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Norwegian envoy stresses enhanced ties with Pakistan

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Pakistan, EU ties cordial, says Gilani

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Health Minister attends Rabta event at Serena

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Programme review

Pak urges IMF to consider flood impact

Record monsoon rains since late June, amplified by dam releases from India, have submerged large swathes of country

CENTRELINE REPORT

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan is making steady progress in meeting targets set under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, but stressed that the economic impact of recent floods should be taken into account during its upcoming review.

Massive floods across the country have struck both the rural heartland and industrial centres for the first time in decades, causing billions of dollars in damage while straining food supplies, exports and a fragile economic recovery. Record monsoon rains since late June, amplified by dam releases from India, have submerged large swathes of Punjab and Sindh, the two most populous and economically vital provinces.

Over 1,000 people have been killed since June 26, the National Disaster Management Authority said, while over 2.5 million people have been evacuated in Punjab and Sindh. The prime minister, in a meeting with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, on the sidelines of the UNGA on Wednesday, appreciated the IMF's longstanding constructive partnership with Pakistan, which had further strengthened under the incumbent chief's leadership. He acknowledged the IMF's timely support under various instruments, including the Stand-By Arrangement for \$3 billion in FY 2024, followed by the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of \$7 billion. "Today, with the institution of deep-rooted structural reforms, Pakistan's economy [is] showing positive

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Prime Minister Meets World Bank Group President

DNA

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Mr. Ajay Banga, President of the World Bank Group (WBG), on the sidelines of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Prime Minister appreciated Mr. Banga's leadership in transforming the World Bank into a faster, more efficient and impactful development partner, with renewed focus on simplifying operations and mobilizing private sector resources. He lauded the Bank's long-standing support to Pakistan, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating 2022 floods.

The Prime Minister apprised the World Bank President of the Government's comprehensive reform agenda, encompassing resource mobilization, energy sector reforms, privatization and measures to build resilience against climate change. He reiterated that the reform agenda had steered Pakistan towards macroeconomic stabilization, restored investor

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NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Sri Lanka H.E. Anura Kumara Dissanayake on the sidelines of 80th session of UNGA, New York. – DNA

'Only SJC can hold judges accountable'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) has held that only the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) can investigate allegations of misconduct against judges of the apex court and high courts, it emerged on Wednesday. Three Supreme Court judges had initiated contempt proceedings against the senior staff member in January for not fixing a case regarding the jurisdiction of regular benches. The case pertained to whether regular benches of the Supreme Court could determine the constitutionality of Article 191A of the Constitution, under which the Constitutional Bench was established after the 26th Amendment. The detailed verdict authored by Justice Jamal Khan

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CCI yet to take decision on withholding tax

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman Allama Dr Muhammad Raghob Hussain Naeemi on Wednesday clarified that the body would take up matter related to the withholding tax in its next meeting. His remarks came shortly after a press release by the CII declared withholding tax on money transfers and withdrawals to be against Sharia (Islamic law). Talking to Geo News, the CII chairman said that the note-taking staff misunderstood that withholding tax had been declared un-Islamic.

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PVARA to get more budget

ECC decides to allow commercial import of used cars

Initially, only vehicles not older than five years will be permitted until 30th June 2026

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet was held today at the Finance Division with the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing the meeting virtually from the New York. The ECC considered a summary regarding the commercial import of used vehicles and, after detailed discussion, accorded approval to the proposals. The ECC decided to amend relevant provisions of the Import Policy Order, 2022 to allow the commercial import of used vehicles. Initially, only vehicles not older than five years will be permitted until 30th June 2026, after which the vehicle age limit shall stand removed. The ECC further directed that such commercial importation would remain subject to strict compliance with prescribed environmental and safety standards.

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FBR's new cell scans social media for tax evasion

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Diamond sets and a drone light show at a near-million-dollar wedding have become evidence for tax authorities under a new "Lifestyle Monitoring Cell" tasked with scanning social media for lavish spenders, officials said. A team of 40 investigators from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has started scouring Instagram, TikTok and YouTube posts this week, to match influencers, celebrities, realtors and businesspeople with disproportionate filings. "It's open-source their Instagram accounts are a public

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Briefs

CJCSC attends inauguration ceremony of KHINAMS

DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), attended the inauguration ceremony of King Hamad Institute of Nursing and Associated Medical Sciences (KHINAMS) as the chief guest in Islamabad. The ceremony was also attended by General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, Commander Bahrain National Guard and other senior civil-military officers, said an ISPR news release on Wednesday. The CJCSC underscored the strong bilateral relation between Pakistan and Bahrain. He further said that the inauguration of KHINAMS marked an important milestone in advancing medical education, expressing confidence that the institute would produce competent healthcare professionals and set new benchmarks in nursing and associated medical sciences in Pakistan.

Justice Saman Raffat's cause list cancelled

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The cause list of the court of Islamabad High Court (IHC)'s Justice Saman Raffat Intiaz's has been cancelled on Wednesday due to her leave. The judge will be on leave from September 24 to 26. A notice of the unavailability of the bench has also been displayed outside the court to inform lawyers and litigants.

Fitna al Hindustan

Security forces kill 13 terrorists in KP: ISPR

Pakistan expects the interim Afghan government, run by the Afghan Taliban, to uphold its responsibilities and deny the use of its soil to carry out acts of terror

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Security forces on Wednesday killed 13 terrorists in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) carried out in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan district, the military's media wing said in a statement. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces conducted the operation in the Daraban area, upon the reported presence of terrorists "belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij". "During the conduct of [the] operation, [our] own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and [as a result], 13 Indian sponsored khwarij were sent to hell," the statement read. The ISPR added that weapons and ammunition were recovered from the dead terrorists, who were involved in terrorist activity in the area. The statement added that these ter-

rorists were involved in "facilitation [of] a suicide bombing attack in Daraban in December 2023, [the] abduction and target killing of government officials and innocent civilians".

"[A] sanitisation operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored kharij found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of Indian sponsored terrorism from the country," the statement concluded. On September 21, security personnel launched an IBO in the same district, where they killed seven terrorists, including three "Afghan nationals". In a statement, the ISPR said that the operation was carried out in the Kulachi area upon the presence of "khwarij". "During the conduct of [the] operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and [as a result], seven Indian sponsored khwarij,

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Imran, Bushra blame establishment in Toshakhana 2 case as verdict likely

Duo accuses NAB of acting establishment and their opponents' tool to keep them out of political arena

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: As the Toshakhana-2 reference moves towards its final stages, PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have accused the NAB of acting as a tool of the establishment and their political opponents to keep them out of the political arena. In their statements during the investigation of the case, Imran had alleged that he was ousted from power through a "local and foreign conspiracy" and had since November 2022, faced ruthless and unprecedented victimisation. He said that dozens of cases were manufactured against him and the PTI leadership, but all major prosecution cases have collapsed either through acquittals or suspension of sentences. Khan questioned why only he and his wife were being singled out in the Toshakhana reference, when Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari illegally retained luxury vehicles from Toshakhana, yet no action was taken against them. He maintained that all gifts retained during his premiership were evaluated by government-approved appraisers and in line with policy. There has been absolutely no influence used in this or any previous case, he said, declaring that responsibility lay with the appraisers themselves.

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Hamid Raza resigns from TTAP's info secy post

TTAP confirms Raza quit, citing court cases and trolling, but says he remains a PTI ally

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The opposition alliance faced a setback on Tuesday as Sahibzada Hamid Raza, head of the Sunni Ittehad Council, resigned from his position as information secretary. According to sources within the Tehreek-e-Tahafuz Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP), Raza was deeply upset over alleged trolling by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) social media activists after he declined to join the September 20 "mission nor". PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, addressing the media a day earlier, clarified that no official announcement regarding "mission nor" had been made from the party's platform and suggested that

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ICCI holds 41st AGM

President Tahir Mehmood shares vision for business growth

ICCI President said that rising costs and regulatory hurdles continue to hamper ease of doing business

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) held its 41st Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Wednesday, which was attended by a large number of members including former Presidents, Council Members, and Executive Members. The AGM unanimously approved the minutes of the 40th AGM, adopted the annual report of the Chamber for 2024-25, the Audit Report 2024-25, the Budget for 2025-26 presented by the Secretary General Gulam Murtaza and appointed auditors for the year 2025-26. Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President ICCI, in his address expressed deep gratitude for being elected unopposed, terming it a great honour to lead the premier Chamber of the federal capital. He reaffirmed his resolve to promote trade and investment, foster a conducive business environment, and play a proactive role in national economic development. Highlighting the pressing concerns of the business community, the ICCI President said that rising costs and regulatory hurdles continue to hamper ease of doing business. He assured that he and his team would spare no effort to secure a business-friendly

atmosphere in Islamabad through strong advocacy and constructive engagement. Stressing that ICCI is the "second home" of the business community, he said that under his open-door policy, all decisions would be taken in consultation.

On a key development, Sardar Tahir Mehmood apprised the AGM with pride that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had suspended the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) notification regarding an increase in property tax. The Court has held that the collection of property tax falls under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad (MCI), not CDA, and directed that tax should continue to be charged at previous rates. He further informed that another writ petition filed against the enhancement in transfer fees is fixed for hearing on 29th instant and expressed confidence that it too would be decided in favour of the business community. Outlining his priorities, the ICCI President said that resolving issues of markets and industrial areas, organizing national and international exhibitions, holding Business Opportunity Conferences and Awards, and strengthening B2B linkages with overseas chambers will remain high on his agenda. He stressed that since most of the challenges of businesses are linked with

CDA, building a strong and result-oriented working relationship with the civic body would be among his foremost objectives.

Tariq Sadiq, Chairman Founder Group, congratulated Sardar Tahir Mehmood on his election and expressed confidence that with his God-gifted qualities and vision, he would deliver exemplary performance during his tenure. Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub also assured that the team would make every effort to deliver on commitments, while Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry pledged to resolve market issues through close consultation with elected representatives.

Former Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry expressed gratitude to the executive members for their cooperation, which made their tenure successful. Former ICCI President Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi conducted the proceedings of the AGM in an efficient and impressive manner.

Prominent among the attendees included former Presidents Zubair Ahmed Malik, Abdul Rauf Allam, Zafar Bakhtawari, Khalid Javaid, Mian Shaukat Masood, Mian Akram Farid, Khalid Iqbal Malik and Shaikh Amir Waheed.

Punjab CM stresses merit, accountability

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif attended the passing-out parade of enforcement and investigation officers of the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) force at Police Training College, Chung, here on Wednesday.

The chief minister also inspected a flag march of the newly trained force and took a general salute. Motorcycle and special vehicle squads carrying the national flag also participated in the ceremony, adding to the grandeur of the occasion. She later inspected the parade aboard a jeep and administered the oath to the PERA Force, pledging adherence to justice, transparency, and integrity in the discharge of duties.

A large number of ministers, parliamentarians, senior officers, personnel, and families of the recruits attended the ceremony. The CM distributed medals and awards among the top performers of the training, including Rabia Arif, Waheed Azam, Abdullah Safdar, Salman Hameed, Rana Afaq Ahmed and others. She also acknowledged and awarded the police contingent for their impressive presentation of the national anthem and patriotic songs.

Earlier, PERA Director General Captain (R) Farrukh Atiq welcomed the Chief Minister and expressed gratitude for her participation as chief guest. He highlighted the importance of the PERA Force in ensuring effective enforcement, regulatory oversight, and public service delivery in Punjab. APP

Navy chief reaffirms commitment to maritime security

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf has said that Pakistan Navy remains firmly committed to safeguarding maritime security and promoting regional stability through constant vigilance in the North Arabian Sea. In his message on the occasion of World Maritime Day 2025, observed on September 25, he extended greetings to the global maritime community, dedicating his message to Pakistani seafarers, maritime professionals and coastal communities.

He praised their "unwavering commitment and tireless efforts" as the backbone of Pakistan's economic progress and global connectivity.

He said that their invaluable contributions under challenging conditions are not only essential but cru-

cial to Pakistan's economic sustenance and resilience. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has aptly chosen this year's theme as "Our Ocean - Our Obligation - Our Opportunity".

The chief said, it carries profound meanings, reminding all that the oceans, which cover more than two-thirds of the planet, not only connect the world but are the lifeline of humanity, sustaining livelihoods, enabling global commerce, supporting ecological balance and ensuring food and energy security. With these immense benefits comes the paramount responsibility to protect, preserve and harness the oceans, both for our present as well as future generations.

"The sea holds exceptional strategic, economic and developmental significance

for Pakistan. Our coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone present unparalleled opportunities for economic growth through fisheries, shipping, energy and in fact, the all-encompassing Blue Economy. This places a solemn obligation upon us to safeguard the marine environment and ensure safe and healthy maritime practices," he added.

He said that Pakistan Navy (PN) remains firmly committed to these goals, safeguarding maritime security and promoting regional stability through its constant vigilance in the North Arabian Sea. PN also participates in international coalitions, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. In addition, PN protects vital sea lanes and upholds the sanctity of freedom of navigation.—DNA

Punjab to build new children hospitals in Bahawalpur, Rawalpindi

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has announced that new children's hospitals are being established in Bahawalpur and Rawalpindi, while the Sahiwal Institute of Cardiology will soon be opened for the public. He made these remarks while addressing the 22nd convocation of Allama Iqbal Medical College as chief guest on Wednesday. Former Health Minister Professor Javed Akram attended as guest of honor. Khawaja Salman Rafique said that Allama Iqbal Medical College is among the finest medical institutions in Pakistan, providing an outstanding educational environment to students. "Today, along with the success of our graduates, we also celebrate the great traditions and passion for public service instilled by this institution. For every graduate, this is an important day to begin their practical life," he said. Highlighting Punjab government's initiatives under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the minister said historic steps have been taken in healthcare, including the Children's Heart Surgery Program, Kidney and Liver Transplant Program, Dialysis Program, Clinic on Wheels, and Field Hospitals. He added that the government is also building the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research in Lahore, and Nawaz Sharif Institutes of Cardiology in Lahore and Sargodha. Recruitment of thousands of medical officers, consultants, nurses, and paramedical staff is also underway for the new facilities. Congratulating the fresh graduates and their parents, the minister said: "Our new doctors will be the ambassadors of this institution. Providing quality healthcare at people's doorsteps is the Punjab government's top priority." On the occasion, Professor Javed Akram praised Khawaja Salman Rafique's dedication, while Chairman Board of Management Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Principal Professor Tayyaba Waseem, and other senior faculty members also addressed the convocation. Gold and silver medals, along with MBBS degrees, were awarded to the best graduates, including Dr. Abdullah, who was honored as Best Graduate.—APP

British envoy visits Okara to promote climate-smart farming

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott, on Wednesday visited Okara to inaugurate an Eddy Covariance Flux Tower system, installed through funding from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The visit was part of the UK Government's support to the Water Resource Accountability in Pakistan (WRAP) programme, implemented by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). The High Commissioner witnessed, how UK's support is helping Pakistan build a more climate-resilient future through smarter water and land management practices. The newly inaugurated flux tower captures real-time data on water, carbon, methane, and energy exchanges between agricultural land and the atmosphere. This field-based information is already helping the Punjab Irrigation Department improve water allocation and supporting the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination in strengthening Pakistan's greenhouse



gas reporting for agriculture system, an essential step toward achieving the country's climate commitments. She was also briefed on Soil Moisture Sensors being introduced to farmers in Okara. These simple and low-cost devices guide farmers on when to irrigate their fields, reducing water and electricity use while boosting yields. Farmers in Okara have already reported savings on input

costs and improved productivity, showing how simple technology can make a big difference in rural livelihoods. The visit comes at a time when flooding across Pakistan is once again causing damage and hardship for communities. The situation highlights the urgent need for evidence-based research and real-time data that can feed into policies and acts, enabling the country

to move from reactive responses to proactive climate planning. Speaking about this urgency, Dr. Mohsin Hafeez, Director, Water, Food and Ecosystem, IWMI and the Project Leader for WRAP, said, "Pakistan has faced devastating floods in recent years, a reminder that climate change is no longer a distant threat but a present reality. Too often, we respond only after disaster strikes. Through the WRAP programme, we are building the tools and systems that shift us from reactive crisis management to proactive, evidence-based planning. From flux towers that strengthen climate reporting to soil sensors that save farmers water and money, these innovations show how science can protect lives and livelihoods in a changing climate." Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, added, "Pakistan's recent floods are a stark reminder that climate change is a present-day challenge. Too often, action comes only after disaster strikes.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Water Resources, Muhammad Mueen Watto meeting with the Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan, Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater.

APRNS thanks Punjab govt for restoring IPL Ads policy

ISLAMABAD: "The APNS has expressed its thanks to Ms Mariam Nawaz Sharif, Chief Minister Ms Azma Bukhari Information Minister, Mr Zahid Akhtar Zaman Chief Secretary and Mr Tahir Raza Hamdani Secretary Information Punjab for accepting the demand of APNS to withdraw amendment in the PPRA rules and allow publication of tender notices ads in newspapers as in the past. Mr Sarmad Ali President and Mr Mohammed Ather Kazi Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society in a press statement have stated that the resolution of the long pending issue would be highly appreciated by the Punjab based newspapers who were suffering grossly by the amendment in the PPRA rules. The APNS has long been demanding withdrawal of the amendment as it badly affected economy of regional and small newspapers of the province. The APNS office bearers welcomed the much awaited decision of the Punjab Government and stated that finally the Rules have been rectified giving breathing space to the Punjab based newspapers.

Recognition by Europe slap in Israel face: Nusrat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Political and social leader Nusrat Khan has said that the recognition of the Palestinian state by Britain, Canada, and Australia is nothing less than a slap in the face of Israel.

In a statement, Nusrat Khan said that the reality is that the effects of the recent defense agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have begun to appear not only on the regional level but also globally. On one hand, the cooperation between the two brotherly Islamic countries can influence American and Israeli interests in Middle Eastern politics, and on the other hand, it will play a key role in restraining the extremist Jewish Prime Minister Netanyahu. Nusrat Khan said that there is a strong possibility that in the near future, more Arab countries will also join the Pakistan-Saudi defense agreement and practically disassociate themselves from the double standards of the United States and Israel.

KOICA, UN Women host digital startup roundtable to empower young women

LAHORE: UN Women Pakistan, with the valuable support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), organized the latest district-level session of its Digital Startup Roundtable Series - Women Leading Innovation in Lahore, Punjab. The event gathered policymakers, tech leaders, private sector representatives, development partners, and young women entrepreneurs to discuss the role of women in shaping Pakistan's digital future. As part of the Digitalization for Women's Economic Empowerment (D4WEE) project, the La-

hore roundtable created a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and solution-building to strengthen women's access to digital skills, tools, and entrepreneurship opportunities across Punjab. Since July 2025, the series has successfully convened similar sessions in Islamabad, Mardan, Multan, and Swabi, with Lahore marking its continued expansion across the country. The roundtable featured two thematic discussions. The first focused on policy and infrastructure, encouraging dialogue on gender-responsive digital governance, improved infrastructure, and strategies

to expand affordable internet access in underserved communities. Government representatives, academics, and industry experts shared insights on enabling inclusive policies to bridge the gender digital divide in Punjab. The second discussion centred on growth pathways for women entrepreneurs, looking beyond early-stage mentorship to address access to finance, networks, and competitive markets. Participants emphasized the need to connect women-led startups with investors, enable partnerships with established businesses, and expand women's visibility in both local.—APP

President commends APNS role in promoting print media industry

ISLAMABAD: The President of Pakistan is Asif Ali Zardari extend my warmest greetings to readers, journalists, editors, publishers, and all those who have dedicated themselves to the noble profession of journalism on this National Newspaper Readership Day, I. He commend the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) for its initiative in commemorating this day each year to encourage the culture of newspaper reading across the country. The President firmly believe that an informed citizenry is the foundation of a vibrant democracy. When citizens have access to reliable information, they are empowered to make better choices - not only in elections but in every sphere of

life. From the days of the Pakistan Movement to the present, newspapers have been central to our national discourse. They have informed the people, exposed injustices, provided a platform for debate, and upheld the public's right to know. For this invaluable service, generations of journalists deserve our deepest respect. Early on, he learnt that a newspaper guarantees a responsible flow of information. The institution of the editor ensures that responsibility by deciding what deserves to be highlighted and what must be discarded. Sadly, with the advent of social media, the role of the professional editor is in decline, giving rise to disinformation and propaganda. This makes the val-

ues of responsible journalism carried by newspapers all the more precious today. In today's fast-paced digital era, where news often circulates before it is verified, newspapers remain symbols of trust. They provide depth, context, and thoughtful analysis - helping readers understand not just what has happened, but why it matters. While I do recognise that the industry faces severe challenges, it is heartening to see that the best newspapers around the world have not only survived but flourished. I am confident that our newspapers too can do the same, not by waiting for government support or big business patronage, but by relying on the trust.—DNA

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Sept09/DPR Korea National Day

Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day

Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day

Sept16/Mexico National Day

Sept16/Papua New Guinea Independence Day


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RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Health Minister Mustafa Kamal attends RABTA event at Serena

Mustafa Kamal stressed the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles to prevent cardiovascular diseases, which remain a leading cause of mortality worldwide, and reaffirmed the government’s commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure and public awareness campaigns aimed at reducing the burden of heart disease in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, under the Public Diplomacy Initiative, organized a special Raabta Panel Discussion to mark World Heart Day, in collaboration with Maroof International Hospital. The discussion brought together leading cardiologists, health experts, and media representatives to highlight advancements in cardiac care and the importance of preventive strategies for heart health. The event was honored by the presence of Federal Health Minister Mr. Syed Mustafa Kamal as the Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, the Minister praised Serena Hotels and Maroof International Hospital for spearheading dialogue on cardiac health. He stressed the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles to prevent cardiovascular diseases, which remain a leading cause of mortality worldwide, and reaffirmed the government’s commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure and public awareness campaigns aimed at reducing the burden of heart disease in Pakistan. The panel was moderated by Ms. Sidra Iqbal, a broadcast journalist and communication

strategist, who navigated the conversation with insightful questions and reflections. The distinguished panel featured Dr. Mahim Malik, Congenital Heart Surgeon; Dr. Fahad Khalid, Consultant Interventional Cardiologist; Mr. Shahzad Alam, Representative of WHO; Ms. Nayyer Ali, Secretary of the National Press Club; and Dr. Rashid Ali Khan, Head of Psychiatry at Maroof International Hospi-

tal. Together, they shed light on the latest advancements in cardiac care, including minimally invasive procedures, improved diagnostic technologies, and the growing importance of integrated healthcare. They also emphasized preventive strategies such as regular exercise, balanced diet, routine screenings, and mental health management as essential components of heart health.

CDA plans to setup Special Technology Zone in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Headquarters chaired by Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa. The meeting was attended by Member Planning and Design, Dr. Khalid Hafiz, along with Executive Director Aamir Saleemi from the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) and the relevant officers from CDA. The meeting discussed the proposed project for establishing a Special Technology Zone in Islamabad. During the briefing, it was informed that 28 Special Technology Zones have been notified across the country, while 141 acres of land have been allocated for the Special Technology

Zone in Islamabad. The meeting was informed that national and international companies and entrepreneurs associated with modern technology will establish their offices and production houses in this special zone. The meeting was briefed on the master plan prepared for the proposed site. It was informed that this special zone in Islamabad will include a technology zone, a high-tech production zone and commercial and residential areas. The meeting was told that special concessions in taxes and duties, along with various facilities, will be provided for high-tech companies in this zone. It was agreed in the meeting to form a joint working group between the two authorities. The purpose of forming

this working group is to make the project feasible and operational at the earliest. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed that a feasible and sustainable model be prepared by reviewing the financial aspects of the project. He said this project will play a key role in promoting technology and establishing a technology hub in the Federal Capital, Islamabad. Chairman CDA said that this project will also create employment opportunities in the technology sector within Islamabad. Concluding the meeting, the Chairman CDA reaffirmed the commitment to fully utilize the technical expertise and experience of STZA to ensure the success of this project.—DNA

Punjab govt not providing relief to flood affected farmers: Nadeem Afzal

ISLAMABAD: The Central Information Secretary of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Nadeem Afzal Chan, and the In-charge of the Peoples Labour Bureau, Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed, addressed a press conference at the Party’s Central Secretariat in Islamabad. Former Member of the National Assembly, Ghulam Murtaza Satti, was also present. Nadeem Afzal Chan said that the Punjab government is avoiding its responsibility to provide relief to poor farmers affected by the recent floods. He emphasized that the Benazir Bhutto Income Support Programme (BISP) is the only welfare programme in Pakistan that has been internationally recognized and praised. Initiated for the underprivileged, BISP was the dream of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and was practically launched by President Asif Ali Zardari. Today, it benefits nearly ten million poor families. He strongly criticized Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) for recently branding BISP a fraud, reminding that this was the same Jamaat-e-Islami which had recruited innocent citizens in the name of the Afghan Jihad and collected billions of rupees in that failed project. “Was Jamaat-e-Islami’s Jihad project a success or a fail-

ure?” Chan asked, adding that JI sacrificed innocent lives in a futile war. Chan further said that BISP’s reliable data could be used to provide relief to flood victims. “Will international institutions depend on patwari records for aid distribution?” he asked. “Our demand is not about whose picture is displayed on the aid packages. Anyone is free to put their picture, from the ballot box to the grave.” Highlighting PPP’s track record, he noted that Pakistan achieved a wheat surplus only during PPP’s tenure. He said President Asif Ali Zardari had suggested setting the support price at Rs. 4,000, but the present government is instead benefitting foreign farmers while undermining local ones. He revealed that wheat worth Rs. 2 trillion had already been imported, with another Rs. 5 trillion to follow, yet no relief was being extended to domestic farmers. Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed, speaking next, said that questions remain as to whether water was deliberately used as a weapon. “If India carried out water aggression, how is it that East Punjab also faced devastation? Embankments were broken in many places, some to prevent greater damage, but others due to sheer negligence of the Punjab administration,” he said. He emphasized

that only BISP has the infrastructure reaching down to the Union Council level to deliver aid efficiently. “We are not demanding that Benazir’s picture be displayed on relief packages. But apart from BISP, there is no other mechanism with such reach,” he added. Manzoor also accused Jamaat-e-Islami of exploiting the poor by pushing them into Zia-ul-Haq’s Jihad project. “That project was fraudulent, a failure, and history has proven it. JI even won seats in elections under the cover of that scheme. They must confine themselves to politics instead of exploiting people’s lives,” he said. The PLB In-charge said that PPP does not wish to politicize the floods but wants to present facts and figures. He criticized the government for hiding behind IMF conditions instead of buying wheat from local farmers. By importing 3.5 million tons of wheat, the government has economically destroyed Pakistani farmers. He added that only 800,000 tons of wheat remain in reserve today, against the required 2.8 million tons. “Why is the government not allowing wheat to move to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa? Why impose a ban on inter-provincial transport of wheat, making bread more expensive in smaller provinces?” he asked.—DNA

President’s message on the occasion of National Newspaper Readership Day

ISLAMABAD: On this National Newspaper Readership Day, I extend my warmest greetings to readers, journalists, editors, publishers, and all those who have dedicated themselves to the noble profession of journalism. I commend the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) for its initiative in commemorating this day each year to encourage the culture of newspaper reading across the country. I firmly believe that an informed citizenry is the foundation of a vibrant democracy. When citizens have access to reliable information, they are empowered to make better choices – not only in elections but in every sphere of life. From the days of the Pakistan Movement to the present, newspapers have been central to our national discourse. They have informed the people, exposed injustices, provided a platform for debate, and upheld the public’s right to know. For this inval-

uable service, generations of journalists deserve our deepest respect. Early on, I learnt that a newspaper guarantees a responsible flow of information. The institution of the editor ensures that responsibility by deciding what deserves to be highlighted and what must be discarded. Sadly, with the advent of social media, the role of the professional editor is in decline, giving rise to disinformation and propaganda. This makes the values of responsible journalism carried by newspapers all the more precious today. In today’s fast-paced digital era, where news often circulates before it is verified, newspapers remain symbols of trust. They provide depth, context, and thoughtful analysis – helping readers understand not just what has happened, but why it matters. While I do recognise that the industry faces severe challenges, it is heartening to

see that the best newspapers around the world have not only survived but flourished. I am confident that our newspapers too can do the same, not by waiting for government support or big business patronage, but by relying on the trust and loyalty of the people whose right to know they have championed for generations. I particularly urge our youth to develop the habit of reading newspapers, and I call upon educational institutions to encourage newspaper reading among their students. I also call upon the print media to continue upholding the highest standards of ethics, impartiality, and responsibility. Press freedom is essential to democracy, but it must always be exercised with truth, balance, and fairness. I hope that newspaper readership in our country will continue to grow and help us in making a more informed, thoughtful, and democratic Pakistan.—APP

RCCI hosts Pak-Bd business tourism moot, expo

The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has inaugurated the Pakistan-Bangladesh Business Tourism Opportunity Conference alongside the 3rd Pakistan Exhibition at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB), Dhaka. The three-day exhibition, showcasing key sectors including textiles, pharmaceuticals, and other industries, will run until 27 September. The event brings together leading business figures, policymakers, and industry representatives from both countries to explore avenues for enhanced bilateral and regional trade. In his inaugural address, RCCI President Usman Shaukat emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral trade, expanding business opportunities, and fostering people-to-people linkages. The session was attended by SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Md Jashim Uddin, who expressed optimism about greater cooperation between the two nations, particularly in mobile financial systems. He also announced Bangladesh’s plans to inaugurate a Bangladesh Fair in Pakistan next year to further boost regional trade ties. Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka, Muhammad Wasif, formally inaugurated the exhibition. In his remarks, he highlighted the strong bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan and underscored the potential for expanding opportunities in regional trade and connectivity. The event also featured participation from RCCI Vice President Fahad Barlas, Former RCCI President Abdur Rauf Chaudhry, representatives of the SAARC Chamber, as well as business leaders from textile, pharmaceutical, and other key sectors.—DNA


Planning minister, Hunan governor discuss Pak-China coop

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Ahsan Iqbal, who is currently on an official visit to China to participate in 14th meeting of the CPEC Joint Coordination Committee (JCC), met with Governor of Hunan Province Mao Weiming. The two leaders discussed further strengthening Pakistan-China cooperation and expanding partnerships under CPEC Phase II in new areas of development, a Planning Ministry news release said here on Wednesday. Ahsan Iqbal noted that the participation of leaders from more than twenty countries in the BeiDou Summit was highly encouraging. He praised Hunan’s central role in China’s economy and highlighted that the BeiDou system provides modern information infrastructure critical for industrial development.—APP

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Briefs

Digital gallery brings gandhara heritage to life at Islamabad museum

ISLAMABAD: The Digital Immersive Gallery at the Islamabad Museum is captivating visitors with a unique blend of history and technology, bringing to life the rich cultural heritage of Gandhara in a way never experienced before.

Established by the Korea Heritage Agency (KHA) under a five-year Official Development Assistance (ODA) Project of the Korea Heritage Service (KHS), Government of the Republic of Korea, the gallery is a state-of-the-art facility that merges immersive storytelling with advanced digital tools. According to the official source, its centerpiece is a narrative that retraces the historical spread of Buddhism from Gandhara to the Korean Peninsula, recalling the spiritual journeys of Korean monks who traveled to the region centuries ago to study the Dharma. The gallery transports audiences into the past using cutting-edge 3D projections. With just a wave of the hand, visitors can interact with lifelike digital renderings of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Pakistan's six UNESCO World Heritage Sites are also highlighted, offering a sweeping journey that stretches from the 3rd millennium BCE to the 17th century CE. This seamless integration of digital artistry and historical content creates a powerful educational and cultural experience, bridging ancient civilizations with modern-day audiences. The Digital Immersive Gallery is part of a broader project that has transformed Pakistan's capacity for heritage conservation and research. Over the past few years, a Conservation and Analysis Laboratory—the country's first advanced facility dedicated to inorganic antiquities—has been established and fully equipped with modern instruments.—APP

Russia confirms participation in Speakers Conference

ISLAMABAD: In a significant diplomatic development, the Russian Federation has officially confirmed its participation in the upcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers Conference (ISC), a pioneering event being hosted in Islamabad to foster global unity through parliamentary dialogue. The confirmation follows an invitation extended by the ISC Committee, said a news release issued here Wednesday. The conference, described as "first and unique in its nature", is gaining strong international momentum. According to Misbah Khar, Ambassador to the ISC and a key organizer, the foremost agenda items include faith, interfaith harmony, and addressing the pressing global challenge of climate change. "This conference is not just a diplomatic gathering; it is a global call for peace, cooperation, and collective climate action," said Misbah. "We are bringing together voices from across continents, cultures, and faiths, with 45 member countries already confirmed. Russia's participation, as a key international player.—APP

HEC Cohort-IV held at civil services academy

The training programs, designed for Assistant Directors, Deputy Directors, and now Directors General/Directors, aim to enhance governance, strengthen administrative efficiency, and promote integrity within the higher education sector

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), through its National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), inaugurated the fourth training cohort for its senior officers at the Civil Services Academy (CSA), Walton Campus, Lahore. The opening session was graced by the worthy Executive Director HEC, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, as the Chief Guest.

On his arrival, he was warmly welcomed by Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja, Director General CSA. During the ceremony, Mr. Shabbir Ahmed Zaidi presented an overview of the HEC training initiative, highlighting the progress of the previous three cohorts, the objectives of CSA, and the broader purpose of this collaboration.

This initiative was originally introduced under the vision of Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, who emphasised that HEC employees should be provided the best opportunity to benefit from the CSA which is the apex training institution for the civil servants of Pakistan. Expressing satisfaction at the successful completion of three cohorts and the commencement of the fourth, Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum noted that this achievement reflects a strong commitment to the professional development of HEC officers.

The training programs, designed for Assistant Directors, Deputy Directors, and now Directors General/Directors, aim to enhance governance, strengthen administrative efficiency, and promote integrity within the higher education sector.



In addition to technical knowledge, these sessions offer participants valuable opportunities to engage in cross-institutional learning, reflective discussions, personal and professional development and sharing best practices of leadership and management. With 15 senior officers participating

in Cohort-IV, this program marks a significant milestone in efforts of HEC to institutionalize professional capacity building. The Executive Director appreciated both NAHE and CSA for their joint efforts and expressed hope that this collaboration will soon be formalized through a Memorandum

of Understanding to ensure sustainable, long-term training opportunities for HEC employees. At the end of the ceremony, Mr. Farhan Aziz Khawaja, Director General CSA, presented a shield to Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum as a token of appreciation and to mark the occasion.

China, Pakistan to deepen ties after Zardari visit

ISLAMABAD: China is willing to collaborate with Pakistan to implement the important outcomes of President Asif Ali Zardari's visit and advance the joint Action Plan 2025-29 to foster an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future. Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong in his article following President Zardari's recent visit to China said "the trip added new chapters to the legendary China-Pakistan friendship, advanced practical bilateral cooperation, and deepened the bond between our two peoples". President Asif Ali Zardari was invited to attend the opening ceremony of the 2025 Golden Panda International Cultural Forum, and subsequently paid visits to Sichuan Province, Shanghai Municipality, and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, from September 12-21. This marked President Zardari's second visit to China following his state visit in February this year, which the Chinese ambassador termed as a "vivid testament to his profound affection for the Chinese people and great importance attached to China-Pakistan relations". Ambassador Jiang Zaidong recalled an article penned by President Zardari for China Daily where he regarded China as "my home away from home". He said during this journey to his "home away from home", President Zardari traversed three provincial-level administrative regions, visited four destinations, met with heads of local governments, and engaged with ordinary Chinese citizens. "This is a journey of civilization and innovation, shaped by mutual commitment," he said. The ambassador wrote in length about President Zardari's diverse interactions at various platforms, calling it of profound importance for the bond between the two countries. At the opening ceremony of the 2025 Golden Panda International Cultural Forum held in Chengdu, Sichuan, he said, President Zardari delivered a speech, praising the forum for using the universal language of art to bridge divides and connects communities across the globe. He emphasized that this stands as a vivid practice of the Global Civilization Initiative, embodying the concepts of diversity of civilizations, equality among cultures, people-to-people exchanges, and cultural dialogue as a counter to narratives of a clash of civilizations. "This not only underscores the profound significance of the Golden Panda Forum in fostering mutual learning among world civilizations, but also directly conveys the earnest aspirations of the two peoples to deepen China-Pakistan people-to-people and cultural exchanges," he said. He mentioned the heart-warming interactions between the two nations: the film BaTie Girl graced screens in both countries; the Gandhara Art Exhibition made its debut to the Palace Museum in China; Pakistani mangoes became a sensation among Chinese netizens; the "Tea for Harmony" cultural activity won widespread popularity in Pakistan; numerous Chinese universities now offer Urdu programs while a "Study-in-China" fever sweeps through Pakistan's younger generation; the CPEC Consortium of Universities, boasting over 130 members, was officially established; and First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari had an intimate encounter with giant pandas in Chengdu.—DNA

Pharmaceutical exports hit record \$457m: Gilani

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said Pakistan's pharmaceutical exports had reached a record USD 457 million in the last fiscal year, registering 34 percent growth — the highest in over two decades. Delivering the keynote address at the 8th Pakistan Pharma Summit and the 4th Pharma Export Summit & Awards (PESA 2025), he termed the achievement a matter of national pride, noting that Pakistan now meets the vast majority of its pharmaceutical needs through local production. Gilani congratulated the top 50 exporters of pharmaceuticals and allied products, honored at the PESA Awards, calling them the "torchbearers of Pakistan's growing stature in international markets." The event, organized by the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PPMA), brought together exporters, industry leaders, policymakers, and international experts. Gilani was received by Tauqeer Ul Haq, Chairman PPMA, Dr. Kaiser Waheed, Chairman Organizing Committee, and Co-Chairmen Haroon Qasim and Asad Shuja. Highlighting the sector's transformation, he pointed to the adoption of artificial

intelligence, digital health platforms, and advanced manufacturing technologies, as well as policy support through reduced duties on Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and the launch of PharmEx Pakistan. He assured the industry of Parliament's full support, stressing that relevant Senate and National Assembly committees remain committed to enabling better legislation, aligning policies, and encouraging investment in research and development. Welcoming international delegates, Gilani underscored the importance of global partnerships, technology transfer, and adherence to international certifications, including those from the World Health Organization (WHO), to expand Pakistan's footprint in advanced markets. "The way forward lies in a progressive approach that links innovation, collaboration, and sustainability," he said, adding that with resilience and determination, Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry could capture a much larger share of the trillion-dollar global market. He concluded by congratulating PPMA leadership and award recipients, reaffirming the Senate's support for building a stronger, healthier Pakistan.—APP

Three killed in cross firing in Malakand

ISLAMABAD: Three people were killed in a clash between two groups in Dargai tehsil of Malakand on Wednesday. According to a private news channel and Levies officials, the groups exchanged fire, leaving two others injured who were shifted to a nearby hospital. Officials said an investigation into the incident has been launched.—APP

WMC urges UNHRC action on India's IoK rights abuses

ISLAMABAD: The World Muslim Congress (WMC) has called the attention of the UN Human Rights Council to the alarming human rights situation and systematic assault on Kashmiri identity in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the aftermath of August 2019. In a statement before the Council, WMC representative Ghulam Muhammad Safi highlighted that Indian occupation forces have killed at least 600 innocent civilians since August 2019, including five unarmed youth in Baramulla during a military operation in March 2025, and the extrajudicial killing of Javed Ahmed from Bhabdipora district on September 17, 2025 received a press release from Geneva here on Wednesday. The organization drew attention to thousands of unmarked graves documented by the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, noting that mass grave sites continue to expand. It further revealed that more than 5,000 Kashmiris, some as young as 16, remain imprisoned under draconian laws such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). "Prominent political leaders including Yasin Malik, Shabir Shah, Masarat Alam, and Nayeem Ahmed Khan are detained in Tihar Jail under harsh conditions, with deteriorating health and no access to family visits", Mr. Safi said. He also expressed grave concern over India's ongoing demographic engineering, pointing out that since 2020, over 4.2 million domicile certificates have been issued to non-Kashmiris. "Alongside, new land laws have facilitated the confiscation of more than 40,000 acres of ancestral orchard and forest land, reclassified under the pretext of strategic purposes," he added. He regretfully noted that a three-decade-long culture of impunity has resulted in more than 100,000 deaths, 8,000 enforced disappearances, and widespread sexual violence. "Today, Kashmiri culture itself faces an existential threat, with shrines being demolished, villages renamed, and public mourning criminalized", he maintained.—APP

KIIR urges UN to hold India accountable, protect Kashmiris' rights

ISLAMABAD: Director Research Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), Ms. Mehr ur Nisa Rehman has urged the UN Human Rights Council to act against India's intensifying repression in occupied Jammu and Kashmir Taking part in a debate held under agenda item 4, on the sidelines of the 60th session of the UNCHR, Ms. Rehman said the situation in the Indian occupied territory is "not a distant crisis but the lived reality of millions," who face killings, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detentions on a daily basis, received a press release from Geneva. She condemned India's massive militarization and the stripping of Kashmir's autonomy after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, calling it a blatant violation of international law and UN resolutions. Ms Mehr ur Nisa highlighted widespread abuses, including the unlawful detention of Hurriyat leaders, the imprisonment of rights defenders and ongoing torture, sexual violence, and media restrictions. Referring to the recent custodial killing of Firdous Ahmad Mir, a father of three, he said the incident "exposes the sheer brutality of occupation forces." She added that since the Pahalgam attack, Indian troops have martyred 44 Kashmiris, arrested more than 3,190, and demolished 81 homes. "Equally alarming is the cultural assault," Ms Mehr ur Nisa stressed, pointing to India's ban on Kashmiri books as "a calculated attempt to erase memory and identity." She urged the Council to hold India accountable, demand the release of political prisoners, and safeguard the rights and cultural heritage of the Kashmiri people.—APP

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OGDCL reports five new discoveries

ISLAMABAD: Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), the country's largest exploration and production firm, announced five new discoveries, spudded fifteen wells, and secured seven new exploration blocks in the 2025 bid round, further strengthening its portfolio. According to the company's Board of Directors, average net saleable production stood at 30,919 barrels of oil per day (BPD), 652 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas, and 642 metric tons per day (MTD) of LPG, primarily from wholly owned and operated fields. This maintained OGDCL's leading share in national

output. Production could have reached 32,709 BPD of oil, 743 MMSCFD of gas, and 714 MTD of sulphur had SNGPL not curtailed offtake from the Nashpa, Qadirpur, and Bettani fields, along with reduced demand from Uch Power that limited offtake from the Uch Field. Key development projects—including the commissioning of the Jhal Magsi Field and ongoing work on compression facilities at Dakhni, KP-D-TAY, and Uch—are expected to support future volumes. Diversification initiatives such as participation in Reko Diq, Abu Dhabi Offshore Block-5, and geothermal ventures are also reinforcing long-term growth. OG-

DCL continued implementing its Production Optimisation Plan for mature fields, particularly Rajian, Fimkessar, Missakawwal, and Toot. The company also advanced its Tight Gas program and finalized the design for Phase-2 horizontal frac jobs under its Shale Gas Pilot Project. The company further strengthened its corporate governance framework, embedding sustainability, ESG, and DEI principles across operations. Initiatives in environmental stewardship, workforce inclusion, and responsible business practices underscored its commitment to transparency and accountability. OGDCL's leadership in corpo-

rate disclosure was reaffirmed in the Transparency in Corporate Reporting (TRAC) 2024 assessment by Transparency International Pakistan, where it ranked third overall with a score of 93.09% and first among public sector entities. The Board of Directors praised management's focus on operational delivery, financial discipline, and diversification, which enabled the company to declare the highest dividend in its history while sustaining its role as Pakistan's leading energy contributor. The Board expressed confidence that OGDCL will continue to expand its resource base and create long-term value for shareholders and stakeholders.—APP

Efforts for a Durable Peace in Kurram

SHAMIM SHAHID

KURRAM, a tribal district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, holds strategic importance due to its shared border with Afghanistan. However, this region has been plagued by sectarian violence for over four decades, starting in the mid-1980s. These conflicts, which were externally and internally sponsored, have resulted in the tragic loss of hundreds of lives from both sides of the sectarian divide. Although authorities have recently managed to enforce a fragile peace, the underlying issues remain, threatening to reignite the conflict. To achieve a lasting peace, it's crucial for the government to move beyond temporary measures and address the deep-seated, root causes of this animosity. The recent peace agreement, brokered by authorities, represents a significant achievement. It involved disarming numerous individuals and forcing elders from both sides to sign a peace accord. A key event in this process was the Peace and Development Conference held in Parachinar, the district headquarters. This conference, organized by the 73 Brigade, brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including military and civil officials, tribal elders, religious scholars, and media representatives. The discussions focused on reviewing development projects, strengthening tribal harmony, and charting a path toward sustainable peace. During the conference, speakers highlighted the importance of inter-tribal unity and the continuity of development initiatives. Tribal elders voiced their concerns, urging authorities to prioritize the resolution of revenue-related disputes, accelerate public welfare schemes, and ensure community participation in local governance. They also called for decisive action against those using social media and other platforms to incite hatred and unrest. The conference concluded with a collective promise from all participants to work together for the progress, peace, and prosperity of Kurram. The efforts of Commissioner Kohat and the Commander of the 73rd Brigade in organizing this event are commendable, as it marks a move away from the traditional, ineffective "business as usual" approach. While these recent efforts are a positive step, they represent a fragile truce, not a durable solution. A lasting peace in Kurram requires a fundamental shift in strategy—from managing conflict to eliminating its root causes. For decades, sectarian and religious hatred has been

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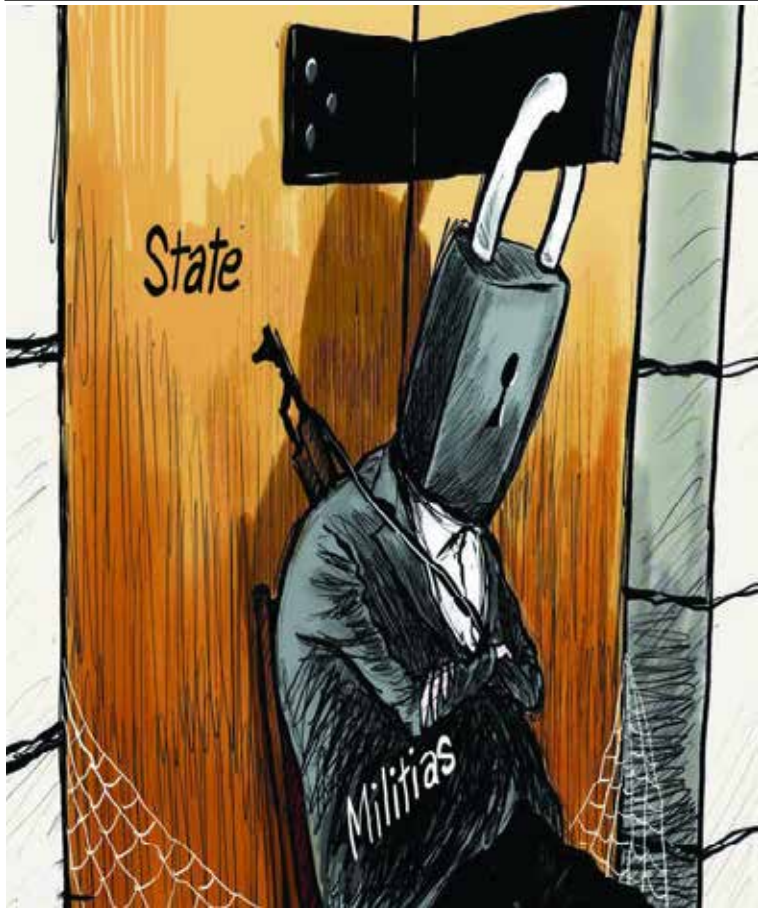
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mysteriously promoted for nefarious strategic and economic purposes, a legacy inherited from the Cold War era. This externally influenced animosity has not only destabilized regions like Pakistan and Afghanistan but has had a ripple effect across Asia and the world. The true objectives of this religious and sectarian extremism—including remote-controlled violence and terrorism—are now becoming clearer. They do not serve the interests of the local population, whether they are the governed or those in power. The persistent violence has exhausted the people of Kurram, as well as the broader populace of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the entire country. They yearn for a durable and sustainable peace, which is a fundamental human right. Therefore, the responsibility now falls on those in positions of power—in parliament, the executive, the judiciary, and the media—to address their duties at this crucial juncture. Instead of acting as silent spectators or unwitting partners in the perpetuation of this conflict, they must focus on dismantling the mechanisms that generate and sustain sectarian and religious hatred.

This means tackling the financial and ideological networks that fuel extremism. It also means investing in education that promotes tolerance and unity rather than division. A crucial part of this is empowering local communities and giving them a genuine stake in their own governance and development. When people feel that their voices are heard and that they have a say in their future, they are less likely to be swayed by external forces seeking to sow discord. The long-term solution must also involve economic upliftment. Poverty and a lack of opportunities often create fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root. By accelerating public welfare schemes and resolving revenue-related issues, as requested by the tribal elders, the government can address some of the material deprivations that contribute to unrest.

The use of social media as a tool for inciting violence is another critical issue that requires a nuanced response. While freedom of speech is important, deliberate incitement to hatred should not be tolerated. Authorities must work with social media companies and local communities to develop effective strategies for combating misinformation and hate speech without resorting to heavy-handed censorship that could further alienate the populace.

Ultimately, a durable peace in Kurram is not just about a lack of fighting; it is about the presence of justice, opportunity, and reconciliation. It requires a holistic approach that acknowledges the historical, political, and economic dimensions of the conflict. By addressing these root causes, authorities can transform Kurram from a symbol of sectarian strife into a model of peace and progress, demonstrating that unity can overcome the most deeply entrenched divisions. The people of Kurram deserve to live in a secure and prosperous environment, and it is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders to make this a reality.

Xi Jinping's Era and Beyond

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The PLA's influence during succession raises the danger of politicized military assessments. Leaders may receive intelligence skewed to match their preferences, leading to strategic miscalculations. Deng's 1979 invasion of Vietnam undertaken partly amid his maneuvering to oust Hua was a political gambit with poor battlefield results, illustrating how domestic power struggles can distort foreign policy decisions. Determining Xi's successor will be complicated by demographic and political constraints. None of the current seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee...

FOR over a decade, Xi Jinping, has consolidated power to an extent unseen and has reshaped the CCP elite through a sweeping anti-corruption campaign, curtailed civil society, restructured and modernized the military and expanded state involvement in the economy. He has also pursued assertive foreign policies escalating military activity around Taiwan, expanding China's presence in the South China Sea, deploying confrontational "wolf warrior" diplomacy and deepening ties with Russia even after its invasion of Ukraine. This has ushered in what is widely viewed as Xi's personal era in Chinese politics. Past precedent shows that power transfers in China have been fraught with political intrigue, factional struggles and even instability. The 2012 leadership change from Hu Jintao to Xi occurred amid rumors though unsubstantiated of coups and assassinations, underscoring the volatility of such moments. Succession politics often begin long before a leader steps down, as incumbents seek to secure their legacy by installing loyal successors. Mao Zedong's fixation on preserving his revolutionary vision in his final decade led to the Cultural Revolution, while Deng Xiaoping ensured his economic reforms continued even after relinquishing formal titles. Xi is likely to follow the strongman precedent of Mao and Deng, selecting a successor ideologically aligned with him. However, survival in elite politics requires more than shared ideology successors must also navigate the rivalry of those passed over, making political cohesion fragile. A critical determinant of succession success is military backing. Although the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has never directly seized political control, it plays a decisive "kingmaker" role in internal CCP struggles.

The Mao-Hua Guofeng transition illustrates this: Mao's chosen heir lacked strong political and military standing, surviving only temporarily with top generals' support before being ousted by Deng. Xi himself benefited from strong military ties upon taking office, enabling him to purge rivals and reshape the PLA leadership. Maintaining such control will be essential for any future leader. Historically, personalist rulers in China have cycled through multiple would-be successors Mao discarded Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao before settling on Hua, while Deng replaced Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang before elevating Jiang Zemin. Such instability risks factional splits, as seen in the 1989 Tiananmen protests, which were partly triggered by Hu Yaobang's death. Leadership transitions can also influence foreign policy Xi's awareness of limited time could increase his willingness to take risks, particularly over Taiwan, which he views as central to national rejuvenation. Yet the potential costs of failure military defeat, economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation could temper such ambitions. The PLA's influence during succession raises the danger of politicized military assessments. Leaders may receive intelligence skewed to match their preferences, leading to strategic miscalculations. Deng's 1979 invasion of Vietnam undertaken partly amid his maneuvering to oust Hua was a political gambit with poor battlefield results, illustrating how domestic power struggles can distort foreign policy decisions. Determining Xi's successor will be complicated by demographic and political constraints. None of the current seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee fit the ideal profile of a relatively young leader capable of ruling for many years.

Older candidates risk short tenures, while younger "dark horse" picks would require sidelining an entire generation of senior politicians, potentially causing long-term fractures. Historical cautionary tales such as the Soviet Union's unstable transitions in the 1980s loom large in Xi's thinking. If Xi dies unexpectedly without naming a successor, the CCP constitution calls for the Central Committee to elect a new leader. In reality, a smaller circle of elites, possibly including military figures, would likely decide beforehand. Premier Li Qiang could be a natural choice, but military-backed rivals could displace him. The best-case scenario for stability is for Xi to designate and gradually empower a successor in his final years, as Deng did with Jiang Zemin. This would require giving the heir key posts in party administration and military leadership to build competence and authority. Failing to groom a capable successor increases the risk of a weak leader falling to internal challenges, destabilizing both Chinese politics and international relations. For the United States, the looming succession represents both a potential turning point and a source of uncertainty. However, Washington should resist the temptation to interfere both because of the risk of backlash and because the CCP still interprets the 1989 protests through the lens of perceived foreign subversion. Instead, careful observation and preparedness for post-Xi adjustments are advised. A future leader could similarly steer China toward moderation and greater openness, though this outcome is far from guaranteed. Xi's eventual succession will be a defining moment, shaping China's domestic governance, its military orientation and its global posture for years to come.

Chunian: A Forgotten Jewel of Punjab

Kaynat Siddique



The Mughal era gifted Chunian with recognition, but under British colonial rule, the city gained administrative importance. In 1885, Chunian was declared a Tehsil of Lahore and at the time, it was the largest in the district. Following independence, with the creation of Kasur District in 1976, Chunian was integrated as one of its Tehsils. Later, in 1992, Pattoki, Bhiphro and Phoolnagar were carved...

PUNJAB'S fertile plains have long been home to cities that carry centuries of cultural, political and spiritual heritage. Among these lies Chunian, a city whose roots stretch back nearly two centuries and beyond. While modern urban centers like Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan dominate contemporary discussions, Chunian quietly stands as a reminder of Punjab's layered history. Its mosques, temples and neighborhoods echo the architectural diversity of bygone eras, while its myths, legends and ruins connect the present with a rich past. In its early days, the mighty River Beas flowed beside Chunian, not only serving as a lifeline for agriculture and trade but also inspiring poets and writers with its romantic atmosphere. Today, though the river has dried up, traces of its old course can still be seen, silently telling stories of a once-thriving riverine culture.

How Chunian acquired its name has been a subject of folklore and debate. Two dominant stories circulate. The first attributes the name to Chuni, daughter of Raja Tadar Mal, the famed finance minister of Emperor Akbar. Following her father's death, Chini ruled the region and the city came to be associated with her name. Over time, "Chini" transformed into "Chunian." Interestingly, another town nearby Kanganpur is said to have been named after Chini's sister, Kangan, reinforcing the tale's credibility. The second version ties Chunian's origins to Sufi traditions. It suggests that a woman disciple of the saint Kamal Shah settled in the area and her name also Chuni was immortalized in the city's title. While the first story enjoys wider acceptance, both illustrate how history and spirituality often intertwine in Punjab's towns.

The historical landscape of Chunian is not limited to Mughal legends. Archaeological findings suggest that its roots may go as far back as the Indus Valley Civilization. In the 1970s, local historian Syed Husain Zaidi discovered pottery fragments, copper coins and even a gold bead in nearby mounds. Experts later confirmed these artifacts to be more than 200 years old and they were placed in the Lahore Museum for preservation. From these discoveries, historians deduced that Chunian may once have been a peaceful manufacturing hub, producing swords and helmets for Mughal armies. Local lore even claims that the city has been destroyed and rebuilt seven times, reflecting both the resilience of its people and the challenges of surviving waves of invasions and migrations.

Its association with Syed Waris Shah, the celebrated Punjabi poet and author of Heer Ranjha, further highlights Chunian's cultural richness. Shah is said to have lived briefly in Chunian, where he penned verses that referenced the city. A manuscript in his handwriting remains preserved in the Waris Shah Academy, a treasure for lovers of Punjabi literature. This poetic connection elevates Chunian from a mere historical settlement to a cultural landmark, intertwining literature, spirituality and local identity. The Mughal era gifted Chunian with recognition, but under British colonial rule, the city gained administrative importance. In 1885, Chunian was declared a Tehsil of Lahore and at the time, it was the largest in the district. Following independence, with the creation of Kasur District in 1976, Chunian was integrated as one of its Tehsils. Later, in 1992, Pattoki, Bhiphro and Phoolnagar were carved out as separate units, reducing Chunian's administrative reach but not its cultural significance. Local folklore also connects Chunian to the tragic Punjabi love tale of Sassi Punnu. According to legend, Sassi, abandoned by her father in a floating wooden box, was discovered near the shrine of Syed Kamal Mustafa (Mattoo Shah). Raised by a washerman, she later fell in love with Prince Punnu of Makran. Their separation and eventual demise in the desert remain immortalized in poetry and song, adding another layer of mystique to Chunian's history. While Chunian's past is steeped in myths and ruins, its present reflects the vibrancy of Punjabi culture. Weddings, Sufi music and annual festivals are integral to daily life, while Punjabi remains the mother tongue, with Urdu and English increasingly used in education and administration. Chunian is well-connected to Lahore and Kasur, providing residents with access to better educational and economic opportunities. Modern infrastructure roads, electricity, gas and water has gradually transformed it into a semi-urban hub. One of its most celebrated institutions is the Chunian Cardiac Hospital, established in 2012 during the tenure of Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif. It offers free or low-cost treatment to patients from surrounding villages, embodying a rare example of accessible healthcare in rural Punjab. Alongside this, both government and private schools including branches of national chains like Army Public School and Smart School cater to the grow-

ing demand for modern education. Not far from Chunian lies the legendary Changa Manga Forest, Asia's largest man-made forest, dating back to 1866. Initially developed by the British for timber needs, it now serves as a recreational space for families, students and nature lovers. The forest is entwined with folklore as well its name comes from two bandit brothers, Changa and Manga, who supposedly hid in its dense thickets after looting travelers. Today, the forest is home to wildlife, a small railway line and picnic spots, making it a beloved retreat for people of the region. Chunian also plays a role in Punjab's agrarian economy through the Brother Sugar Mills, one of the province's major sugar-processing units. Established in the mid-20th century, it provided employment to locals and a steady market for sugarcane farmers. However, financial scandals including a Rs. 6 billion default on farmer payments in 2016 led to its sealing by the Lahore High Court. Despite such setbacks, the mill remains symbolic of Chunian's role in bridging agriculture and industry. Chunian embodies the essence of Punjab: a fusion of history, folklore, culture and resilience. Yet, like many smaller cities, it risks being overshadowed by urban sprawl and neglect. Its archaeological heritage requires preservation, its cultural tales need systematic documentation and its infrastructure must be further developed to meet modern needs. As Pakistan redefines its urban and rural identities, cities like Chunian should not be forgotten. They remind us that history is not only written in capitals but also in the quiet resilience of smaller towns that carry the soul of a nation. In the last, I thankful of Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer who graciously dedicated his time to guiding and mentoring me. Driven by a genuine passion, he goes above and beyond to help students enhance their writing skills and successfully complete their assignments. His expertise shines prominently in subjects such as Pakistan Studies, where he enlightens eager minds about the captivating history of Pakistan and its remarkable contributions. Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer truly embodies the essence of an inspiring educator, leaving an indelible mark on all those fortunate enough to be under his tutelage.

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Briefs

Pak urges IMF to consider flood impact

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signs of stabilisation and is now moving towards recovery,” said PM Shehbaz and appreciated the IMF’s support for being instrumental in guiding the government’s economic reform efforts. The IMF Managing Director expressed her sympathy to all people affected by the floods and noted the importance of the damage assessment to underpin recovery priorities. The IMF chief commended the prime minister’s commitment to pursuing sound macro-economic policies and reiterated the IMF’s continued support as Pakistan advances the necessary economic reforms to ensure sustainable long-term economic growth. Meanwhile, in a meeting with World Bank Group President Ajay Banga, PM Shehbaz apprised him of the government’s comprehensive reform agenda, encompassing resource mobilisation, energy sector reforms, privatisation and measures to build resilience against climate change. He reiterated that the reform agenda had steered Pakistan towards macroeconomic stabilisation, restored investor confidence and promoted sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

PM Meets World Bank Group...

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confidence and promoted sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the World Bank’s new Country Partnership Framework (2026–2035), under which the World Bank has committed an unprecedented US\$ 40 billion for Pakistan. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to ensure its effective implementation in close coordination with provincial governments. President World Bank appreciated the reform measures being undertaken by Pakistan and reaffirmed the Bank’s commitment to Pakistan’s development priorities.

Security forces kill 13 terrorists...

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including three Afghan National khwarij and two suicide bombers, were sent to hell,” the ISPR said. The statement added that Pakistan expects the interim Afghan government, run by the Afghan Taliban, to uphold its responsibilities and deny the use of its soil to carry out acts of terror. Pakistan has lately been witnessing an uptick in terrorist activities, mainly in KP and Balochistan. In November 2022, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, after breaking a ceasefire deal with the government, had vowed to escalate attacks against the security forces, the police, and other law enforcement agencies’ personnel.

Imran, Bushra...

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Naming Inam Shah, the key prosecution witness, in particular, Khan accused him of dishonesty and of working under the influence of Jehangir Tareen and Awn Chaudhry. He claimed both JKT and Chaudhry were used by the establishment to break the PTI and weaken him politically before the February 8 elections. He said his conviction before the polls was designed to demoralise the PTI vote, adding that both he and his wife were jailed for long in fabricated cases. Bushra Bibi, in her written response, also rejected the allegations, saying she had never received, deposited, or influenced the evaluation of any Toshakhana gift.



ISLAMABAD: People are taking interest and selfies with the beasts of Pakistani young artist, made by old metal (scrap) steel as displayed at local mall in Federal Capital. – Online

Alcaraz expects Sinner to come back stronger after US Open loss

"I know he's going to change something from the last match," says World number one Carlos Alcaraz

TOKYO: World number one Carlos Alcaraz said Wednesday that he will have to prepare for a new and improved Jannik Sinner after beating his great rival in the US Open final. Italy’s Sinner admitted he needed to overhaul his “predictable” game after losing to Alcaraz in New York earlier this month in the latest of a string of recent defeats to his Spanish nemesis. Alcaraz is playing at the Japan Open in Tokyo this week, while Sinner will compete at the China Open in Beijing in his first appearance since the US Open. Alcaraz said he would need to be ready for a different Sinner next time he faces the world number two on the court. “I know he’s going to change something from the last match,” said Alcaraz. “It’s the same thing that I did when I lost to him a couple of times, I tried to be a better player the next time I was going to face him. “I have to be focused and I have to be ready for that change,” he added. Alcaraz and Sinner have dominated men’s tennis this season, with the pair contest-



ing all four Grand Slam finals, winning two each. Alcaraz is only 22 and Sinner is just two years older, and the two look set to monopolise the sport’s top titles for years to come. “Our rivalry is getting better, for me and for tennis I would say is great,” said Alcaraz. “We will see in the future how many times I’m going to play against him

and which circumstances we will play.

“Right now, it’s going great.” Alcaraz heads to Tokyo coming off a surprise loss to American world number five Taylor Fritz at the Laver Cup in San Francisco last week. Fritz is the number two seed in Tokyo, where Denmark’s Holger Rune, Norway’s Casper Ruud and the Czech Republic’s Tomas Machac will also compete. Alcaraz has won the French Open as well as the US Open this year and he said it had been “the best season that I’ve ever done”. “I’ve seen myself that I’ve grown up a lot as a player on the court,” he said. “For me, it could be better, of course it could be better, but I can’t complain about the season I’m having so far.” Alcaraz is playing at the Japan Open for the first time in his career. He said he wanted to play in Tokyo to “see the culture and see everything here”. “I’m really excited about playing in different places, in different stadiums, and feel the energy from the Japanese people,” he said. – Agencies

Mbappe hits brace as Real Madrid thrash Levante in La Liga

PARIS: French striker Kylian Mbappe struck twice as Real Madrid extended their winning start to La Liga with a comfortable 4-1 triumph at Levante on Tuesday. With these two goals, Mbappe has reached seven league goals in six matches as Xabi Alonso’s side maintained their 100 percent record. Vinicius Junior opened the scoring with a superb finish, and Franco Mastantuono was also on target for the league leaders. Second-placed Barcelona visit Real Oviedo on Thursday, with the Spanish champions trailing Madrid by five points. “It was a very good game, from the start, we were really committed in defence and the first goal was fundamental, to go ahead and give us confidence,” said Alonso. Vinicius was unhappy to be taken off by Alonso during the win over Espanyol on Saturday, but the Brazilian winger started on the left flank and delivered. Since coming second to Manchester City’s Rodri in last year’s Ballon d’Or rankings, Vinicius has struggled for

consistency. However, he found his rhythm at the Ciutat de Valencia stadium and opened the scoring after 28 minutes, following a bright start to the game. “Vini had a very complete, very good game, and I am very happy for him,” said Alonso. Valencia goalkeeper Mathew Ryan made a good save to deny Vinicius, and Mastantuono hit the bar from the rebound as Los Blancos threatened in the opening stages. Then fed by Fede Valverde on the right of the box, Vinicius used the outside of his right boot to bend a sumptuous effort in at the far post. Ivan Romero and Adrian de la Fuente came close early for Levante, but they were forced back, and Madrid found their second when Vinicius set up Mastantuono, who rifled into the top corner. It was the promising 18-year-old attacker’s first goal for the club since his summer switch from River Plate. Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel. Ryan denied Vinicius with a good stop from close range before half-time. Levante striker Karl Etta Eyong, in fine form him-

self at the start of the season, nodded home his fourth goal from close range after Romero’s cross was deflected and looped into the air. It offered Levante a brief glimmer of hope, but that was quickly quashed by Mbappe. Unai Elgezabal clumsily brought down the French superstar in the box, and Mbappe cheekily dinked the resulting penalty down the middle for the third. Then, two minutes later, the forward, released by Arda Guler, rounded Ryan and tapped home his second of the night. Mbappe struggled in his first few months at Madrid after joining from Paris Saint-Germain in the summer of 2024, but hit top form in the second half of the season. The striker has carried that into the new campaign and has nine goals in seven games across all competitions, helping Madrid start the campaign in ideal fashion. “There are still things we can do better, but we’re on a good path and we have to continue along it,” said Alonso, with Los Blancos facing city rivals Atletico on Saturday. – Agencies

2024), Rizwan achieved it in back-to-back years (2021 and 2022), while Shan managed the feat in 2022. Farhan’s tally in 2025 has been accumulated through his performances for Pakistan, Peshawar Region, and Islamabad United, underlining his consistency across formats and tournaments. The 29-year-old also made headlines earlier on Sunday with a striking celebration after notching up a half-century against India. He reached the landmark by launching Axar Patel for a six and marked the moment by mimicking his bat “firing runs like bullets,” a gesture that quickly went viral among fans.

USA Cricket suspended from ICC with immediate effect

ICC makes decision against USAC for repeated governance breaches

THE International Cricket Council (ICC) has suspended USA Cricket’s membership with immediate effect after a year-long review and consultations with key stakeholders. The ICC Board reached the decision at its recent meeting, citing repeated breaches of obligations under the ICC Constitution. According to the ICC, USA Cricket failed to establish a functional governance structure, made little progress toward National Governing Body recognition with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), and undertook actions that harmed the reputation of the sport both domestically and internationally. “The suspension is an unfortunate but necessary step to protect the long-term interests of the game,” the ICC said in a statement. The Board emphasised that USA Cricket’s national teams will retain the right to participate in ICC events, including preparations for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games (LA28). To ensure continuity, the ICC and its designated representatives will temporarily oversee the management and administration of USA’s national teams. This arrangement aims to support the players, maintain momentum toward Olympic inclusion, and sustain the High-Performance & Player Development Program, which seeks to strengthen the capabilities of USA cricketers. The ICC’s Normalisation Committee, with support from ICC management, will define the steps required for USA Cricket to have its suspension lifted and membership rights restored. These measures will include demonstrable improvements to governance, operations, and overall functioning within the cricket ecosystem. The committee will also monitor progress and provide consultative guidance. The ICC reaffirmed its commitment to growing cricket in the United States while safeguarding the interests of athletes and the broader sporting ecosystem. USA Cricket had been placed ‘on notice’ at the 2024 ICC Annual General Meeting for failing to meet membership criteria, with a 12-month period granted to address these issues. Despite assurances and commitments made to the ICC Board in July 2025, continued non-compliance led to this suspension. – Agencies

Sahibzada Farhan joins Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan in elite list

ABU DHABI: Pakistan opener Sahibzada Farhan has joined star batters Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan in an elite list during the Asia Cup 2025 Super Four clash against Sri Lanka on Tuesday. Farhan struck 24 off 15 deliveries, laced with two sixes and a four, entering the record books as he be-

came only the fourth batter from the country to score 1,500 T20 runs in a calendar year. He reached the landmark in his 35th innings of the year. Prior to Farhan, only Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, and Shan Masood had crossed the 1,500-run barrier in a calendar year. Babar has done it thrice (2019, 2021,

PMYP-Qalandars Trials Attract Huge Youth Turnout in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PMYP-Lahore Qalandars Cricket Trials Ignite Passion Across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Empowering Thousands of Youth with Dreams of National Glory and Showcasing Raw Talent in Kohat, Abbottabad, and Peshawar

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister’s Youth Programme (PMYP) cricket talent hunt, powered by Lahore Qalandars, continued its inspiring journey across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with consecutive trials held in Kohat, Abbottabad, and Peshawar. The events witnessed overwhelming participation, as thousands of young boys and girls turned up brimming with energy, determination, and dreams of representing Pakistan on the bigger stage, said a press release. The nationwide initiative, aimed at unearthing the country’s next generation of cricket stars, has been met with resounding enthusiasm at every stop. In Kohat, Ab-

bottabad, and Peshawar, aspiring cricketers displayed outstanding passion, discipline, and resilience, reflecting the deep-rooted cricket culture of the province. With Lahore Qalandars’ professional setup providing technical expertise and structured opportunities, the trials have not only given youngsters a platform to showcase their skills but also instilled belief and confidence that talent will be recognized at the highest levels. CEO Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana extended heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for their vision

and extraordinary support in empowering youth and women through cricket. “This entire journey is only possible because of the tremendous support of our Prime Minister, PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, and HEC. Their commitment to youth and women’s cricket is commendable. I also want to thank the youth of Pakistan, who came out in huge numbers, turning these trials into a festival of cricket and hope. Their passion assures us that Pakistan’s cricketing future is in safe hands,” said Atif Rana. Participants too voiced their appreciation for the initiative, thanking the Prime Min-

ister, PMYP, and Lahore Qalandars for offering such a massive platform where they could display their prowess in front of seasoned professionals. Many young cricketers expressed confidence that this opportunity would open doors for them at national and international levels. The overwhelming response in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has reinforced the value of this landmark collaboration between PMYP and Lahore Qalandars. The trials now move forward with upcoming stops scheduled in Swat, Mardan, Muzaffarabad, and Gilgit, where even greater excitement and participation are anticipated. – Agencies

Hamid Raza resigns from TTAP’s...

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the call may have originated from an unknown source. However, some opposition leaders and central leaders were seen on social media marking the “mission nor” by reciting ‘Azaan’, including Senator Allama Raja Nasir Abbas Jafri. It was learnt that Hamid Raza and his party had strong reservations about this mode of protest and declined to be part of it, prompting a sharp and unending reaction in the shape of his bashing by PTI social media. “We are in touch with the SIC leadership and hopefully very soon sort out and allay the concerns of Sahibzada Hamid Raza. Since the party did not give any such call, then how can he be trolled for not subscribing to it,” a senior PTI leader said when contacted.

ECC decides to allow...

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The Committee also approved the imposition of 40 percent Regulatory Duty (RD), in addition to the existing customs duties, on the commercial import of used vehicles (less than five years old). This enhanced duty will remain applicable until 30th June 2026. Thereafter, the duty shall be reduced gradually by 10 percentage points per year, reaching zero by 2029-30, in line with the recommendations of the Tariff Policy Board. On another summary moved by the Cabinet Division, the ECC considered and approved allocation of Rs 800 million ad Technical Supplementary Grant in favour of the Pakistan Virtual Asset Regulatory Authority (PVARA). The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, federal secretaries and senior officials from concerned ministries and regulatory bodies.

‘Only SJC can hold...

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Mandokhail, said that by virtue of holding a constitutional position, sub-article (5) of Article 199 of the Constitution granted immunity to SC and high court judges for acts performed within their judicial and administrative capacity. “The constitutional scheme of immunity to the judges of the superior courts is to secure the independence of the judiciary, which is the command of Article 2A [Objectives Resolution to form part of substantive provisions] of the Constitution. It is for this reason, a judge of the same court cannot issue any kind of writ nor can take any action against another judge of the same court.”

CCI yet to take...

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“Several members of the council were against withholding tax,” Dr Naemi added. He said: “They left the meeting when food was served and the staff thought that withholding tax was declared against Sharia.” It is pertinent to mention here that the FBR describes “withholding tax” as an advance payment of tax deducted at the time of economic activities specified under certain sections of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 and Sales Tax Act, 1990. The CII meeting also discussed matters related to the establishment of human milk banks in the country. Human milk storage facilities can be established under certain conditions, the CII said, adding that necessary legislation on the matter must come first to prevent evils.

FBR’s new cell scans social media for tax evasion

FROM PAGE 01
declaration,” one senior FBR official said, adding that tax evasion cases can be opened up in a matter of hours.



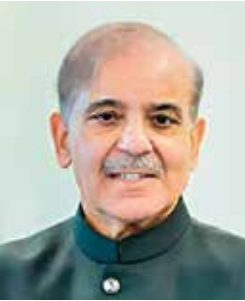
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER READERSHIP DAY



M E S S A G E S



Asif Ali Zardari
President Islamic Republic of the Pakistan



Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif
Prime Minister, Islamic Republic of the Pakistan



Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani
Chairman Senate of Pakistan



Sardar Ayaz Sadiq
Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari
Chairman, Pakistan Peoples Party



Maryam Nawaz Sharif
Chief Minister Punjab



Syed Murad Ali Shah
Chief Minister Sindh



Mir Sarfraz Bugti
Chief Minister Balochistan



Ali Amin Gandapur
Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On this National Newspaper Readership Day, I extend my warmest greetings to readers, journalists, editors, publishers, and all those who have dedicated themselves to the noble profession of journalism. I commend the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) for its initiative in commemorating this day each year to encourage the culture of newspaper reading across the country.

I firmly believe that an informed citizenry is the foundation of a vibrant democracy. When citizens have access to reliable information, they are empowered to make better choices not only in elections but in every sphere of life. From the days of the Pakistan Movement to the present, newspapers have been central to our national discourse. They have informed the people, exposed injustices, provided a platform for debate, and upheld the public's right to know. For this invaluable service, generations of journalists deserve our deepest respect.

Early on, I learnt that a newspaper guarantees a responsible flow of information. The institution of the editor ensures that responsibility by deciding what deserves to be highlighted and what must be discarded. Sadly, with the advent of social media, the role of the professional editor is in decline, giving rise to disinformation and propaganda. This makes the values of responsible journalism carried by newspapers all the more precious today.

In today's fast-paced digital era, where news often circulates before it is verified, newspapers remain symbols of trust. They provide depth, context, and thoughtful analysis – helping readers understand not just what has happened, but why it matters. While I do recognise that the industry faces severe challenges, it is heartening to see that the best newspapers around the world have not only survived but flourished. I am confident that our newspapers too can do the same, not by waiting for government support or big business patronage, but by relying on the trust and loyalty of the people whose right to know they have championed for generations.

I particularly urge our youth to develop the habit of reading newspapers, and I call upon educational institutions to encourage newspaper reading among their students. I also call upon the print media to continue upholding the highest standards of ethics, impartiality, and responsibility. Press freedom is essential to democracy, but it must always be exercised with truth, balance, and fairness.

I hope that newspaper readership in our country will continue to grow and help us in making a more informed, thoughtful, and democratic Pakistan.

I extend my warm greetings to the journalists, publishers, and readers on the occasion of National Newspaper Readership Day.

Newspapers have historically played a pivotal role in shaping informed societies. They are not merely carriers of news but also serve as platform for national dialogue, public awareness, and accountability.

In today's rapidly changing media landscape, newspapers continue to be a trusted source of verified information.

As we commemorate this day, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable services of our print media professionals who have worked with dedication and responsibility to uphold the principles of truth, fairness, and public interest.

I also pay tribute to the millions of readers whose trust sustains this important pillar of democracy.

It is my firm belief that a well-informed society is the foundation of a progressive and democratic nation. I encourage our citizens, especially the youth, to cultivate the habit of newspaper reading so they may broaden their knowledge, enhance critical thinking, and remain engaged with national and global developments.

On this National Newspaper Readership Day, let us reaffirm our collective commitment to strengthening the culture of reading, promoting responsible journalism, and building an enlightened Pakistan.

The observance of National Newspaper Readership Day on 25th September, at the initiative of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), is a timely reminder of the enduring importance of newspapers in our national life. In an era defined by the rapid flow of information, the role of credible and responsible journalism stands as a pillar of democracy and social stability.

For decades, newspapers have remained a trusted source of authentic information, fostering public awareness, encouraging constructive debate, and ensuring accountability. Today, when societies across the globe grapple with the challenges of fake news and disinformation, the value of newspapers as a medium of truth and integrity becomes even more vital.

It is also encouraging to note that newspapers have successfully adapted to the digital age. Their online editions and digital platforms have expanded readership and increased accessibility, particularly for the younger generation. This evolution has enabled newspapers to reach wider audiences while retaining their credibility and journalistic standards.

I call upon the citizens of Pakistan, particularly our youth, to embrace the habit of newspaper reading, both in print and digital form. It not only broadens knowledge and sharpens critical thinking but also nurtures an informed society that can actively contribute to the progress and strength of our beloved country.

On this occasion, I commend the efforts of APNS in promoting a culture of reading and in highlighting the indispensable role of newspapers in nation-building. Let us reaffirm our collective commitment to truth, knowledge, and responsible journalism, which remain essential for a democratic and enlightened Pakistan.

I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), as well as to readers, journalists, and publishers, on the celebration of National Newspaper Readership Day. This day is a tribute to the pivotal role newspapers play in shaping public opinion, strengthening democracy, and serving as an authentic source of information in our country. Throughout our history, newspapers have remained at the forefront of informing citizens, cultivating political awareness, and ensuring that people's voices are heard. Even in an age dominated by fast-moving digital content, newspapers continue to provide depth, context, and perspective that are indispensable for informed discourse and critical thought. Journalists, especially those reporting from the precincts of Parliament, serve as a vital link between the legislative process and the people, upholding transparency, accountability, and public trust. The Parliamentary Reporters Association plays an instrumental role in this regard. As Speaker of the National Assembly, I am acutely aware of the challenges posed by fake news and disinformation, which threaten social harmony and the very foundations of democracy. Parliament has consistently highlighted the importance of media literacy, fact-checking, and responsible reporting through its committees and forums. Recent parliamentary initiatives promoting fact-based communication and fostering collaboration with media institutions reflect our shared resolve to counter these challenges while preserving the fundamental right to freedom of expression. The observance of National Newspaper Readership Day is therefore not merely a commemoration of the newspaper industry but a call to encourage the culture of reading, strengthen reliance on verified sources, and empower citizens with the knowledge necessary for meaningful participation in national life. A vibrant culture of readership and strong newspapers are indispensable pillars of democracy. They provide informed perspectives, hold institutions accountable, and foster constructive debate, without which democratic societies cannot flourish. I commend APNS for its tireless efforts to promote readership and counter misinformation. The National Assembly reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding press freedom, advancing responsible journalism, and ensuring dissemination of accurate information for a more informed, united, and forward-looking Pakistan.

For decades, newspapers have served as a primary and credible source of information, retaining their importance even with the rise of electronic media such as radio and television. Newspaper readers have long been recognized as among the most well-informed individuals in society. The habit of reading newspapers not only fosters literacy but also empowers people with knowledge while keeping them updated on global affairs.

Newspapers cover a broad spectrum of subjects ranging from sports and entertainment to politics and history. This diversity, combined with in-depth reporting and expert analysis, distinguishes newspapers as a reliable source of authentic information and responsible commentary. Even in today's digital age, where misinformation and fake news spread rapidly, the credibility and accountability of newspapers continue to make them one of the most trusted mediums for knowledge and insight.

I once again commend the editors, journalists, staff members, and all those associated with the newspaper industry for their invaluable service to the nation.

It gives me immense pleasure to note that the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) is observing National Newspaper Readership Day on the 25th of September. On this occasion, I extend my sincere appreciation to all members of the newspaper fraternity for their vital contributions.

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I once again commend the editors, journalists, staff members, and all those associated with the newspaper industry for their invaluable service to the nation.

I am honoured to extend my warmest greetings to the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and the journalist community on National Newspaper Readership Day 2025. This day is not only a celebration of the printed word but also a reaffirmation of our collective commitment to building an informed, enlightened, and responsible society. Newspapers have long stood as guardians of truth, transparency, and public accountability. In a country as vibrant as Pakistan, and in a province as dynamic as Punjab, their role extends beyond daily reporting. They shape public consciousness, safeguard democratic values, and document the socio-political journey of our people. Today's media ecosystem is more complex than ever. With digital content and misinformation spreading rapidly, truth competes with speculation, and opinion is often mistaken for fact. This makes the role of newspapers as providers of verified, balanced, and in-depth journalism more vital than ever. In Punjab, we have witnessed how a free, credible press contributes to responsive governance, engaged citizenship, and social unity. Newspapers give voice to marginalized communities, highlight developmental issues, and create space for constructive dialogue. They act as a bridge between government and the people, fostering inclusion, transparency, and harmony. I urge our youth to reconnect with this valuable source of credible information and analytical discourse. At a time when fleeting content dominates screens, the discipline of newspaper reading builds critical thinking, comprehension, and global awareness. It equips young minds to distinguish fact from misinformation, enabling them to become thoughtful citizens. This day is also an occasion to recognize the tireless efforts of journalists, editors, and media organizations who uphold ethical reporting despite challenges. Their work strengthens democracy and safeguards the public's right to know. The Government of Punjab remains committed to promoting media literacy, responsible journalism, and access to credible information. A well-informed population is the cornerstone of a resilient, inclusive, and progressive society. Let us renew our commitment to the values newspapers represent: truth, transparency, and knowledge. May the habit of reading continue to inspire and empower generations to come.

The role of newspapers as watchdogs of transparency and accountability cannot be overstated. Their contribution to good governance and democratic advancement remains fundamental, firmly establishing newspapers as a cornerstone of our democracy.

In an age where misinformation spreads rapidly online, promoting newspaper readership is not only necessary but also a shared responsibility. By fostering a culture of reading, especially among the youth, we lay the foundation for a more knowledgeable, tolerant, and responsible society. I commend APNS for its unwavering commitment to promoting literacy, safeguarding press freedom, and championing responsible journalism across Pakistan.

The Government of Sindh stands resolutely behind initiatives aimed at enhancing education, awareness, and civic participation throughout our province.

Let us all work together to preserve and strengthen the tradition of newspaper readership, ensuring that truth, knowledge, and informed dialogue remain the guiding lights of our collective future.

I am pleased to join the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) in celebrating National Newspaper Readership Day - a meaningful occasion that underscores the enduring importance of newspapers in cultivating an informed, engaged, and thoughtful society.

For generations, newspapers have been indispensable pillars of education and trustworthy sources of information. In an era defined by rapid digital transformation, they continue to shine as beacons of credible, fact-based journalism - essential for fostering critical thinking and encouraging informed public discourse.

Sindh, a province with a rich cultural and intellectual heritage, has long recognised the vital role newspapers play in keeping citizens abreast of crucial social, political, and economic developments. Newspapers amplify diverse voices, connect local realities to global conversations, and serve as a reliable archive of our collective history and progress.

The role of newspapers as watchdogs of transparency and accountability cannot be overstated. Their contribution to good governance and democratic advancement remains fundamental, firmly establishing newspapers as a cornerstone of our democracy.

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Let us all work together to preserve and strengthen the tradition of newspaper readership, ensuring that truth, knowledge, and informed dialogue remain the guiding lights of our collective future.

I am pleased to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) for observing National Newspaper Readership Day on 25th September each year. This initiative has played a vital role in highlighting the importance of reading newspapers as a reliable source of information in today's fast-changing world.

In an age where misinformation and fake news spread rapidly and create confusion in society, the role of newspapers as an authentic and credible medium has become even more significant. Newspapers not only inform citizens with accuracy but also help shape an educated, responsible, and enlightened society.

I urge the people of Balochistan, especially the youth, to cultivate the habit of reading newspapers daily. This practice will broaden their knowledge, sharpen their critical thinking, and strengthen their understanding of national and global affairs. By rejecting fake news and relying on credible journalism, we can collectively contribute towards building a more informed and cohesive society.

On this occasion, I commend the APNS for its continued efforts to promote the culture of newspaper reading across Pakistan. The Government of Balochistan fully supports this noble initiative and will continue to encourage awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of credible information and responsible journalism.

Let us all pledge to value newspapers as a cornerstone of democracy and a bridge between the people and the truth.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the All Pakistan Newspapers Society's (APNS) initiative of declaring September 25th as "National Newspaper Readership Day", a tradition that has been observed annually since 2019. This commendable effort underscores the enduring significance of newspaper readership and seeks to revive the culture of reading in our country, an important habit that has unfortunately declined with the rapid rise of social and digital media.

While social and digital platforms have revolutionized communication and information-sharing, but have also contributed to the unchecked spread of unverified or out-of-context content, often giving rise to fear, conflict, and controversy. In this environment, the importance of print media cannot be overstated. Despite the advancement of new media, newspapers continue to serve as a credible, authentic, and reliable source of information.

Promoting the habit of reading is essential to counter the challenges posed by misinformation and disinformation. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains firmly committed to upholding the fundamental and constitutional right of press freedom and recognizes an independent and responsible media as a cornerstone of a progressive, civilized, and democratic society. Without safeguarding both press freedom and the people's right to know, our shared vision of a stronger democracy cannot be realized.

The provincial government deeply values responsible journalism and is taking concrete measures for the welfare of journalists. Guiding society towards the right path is a collective responsibility, and print media, in particular, carries a prominent role in this regard. In today's environment, the need for quality journalism, rooted in responsibility, accuracy, and integrity, is greater than ever before.

I once again commend the APNS for this laudable initiative and firmly believe that celebrating this day will inspire more people to embrace the habit of reading while fostering a greater sense of awareness and unity on national issues.

Zardari visit adds new chapter to Pak, China friendship: Jiang Zaidong

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong has said President Asif Ali Zardari's 10-day visit to China – a journey across mountains and seas to his "home away from home" – has once again added a new chapter to the iron-clad friendship between China and Pakistan. In an article on Wednesday, Zaidong presented details of Zardari's visit that started on September 12 and continued till September 21.

During this journey, the president traversed three provincial-level administrative regions, visited four destinations, met with heads of local governments, and engaged with ordinary Chinese citizens.

"This trip has added new chapters to the legendary China-Pakistan friendship, advanced practical bilateral cooperation, and deepened the bond between our two peoples. This is a journey of civilization and innovation, shaped by mutual commitment," he said. Zaidong noted that during his visit to the Memorial Hall of the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Shanghai, President Zardari commended the role of the CPC in liberation and rise of China on the globe as the major global power. "We express our sincere gratitude for these kind works. As President Zardari noted, since its founding, the CPC has been unwaveringly dedicated to pursuing happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation." – DNA



ISLAMABAD : Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza with the participants of The 8th Pakistan Pharma Summit & Pesa Awards .

Israeli tanks push deeper into Gaza City as Trump talks peace

CAIRO: Israeli forces pushed toward the heart of Gaza City on Wednesday, risking the lives of Palestinians who had stayed put in hopes that growing pressure on Israel for a ceasefire would mean they would not lose their homes. US President Donald Trump met leaders of Muslim countries at the United Nations in New York on Tuesday for talks which focused on an end to the war. Trump, who earlier condemned moves by a string of countries to put pressure on Israel by recognizing a Palestinian state, said a meeting with Israel would be next. The Israeli government has urged the population of Gaza City to move south but many people hesitated, citing the lack of

security and widespread hunger there. "We moved to the western area near the beach, but many families didn't have the time, tanks took them by surprise," said Thaer, a 35-year-old father of one from Tel Al-Hawa. Israeli forces, which began closing in on the city of more than a million in August, have ignored calls to stop an offensive that the government says aims to destroy the last stronghold of Hamas militants whose 2023 attack on Israel and seizure of hostages triggered the war. Medics said at least 20 people were killed and many others wounded when Israeli airstrikes hit a shelter housing displaced families near a market in the middle of

the city. Two other people were killed in a house nearby, they said. The Israeli military said it was looking into the reported attack on the shelter, where footage obtained by Reuters showed people sitting through the rubble. "We were sleeping in God's care, there was nothing – they did not inform us, or not even give us a sign – it was a surprise," said Sami Hajjaj. "There are children and women, around 200 people maybe, six-seven families, this square is full of families," he said. In the city's Tel Al-Hawa suburb tanks entered populated areas trapping people in their homes, while more tanks were seen stationed close to Al-Quds Hospital. The

Palestinian Red Crescent Society said an oxygen station had been damaged. Tanks have also advanced closer to Gaza's largest hospital, Al-Shifa, witnesses and Hamas media said. On Monday, Palestinian authorities said tank shelling had damaged the Rantissi Hospital and put the nearby Al-Naser eye hospital at risk, forcing them to close. Jordan, which runs a third hospital in the area, said it had moved it further south due to repeated bombardment. The Israeli military said it would continue to enable the provision of medical services and functioning of health care facilities in Gaza and that staff and patients from Al-Naser and Rantissi had voluntarily evacuated.

Dengue fever ravages Sudan

KHARTOUM: Tens of thousands of Sudanese people have fallen victim to dengue fever and other diseases, Sudan's health minister said, as seasonal rains further test infrastructure and hospitals devastated by conflict. As millions of people displaced by fighting return to their homes in Sudan while others continue to flee, the unusually high spread of diseases like dengue fever, cholera and malaria this year highlights the hidden costs of almost 30 months of war. The conflict between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis and spread famine, and has shown no signs of slowing – although the army has recaptured the capital Khartoum and other parts of the country.

Exhausted patients lie under mosquito nets in packed wards in Omdurman Hospital as they receive intravenous paracetamol drips, the main treatment for the disease which can be fatal on second exposure. More than 2,000 cases of dengue fever were recorded nationwide over the week ending on Tuesday, mostly in Khartoum, according to the Ministry of Health, but the minister said the real numbers falling ill were likely much higher. "80 percent of cases are minor and do not reach the hospital so we expect it to be tens of thousands of cases in the past period across Sudan," Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim told Reuters. The mosquitoes that carry the disease thrive in stagnant water including inside homes. – APP

Briefs

Aseefa says
BISP fastest
way to help
flood victims

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: PPP's Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari, the first lady and a member of the National Assembly, on Wednesday asserted that the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was the "most effective way" to distribute aid to flood-affected people, adding that it would be "irresponsible to not utilise it". Her statement comes a day after Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said that the provincial government would issue relief cards to the flood victims in their personal names using its own resources instead of using BISP to assist them. Over the past month, the PPP has repeatedly urged the Centre to disburse stipends among displaced citizens via the "efficient and proven" BISP. BISP is a national safety net programme in Pakistan that provides cash assistance to poor and vulnerable families, particularly targeting women. In a post on X, Aseefa said that over four million people had been impacted by the "unprecedented floods" in Punjab. She termed the BISP as the "fastest and most effective way" to distribute aid to those affected. "Not utilising one of the state's key organisations, which has both the data and the capacity to deliver assistance, would be irresponsible," she said. Over the past weeks, the PPP chairman and senior leaders have encouraged the use of the flagship income support initiative to provide relief to thousands of citizens affected by the monsoon floods.

Farooq Sattar
takes aim at
the Sindh govt

DNA

KARACHI: Muttahida Qami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader Dr Farooq Sattar on Wednesday took aim at the Sindh government and Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab over the delay in development projects in the metropolis. Karachi's key development projects—from the long-delayed KIV water supply scheme and Red Line bus corridor to stalled roadworks like the Karimabad underpass and Malir Expressway—remain stuck due to chronic funding gaps, utility relocation issues, regulatory hurdles, and weak inter-agency coordination, leaving the city's residents waiting years for essential infrastructure. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Sattar said, "They cannot conceive a development project, nor can they deliver it." During the presser, the MQM leader talked about the Green Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. Recently, the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), backed by the PPP-led Sindh government, halted the federally funded Rs6 billion project of the Green Line Bus extension, citing the PIDCL's failure to obtain a no-objection certificate (NOC) from municipal authorities before restarting the work.

Norway envoy stresses rules-based order, calls for stronger ties with Pak

Dilating upon the International Order in the wake of World War II, Ambassador Albert said that the emergence of United Nations, NATO, Council of Europe and a rules-based order was a blessing, and it is high time deviations are checked for a peaceful and coordinated world order

SAIFULLAH ANSAR /DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Norway to Pakistan, Per Albert Isaas has said that sustainable development, rules-based order and economic progression are hallmarks of his country's policy, and hoped that the world will be a better place if the Charter of the United Nations is adhered to in letter and spirit. Speaking at the "Diplomatic Reflections" forum organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), the envoy said that Oslo has a policy of "no nukes and no bases", and believes in deterring aggression, said a press release issued on Wednesday. He remarked that irrespective of a country being an ally or an adversary, Norway believes in upholding International



Law and principles of peaceful coexistence, and calls a spade a spade. Dilating upon the International Order in the wake of World War II, Ambassador Albert said that the emergence of United Nations, NATO, Council of Europe and a rules-based order was a blessing, and it is high time deviations are checked for a peaceful and coordinated world order. He underscored the need for more cooperation between Norway and Pakistan, and highlighted the progress attained in the last many decades. He also said that he is pleased to learn about the passion for rule of law, supremacy of constitution, independence of judiciary from Pakistani Op-Eds, and said that both the countries share the denominator in economic progress and democracy. Ambassador Albert talked about the richness of Arctic region and the economic opportunities in trade and navigation. He observed that Russia's aggression over Ukraine and occupation of Crimea have created a security imbalance, and underscored the need for checking this tendency. To a question on President Trump's desire to takeover Greenland as part of 'strategic depth', the ambassador said that it is a point of concern for Norway, and Oslo's positioning will be with the Danish government. Ambassador Albert dispelled the tendency in international relations based on double-standards, and supported the two-state solution on Palestine. He condemned Israel's Gaza massacre and genocide, and called for addressing the issue on an urgent basis. He also stressed the need for proactivity in regional organisations, and for working closely with Pakistan for the collective good of both the countries.

Pakistan values ties with EU, says Seante chairman

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Meets with EU Ambassador Raimundas Karblis at Parliament House Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Raimundas Karblis, paid a courtesy call on the Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, at Parliament House today. The meeting offered a comprehensive review of Pakistan-EU relations, underscoring the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in promoting mutual understanding, regional stability, and people-to-people linkages.

Welcoming the Ambassador, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani

expressed appreciation for the EU's longstanding partnership with Pakistan, built on shared democratic values, respect for international law, and a common commitment to global peace and cooperation. He reaffirmed that Pakistan greatly values the EU's continued engagement with its Parliament. The EU Ambassador conveyed condolences and regret over the loss of life and property caused by recent floods and rains in Pakistan. Chairman Gilani expressed gratitude to the European Union for its timely assistance and solidarity during difficult times, including natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. Highlighting the broadening scope of bilateral cooperation, Chairman

Gilani noted that Pakistan-EU collaboration spans trade, development cooperation, institutional linkages, and security. He lauded the EU as one of Pakistan's largest trading partners and emphasized the positive impact of the GSP+ arrangement in fostering export diversification, job creation, and sustainable development. On investment, the Chairman briefed the Ambassador about SIFC, a national platform aimed at creating a predictable business environment and attracting foreign investment in key sectors such as IT, renewable energy, agriculture, minerals, and infrastructure. He invited European investors to explore opportunities in alignment with the EU's Global Gateway Strategy. Chairman Senate also underscored Pakistan's commitment to inclusive development, with special focus on women's empowerment. He drew attention to the grave human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, reiterating Pakistan's principled stance for a peaceful resolution of the dispute in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions and international law. He further urged the international community, particularly the EU, to play its role in ensuring just and lasting solutions to global conflicts, including the Palestinian issue. Ms. Misbah Khar, Advisor to the Chairman Senate on Parliamentary Diplomacy, apprised the Ambassador of Pakistan's proactive role in global parliamentary forums. She highlighted that Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gilani was unanimously elected as the Founding Chairman of ISC, a unique platform comprising 45 countries. She briefed the Ambassador on the objectives of the ISC, which fosters dialogue on peace, development, stability, and security.

Ahsan meets
Chinese official;
discusses CPEC

BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, met with the Governor of Hunan Province, Mr. Mao Weiming. The two leaders discussed further strengthening Pakistan-China cooperation and expanding partnerships under CPEC Phase II in new areas of development. Professor Ahsan Iqbal noted that the participation of leaders from more than twenty countries in the BeiDou Summit was highly encouraging. He praised Hunan's central role in China's economy and highlighted that the BeiDou system provides modern information infrastructure critical for industrial development. The Federal Minister recalled that Pakistan was the very first foreign country to adopt BeiDou, a reflection of the deep trust and enduring friendship between the two nations. He remarked that Pakistan-China cooperation is reaching new heights in science, technology, and economic development. - DNA

Pakistan urges UN Security Council to act decisively

UNITED NATIONS: Highlighting Palestinian people's suffering of "historic proportions", Pakistan Tuesday called on the UN Security Council to act decisively to uphold human dignity, ensure accountability and deliver justice, while underscoring a two-State solution for the Middle East peace. "The time for words has passed; the time for action is now," Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar told the 15-member Council on the Middle East situation, especially in besieged Gaza. The Council meeting came on the heels of the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, which on 22 September further galvanized broad international support for the rights and sovereignty of a Palestinian State. DPM/FM commended the recent recognitions of Palestine by numerous member states, saying that Pakistan had the honour to be among the first few countries to recognize Palestine, following the declaration of independence in 1988. "This positive momentum must be sustained with resolute determination, seriousness of purpose, and an unwavering commitment to achieving a just and lasting solution," he said. "The people of Palestine are facing a crisis of historic proportion, the suffering is a stain on our collective consciousness."

Gaza has become a graveyard for humanity and the global conscience, Dar said, as he reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their just struggle for dignity, justice, and self-determination, through the establishment of a sovereign, independent, and contiguous Palestinian State on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. In this regard, he called for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire; unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza and the immediate lifting of the blockade to allow life-saving aid to reach those in need; an end to any forced displacement of Palestinians from their lands, while upholding the right of return for refugees, and establishing an international protection mechanism. Opening the debate, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, "We are confronting one of the darkest chapters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, noting that violence has only escalated across the Occupied Palestinian Territory nearly two years after the Israeli war in Gaza. The onslaught in Gaza City, he warned, is deepening an already catastrophic humanitarian crisis, trapping civilians and hostages "under relentless bombardment and deprived of food, water, electricity and medicine". - APP

At least 12
dead as
record rain
floods India's
Kolkata

Police say nine people died in Kolkata, with most deaths reported due to electrocution

NEW DELHI: At least 12 people died as heavy rain lashed the eastern Indian city of Kolkata and surrounding areas ahead of a major festival, flooding streets, disrupting transport and leaving residents stranded for hours, officials said on Wednesday. Most of the rain, as much as 251.6 mm (9.9 inches) in 24 hours, fell during the early hours of Tuesday and was the heaviest witnessed in the city since 1988, said HR Biswas, the regional head of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in Kolkata. Police said nine people died in Kolkata, with most of the deaths due to electrocution. Two people drowned, they added. The rains brought the state capital to a standstill, seriously hampering preparations for the upcoming Durga Puja — the biggest annual festival of Hindus in West Bengal state. Many pandals, temporary structures built with bamboo and other materials for the festival, and clay idols of the deities also suffered damage across the city. Roads were submerged under waist-deep water in some areas, stranding vehicles and forcing commuters to wade through flooded streets. Road, train, and air traffic were severely disrupted, with several flights and trains cancelled or delayed. Power outages affected multiple areas for hours, compounding residents' difficulties. "I got stranded in my hotel as my flight got cancelled and the roads were all waterlogged," said Ranjan Panda, a water and climate expert. Authorities said they have deployed water pumps to clear streets and railway tracks, with relief measures, including food distribution and emergency services, underway.

UNDP rep,
vows support
for human
rights

DNA

LAHORE: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Pakistan Dr Samuel Rizk called on Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora at the Human Rights & Minorities Affairs (HR&MA) Department on Wednesday. He thanked the minister for continued partnership with the UNDP on human rights, minority rights, and peace building initiatives. He also offered condolences over the loss of lives and damage caused by recent floods, and inquired about the affected minority communities. The meeting discussed strengthening human rights protection, interfaith harmony, and institutional support. Dr Samuel Rizk reaffirmed UNDP's commitment to collaborate on the National Action Plan on Human Rights 2026 and Business and Human Rights in Punjab. Minister Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora said the government is committed to safeguarding minority rights, citing progress on legislative reforms including the Sikh Marriage Act, rules under the Hindu Marriage Act, and work on the Christian Marriage Act.

Pakistan, Poland chart new
course for cooperation

The discussions took place against the backdrop of intensified diplomatic activity — including recent engagements with ASEAN Ambassadors, ongoing work with Saudi Arabia on a trade enhancement roadmap

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday held an extensive meeting with Poland's Ambassador to Pakistan, Maciej Pisarski, covering a wide spectrum of bilateral initiatives from trade and investment to energy, mining, and agriculture. The discussions took place against the backdrop of intensified diplomatic activity — including recent engagements with ASEAN Ambassadors, ongoing work with Saudi Arabia on a trade enhancement roadmap, according to press release issued by commerce ministry. Minister Khan lauded the presence of Poland's leading energy company ORLEN (formerly Polish Oil and Gas Company), describing it as a "success story" that illustrates how persistence and patience leading to substantial returns. Operating in Pakistan for more than 26 years, ORLEN has invested about USD 500 million in exploration and production, mainly in the Sindh-Balochistan belt, and now plans

to double its investment over the next decade. Ambassador Pisarski emphasized that ORLEN's new exploratory concessions — including Baran and Sirmazaran West adjacent to its current operations in the Kirtan Mountains — are highly promising. The Ambassador also raised the pending issues that need to be resolved for furtherance of mutual interests. Minister Khan assured him that Pakistan would facilitate the matter with relevant authorities to safeguard investor confidence and ensure smooth operations. Building on Poland's transformation of its apple industry into a year-round export success, the two sides discussed replicating that model in Pakistan. Minister Khan invited Polish firms to partner with Pakistani public and private enterprises to establish cold storages, preservation, waxing, grading, and warehousing facilities in Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan. He cited the EDF's successful solar-powered chili drying project as an example of the fund's ability to fast-track such.

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