza Strip. Still, countries planning recognition and the PA itself say it would be more than an empty gesture. Husam Zomlot, head of the Palestinian mission to the UK, said it could lead to partnerships between entities on an equal footing. It might also force countries to review aspects of their relationships with Israel, said Vincent Fean, a former British diplomat in Jerusalem. In Britain's case, this might result in banning products that come from Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, he said, even though the practical impact on the Israeli economy would be minimal. Israel, facing a global outcry over its conduct in the Gaza war, says recognition rewards Hamas for the attacks on Israel that precipitated the war in October 2023. "A Palestinian state will not be established west of the Jordan River," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. The United States opposes the recognition moves by its European allies. It has imposed sanctions on Palestinian officials, including blocking Abbas and other PA figures from attending the UN General Assembly by denying and revoking visas.



Abu Dhabi: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's envoy to the United Arab Emirates, pays a farewell call on Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy and Tourism of the UAE, at the Ministry in Abu Dhabi.

In Sudan, 'never again' has proved untrue: UNHCR chief

THE UNITED NATIONS, United States: After the bloody civil war in Sudan's Darfur region 20 years ago, the world said "never again." And yet it is happening again, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi told AFP in a sobering interview. Since April 2023, a war between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has left tens of thousands of people dead and created the world's largest hunger and displacement crises. The violence, with its "ethnic connotations," is reminiscent of what happened 20 years ago in Darfur, Grandi says. Women have been raped, children forcibly recruited, and there is gruesome violence against people who resist. In 2003, dictator Omar Al-Bashir unleashed the Janjaweed militias on non-Arab communities in Darfur. An estimated 300,000 people were killed and close to 2.5 million people were displaced. The International Criminal Court is investigating allegations that Al-Bashir, who is still at large, committed genocide and crimes against humanity, among other charges, in Darfur between 2003 and 2008. RSF leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo is the most notorious member of the Janjaweed. The new conflict has already left tens of thousands dead. "It is the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world," with an "appalling" 12 million people displaced and one-third of those forced to seek refuge in "fragile" neighboring countries, Grandi says. Has the world forgotten about Sudan's current crisis? "Let's be frank, I'm not sure the world is forgetting because it has never paid much attention to it," Grandi says. He is not optimistic that will change at the annual UN General Assembly in New York this week. The situation in North Darfur's El-Fasher, the last major city in the region still under army control, is "catastrophic," Grandi said, with hundreds of thousands of people trapped amid an 18-month siege by RSF—APP

Israeli army operations stir fears in Syria's Quneitra

KHAN ARNABAH: Rubble and Hebrew graffiti mark Israel's presence in Syria's Quneitra province, where people accuse the southern neighbor's troops of demolitions, detentions and forced displacement — defying ongoing security talks between the two sides. "Israeli forces entered under cover of darkness and demolished my house, along with 15 others, with a bulldozer," said Mohammed Al-Ali. "They turned them into rubble within a few hours," said the 50-year-old from the southern town of Hamidiya. Syria and Israel have technically been at war since 1948, but the state of play between the two countries has shifted dramatically since Islamist-led forces toppled longtime ruler Bashar Assad in December. Israel has deployed troops in a UN-patrolled buffer zone on the Golan Heights, launched hundreds of air strikes on targets in Syria and carried out incursions deeper into the south. These operations — denounced as illegal by Syria's government and human rights groups — have continued even as both sides claim progress in direct talks toward a security agreement. Ali, who works in Quneitra's agriculture directorate, can no longer access his destroyed home, located next to a new Israeli military outpost. "This land belongs to Syrians; there can be no peace until it is returned to us," he said. Hebrew graffiti — graffiti can be seen on the walls inside Quneitra's provincial courthouse, which Israeli forces occupied for weeks. Some listed the soldiers' schedules, while one inscription read: "My dear, I miss you." Destroyed homes — including Ali's — are visible from the windows of the building. Last week, Human Rights Watch accused Israeli forces of forcibly displacing residents of southern Syria in their operation, calling it a "war crime." The New York-based watchdog also said Israeli troops had "arbitrarily detained residents and transferred them to Israel." The Israeli military operates in a region patrolled by peacekeepers from the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, which is tasked with monitoring the armistice. Israel says it carries out strikes in Syria to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of the new authorities it considers jihadists or arch-foe Iran and its proxies. Last month, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was engaged in talks to establish a demilitarized zone in Syria's south. In the town of Khan Arnabah, 38-year-old Raafat Al-Khatib is on his motorcycle with his wife and son. "We were terrified when we first saw Israeli soldiers... as they were stopping young men and checking their identification documents," he said. 'An enemy' -Ayman Zaytun, who runs a confectionery shop in the town, said sales have dropped significantly. "The daily Israeli incursions are making people nervous... we just want to live in peace and safety," he said. "We demand that the government, which went to the United States to negotiate a security agreement, ensure the safety of the people," he added, emphasising however that Israel "will remain an enemy until they leave our land." Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa is in New York to speak at the United Nations General Assembly this week.—DNA

Philippine protest arrests leave parents seeking answers

The Department of Finance has estimated the Philippine economy lost up to 118.5 billion pesos (\$2 billion) from 2023 to 2025 due to corruption in flood control projects. Greenpeace has suggested the number is actually closer to \$18 billion

MANILA: Anxious Filipino parents braved the rain outside Manila's police headquarters Monday, after more than 200 people — including dozens of children — were arrested in clashes that erupted during weekend anti-corruption demonstrations. At least 88 minors were among those taken into custody as police deployed water cannon and deafening sirens against crowds of mostly young, rock-throwing protesters.

Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno said a 12-year-old boy was the youngest detained on Sunday. Michelle Blanco said her son Zoren was 13 Standing in a line outside the Manila Police District offices, the 45-year-old saleswoman said she hadn't been told when her son would be released despite having spent most of the

day there. "A little information about how they are doing inside or what we should do to get him out means a lot," she said, insisting her son had only been watching when scooped off the street. Elsie Santos said her son Reden had a speech impediment, showing AFP journalists the 27-year-old's PWD, or person with disability, card. "No one is explaining anything to us at this point," she said as a small group of youth activists chanted for the prisoners' release in the background. "My son cannot communicate properly, and I'm scared they won't understand him when he explains himself." 'Maximum tolerance' Thousands of Filipinos rallied in Manila on Sunday to vent their anger over a ballooning scandal involving bogus flood-control projects believed to

have cost taxpayers billions of dollars. But peaceful demonstrations filled with families, activists and clergy were later overshadowed by street battles that saw police vehicles set ablaze and the windows of a precinct headquarters shattered. "So far, none of them are saying the reasons behind their actions or if somebody paid them to do it," regional police spokesperson Major Hazel Asilo said of those arrested. "As soon as we know their affiliations, we can know if they were part of the protesters or if they were just causing trouble," she added. According to a statement released Monday by the department of health, about 50 people were taken to one Manila hospital alone following the clashes. Police said 93 officers were injured in the melees. Amid accusations by at least

one local rights group that police had used disproportionate force, interior secretary Jonvic Remulla said their response had been one of "maximum tolerance." "They only had their riot gear and no firearms," he said of the 4,000 police deployed, noting that no weapons had been discharged or tear gas fired. Rage over so-called ghost infrastructure projects has been mounting in the Southeast Asian country since President Ferdinand Marcos put them center stage in a July state of the nation address that followed weeks of deadly flooding. The Department of Finance has estimated the Philippine economy lost up to 118.5 billion pesos (\$2 billion) from 2023 to 2025 due to corruption in flood control projects. Greenpeace has suggested the number is actually closer to \$18 billion.—Agencies

Germany plans for 1,000 wounded troops per day in case of conflict with Russia

BERLIN: Germany's armed forces are planning how to treat a potential 1,000 wounded troops per day should a large-scale conflict between NATO and Russia break out, and amid long-standing warnings by the alliance that Moscow could be capable of launching an attack from 2029. Moscow has rejected any suggestions it might be preparing for a war with the Western military alliance, but the latest incursions of Russian jets and drones into NATO territory have raised fears of escalation. Germany's Surgeon General Ralf Hoffmann said the number of wounded troops in a potential conflict would depend on the intensity of battle and which military units were involved. "Realistically, we are talking about a figure of around 1,000 wounded troops per day," he told Reuters in an interview. European militaries, including their medical services, stepped up preparations for potential conflict with Moscow in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Europe's biggest conflict since World War Two. Germany is also constantly adapting its medical training, incorporating lessons from the war in Ukraine.—APP

Russia says NATO airspace accusations create 'tension'

MOSCOW: Russia denied on Monday that its aircraft were violating NATO airspace and warned that countries making such accusations risked "escalating tensions." Three Russian fighter jets entered NATO member Estonia's airspace on Friday, remaining there for 12 minutes before being escorted out by NATO aircraft, Tallinn said.

The MiG-31 jets, which were overflying the Gulf of Finland, had their transponders switched off and did not engage with Estonian air traffic control, the Baltic country added. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday denied Estonia's version of events, saying the Russian military operates "strictly within the confines of international law, including those pertaining to flights." Russia considers Estonia's statements "empty, unfounded, and a continuation of the country's utterly unstoppable policy of escalating tensions and provoking a confrontational atmosphere," Peskov told reporters. NATO ambassadors will convene on Tuesday for talks on the incursion, after Estonia called for urgent discussions under Article Four of the alliance's founding treaty. Poland invoked Article Four earlier this month after around 20 Russian drones violated its airspace.—APP

Pro-Palestinian strikes, protests disrupt transport across Italy

ROME: Pro-Palestinian protests, strikes and blockades swept across Italy on Monday, disrupting transport and port operations, as unions and activists demanded an end to Israel's offensive in Gaza and called for sanctions. The mobilisation coincided with France's and several other countries' intention to recognise the State of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, following recognition by the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada on Sunday. But Italy has taken a more cautious stance and will not recognise a Palestinian state for now. In Rome, hundreds of high school students gathered outside Termini train station, waving Palestinian flags and chanting "Free Palestine!" Michelangelo, 17, told AFP he was there to support "a population that is being exterminated." Francesca Tecchia, 18, joined her first protest, saying "what is happening (in Gaza) is too important." "Italy must come to a standstill today," said Federica Casino, a 52-year-old worker demonstrating alongside the students "for Gaza's dead children and destroyed hospitals."

Strikes also hit Italy's ports. In Genoa, dockworkers blocked access roads early in the morning, waving Palestinian flags and vowing to stop Italy being used as a staging post for arms shipments to Israel. Further down the coast in Livorno, an entrance to the port was also blocked.—APP

Briefs

Trump rallies
MAGA against
political
opponents

DNA

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump hailed slain conservative activist Charlie Kirk as a "martyr for American freedom" on Sunday and vowed at his memorial service to carry on his work, while again accusing what he called the "radical left" of Kirk's murder. "The violence comes largely from the left," Trump said without citing any evidence, in remarks that downplayed political violence from the right and often turned starkly partisan in contrast to the more solemn tone that most other speakers adopted. Trump has been blaming the left for the deadly shooting before a suspect was even detained. His messaging reflected the dual nature of Kirk's memorial, which had the feel of a religious revival mixed with a "Make America Great Again" rally. The memorial, organised 11 days after Kirk was assassinated by his conservative youth advocacy organisation Turning Point USA, drew tens of thousands of mourners dressed in red, white and blue who filled State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. Kirk's friends and fellow conservatives praised him as an inspirational Christian who founded a political movement they promised to nurture.

China says
combating
'malicious'
content in
social media
crackdown

BEIJING: China's top internet regulator announced on Monday a sweeping two-month crackdown on social media, vowing to combat content containing "malicious incitement of conflict" and "negative outlooks on life such as world-weariness". Beijing requires social media companies to moderate content on their platforms, with posts strictly controlled to avoid anything deemed to be too subversive, vulgar, pornographic or generally harmful. The notice from the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) follows announcements of penalties this month against three popular digital platforms, which it said had neglected content management duties. On Saturday, the CAC said it would carry out "disciplinary and punitive measures" against micro-blogging platform Weibo and short video platform Kuaishou, accusing them of highlighting celebrity news and "undesirable" content. The announcement followed similar action taken by the CAC on September 11 against the Instagram-like Xiaohongshu, known as Rednote in English. - Agencies

Ziarat
assistant
commissioner,
son 'killed'

DNA

QUETTA: Ziarat Assistant Commissioner Muhammad Afzal and his son, who were abducted nearly a month ago, have been killed by their captors, sources told Geo News on Sunday. According to the sources, the bodies of the slain officer and his son are being recovered after the kidnappers shot them and dumped their remains in the mountains. The tragic incident has drawn strong condemnation from the provincial leadership. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said the martyred assistant commissioner laid down his life while fulfilling his duty. "Those who kill innocent people and disrupt peace will not escape their fate," he declared in a statement. CM Bugti further described Afzal as a dedicated, hard-working, and capable officer, adding that his sacrifice for the nation would always be remembered.

Experts highlight Pakistan-Uzbek
shared cultural, historical heritage

General Ehsan stressed that Pakistan must further engage with Central Asian republics and extend its outreach to the Caucasus region, particularly Azerbaijan; Dr. Ziyov emphasized the importance of strengthening historical, cultural, and scientific cooperation between the two countries



ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: A seminar focusing on the shared cultural and historical linkages between Pakistan and Uzbekistan was jointly hosted by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad and the MUSLIM Institute. The event brought together scholars, diplomats, policymakers, and academics from both countries in an effort to explore avenues for deeper cooperation. General (retd) Ehsanul Haq, who graced the occasion as the chief guest, underscored Pakistan's deep regard for its fraternal ties with Uzbekistan. He recalled his personal experiences of visiting Uzbekistan and expressed satisfaction over the growth of bilateral connectivity. "It had been my wish for many years that Pakistan and Uzbekistan should have direct air links. Today, I am pleased to note that flights now connect Tashkent with both Islamabad and Lahore," he said, highlighting that the Islamabad-Tashkent route is the shortest air corridor between the two nations. General Ehsan stressed that Pakistan must further engage with Central Asian republics and extend its outreach to the Caucasus region, particularly Azerbaijan, with whom Pakistan enjoys excellent relations. He described Central Asia as an important bridge between South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, adding that cultural diplomacy, people-to-people exchanges, and economic partnerships could pave the way for regional prosperity. Among the distinguished speakers was Dr. Azamat Ziyov, Senator and academician from Uzbekistan, who also serves as Director of the Institute of History at the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. Lead-



ing an Uzbek academic delegation to Pakistan, Dr. Ziyov emphasized the importance of strengthening historical, cultural, and scientific cooperation between the two countries. He praised the MUSLIM Institute and the Uzbek Embassy for arranging the seminar, describing it as a valuable platform for dialogue and collaboration. Dr. Ziyov also expressed his gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to him and his entourage during their stay in Pakistan. Speaking briefly to Daily Islamabad Post, he shared that his delegation would travel to Lahore before returning to Tashkent. "This was my first visit to Pakistan, and I am deeply touched by the warmth and generosity of the Pakistani people," he said.

Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, lauded the role of the MUSLIM Institute in fostering cultural and intellectual dialogue between the two countries. He expressed optimism that ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan would continue to grow stronger in education, culture, and trade. "Uzbekistan sees Pakistan not only as a partner but also as a brotherly nation with whom we share a rich heritage," he remarked. Chairman of the MUSLIM Institute, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, in his address, called for establishing a cultural corridor linking Pakistan with Central Asian states. He emphasized that such initiatives would not only preserve shared history but also open new ave-

nues of cooperation in education, arts, and tourism. Ambassador Sarfraz Ahmed Sipra also addressed the gathering, underscoring the importance of cultural diplomacy in strengthening bilateral relations. Major General (retd) Amir Jaffery, meanwhile, fondly recounted his visits to Uzbekistan and stressed the significance of academic and cultural exchanges in bringing nations closer. At the conclusion of the seminar, souvenirs were presented to the speakers and distinguished guests as a token of appreciation. The event served as a testament to the centuries-old civilizational links between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and underscored the commitment of both nations to carry forward this legacy into the future.

Nepal panel to probe violence during
anti-graft protests that killed 74

Three-member panel headed by retired judge Gauri Bahadur Karki will complete its investigation in three months

NEWS DESK

KATHMANDU: Nepal's interim government, led by former Chief Justice Sushila Karki, has set up a panel to investigate the violence during anti-corruption protests this month that killed 74 people and forced Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to quit, a minister said on Monday. The demonstrations, which began as a Gen Z-led movement against widespread corruption and a lack of jobs, escalated into the Himalayan nation's deadliest violence in decades. More than 2,100 people were injured while protesters set fire to the main office complex that houses the prime minister's office, the Supreme Court and the parliament building, as well as malls, luxury hotels and showrooms that the demonstrators said were owned by

people close to corrupt politicians. Rameshwor Khanal, who Sushila put in charge of the finance ministry, said the three-member panel headed by retired judge Gauri Bahadur Karki had been given three months to complete the probe. "It will investigate [...] the loss of life and property during the protests, excesses by both sides and people involved in the acts of arson and vandalism during the movement," Khanal told Reuters. In a social media post, former Prime Minister Oli also demanded an investigation into the violence and said his government did not order police to fire at the protesters. The protests were infiltrated by outsiders and police did not possess the type of weapons which were used to fire on the crowd, Oli said. Karki is the former chairman of a special court that hears corruption cases in Nepal and has a reputation for honesty and integrity.

North Korea can talk to US if it stops
insisting on denuclearisation: Kim

Kim Jong says building nuclear weapons a matter of survival for Pyongyang against 'grave threats' from US, South Korea

NEWS DESK

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said there is no reason to avoid dialogue with the US if Washington stops insisting his country give up nuclear weapons but he will never trade away the nuclear arsenal to be free of sanctions, state media reported on Monday. In a speech at the Supreme People's Assembly on Sunday, Kim said: "Personally, I still have fond memories of US President Trump," KCNA reported. The two leaders met three times during Trump's first presidency. The comments come at a time when the new liberal government in Seoul is urging Trump to take the lead in reopening dialogue with Kim, six years after all peace talks with Pyongyang collapsed over a clash on sanctions and nuclear dismantlement. "If the United States drops the absurd obsession with denuclearising us and accepts reality, and wants genuine peaceful coexistence, there is no reason for us not to sit down with the United States," Kim was quoted as saying. It was a matter of survival for the country to build nuclear weapons to safeguard its security against

grave threats from the United States and South Korea, Kim said, listing a series of regular military drills by the allies that he said have evolved into exercises for a nuclear war. Recent overtures from Washington and Seoul for dialogue are disingenuous because their fundamental intent to weaken the North and destroy his regime remains unchanged, Kim said, adding a phased proposal by the South on ending the North's nuclear programmes was proof of that. "The world already knows full well what the United States does after it makes a country give up its nuclear weapons and disarm," Kim said. "We will never give up our nuclear weapons." "There will never be, and will never ever be for eternity, any negotiations with enemies of exchanging some things out of some obsession with lifting sanctions." Sanctions have been "a learning experience" and made his country stronger and more resilient, he said. North Korea has been under a series of UN Security Council resolutions imposing economic sanctions and arms embargoes that have squeezed funding for military development but it has continued to make advances in building nuclear weapons and powerful ballistic missiles.



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