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PM Shehbaz says

Energy circular debt elimination plan historic breakthrough

PM Shehbaz Sharif said, "This is the first time in Pakistan's history that circular debt, which was swallowing our national resources, has been addressed in a structured and effective manner"

DNA

ISLAMABAD/NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday inaugurated Pakistan's first-ever comprehensive energy circular debt elimination plan, describing it as a "historic breakthrough" that will pave the way for sustainable reforms in the power sector. Speaking at the signing ceremony, the prime minister lauded the collective efforts of the government, financial institutions, and the task force for successfully negotiating and finalizing the plan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif joined the ceremony via video link from New York, while ministers, senior officials, regulators, international partners, and CEOs of power sector organizations attended the event at the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad. PM Shehbaz Sharif said, "This is the first time in Pakistan's history that circular debt, which was swallowing our national resources, has been addressed in a structured and effective manner." The prime minister highlighted the role of the Power Division, the Petroleum Ministry, and the Task Force in resolving longstanding issues. He paid special tribute to former caretaker energy minister Mohammad Ali, Secretary Power, and Lieutenant General (R) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal for their "tireless negotiations with

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PM Shehbaz lauds Gates Foundation's support

DNA

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, on Thursday calling the polio eradication a high priority of the government, appreciated the valuable support extended by the Gates Foundation to Pakistan to achieve the objective. The prime minister, in a meeting with Chair of Gates Foundation Bill Gates on the sidelines of 80th session of UN General Assembly, also lauded the Foundation's support for improving immunization and nutrition as well as financial inclusion in the country. He also appreciated the Gates Foundation's generous donation following floods in Pakistan this year, also recalling the organisation's significant contribution for relief efforts during the 2022 floods. The prime minister said that partnership with the Gates Foundation would remain vital to achieve the objective of the polio eradication. While emphasizing on the government's initiative of extensive economic reforms, cashless

Continued on Page 06



WASHINGTON: Bill Gates calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Abbas rejects Hamas role in Palestinian rule

DNA

NEW YORK: Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas said Thursday that Hamas would have no role in governing the Palestinians and condemned the armed group's October 7 attack against Israel. "Hamas will not have a role to play in governance. Hamas and other factions will have to hand over their weapons to the Palestinian National Authority," Abbas told the UN General Assembly in a video message. He said a suffocating siege has been imposed on an entire people, destroying more than 80% of homes, schools, hospitals, churches, mosques, and infrastructure. What Israel is carrying out is not just aggression—it is a war crime and a crime against humanity,

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FBR clarifies changes in 2025 income tax return form

FBR says new column aims to assess asset market value accurately

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has issued a clarification regarding changes made to the income tax return form 2025, just days before the deadline for filing returns. The deadline for filing income tax returns remains September 30, the FBR said. However, reports emerged that a new column had been added to the IRIS form, requiring taxpayers to disclose the market value of their assets.

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CM Balochistan says

Terrorists receive 'state patronage' in Afghanistan

Bugti's statement is the latest in repeated blames by Islamabad of terror outfits using Afghan soil to carry out attack in Pakistan. Islamabad has also urged Kabul to choose between maintaining ties with its neighbour or harbouring terrorists. But, Afghan authorities have consistently denied the allegations

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said on Thursday that terrorists receive "state patronage" in Afghanistan, from where they "attack us". Terrorists were provided "safe havens" and places to run training camps in Afghanistan, he said while responding to a question during a press conference in Islamabad. He highlighted that many among the recently killed terrorists were from Afghanistan. The CM called on the Taliban rulers in Afghanistan to abide by the Doha agreement, in which "you committed not to let your soil be used against any country". Bugti's statement is the latest in repeated blames by Islamabad of terror outfits using Afghan soil to carry out attack in Pakistan.

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Man dead, son injured in landmine explosion in Kurram

APP

PESHAWAR: A man was died while his son was injured in a landmine explosion at Khamzai area of the Pewar locality of the tribal district Kurram, said police sources on Thursday. Police source have said the victims, father and son were on way to a mountain at the bordering locality of Pewar wherein a landmine planted in the ground was exploded resulting in the death of a person identified as Hassan Ghulam on the spot while his son Sadiq Hussain sustained injuries.

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Briefs

'Print media challenges to be resolved'

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab's Minister for Information and Culture, Azma Bokhari, has said that addressing the challenges of the print media industry is among the foremost priorities of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. She emphasized that the Punjab government is taking positive steps at every level to support journalists. In a meeting with a delegation of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), the minister highlighted that the print media continues to play a vital role in journalism, adding that even in the age of electronic media and digital technology, its importance remains undiminished. Representatives of the APNS expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, noting that, for the first time, the government has taken the issues of the print media industry seriously and is working to resolve them promptly.

Mly courts appeals: LHC grants time

LAHORE: LHC on Thursday granted the federal government additional time to frame legislation regarding the right of appeal against sentences handed down by military courts. LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum heard the petition filed by Raheeb Mehboob, who had challenged the denial of the right to appeal against military court verdicts. During the proceedings, Federal Law Secretary Raja Naeem Akhtar informed the court that the matter was being forwarded to the federal cabinet for implementation in line with judicial directives. At this stage, the additional attorney general requested the court to allow more time for compliance. The court observed that a final ruling on the petition would be made once the required legislation is passed.

Green shirts defeat Bangladesh

Asia Cup crescendo: it's India vs Pak for the title

Final to be played on Sunday



SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: Dubai: The stage is set for a historic clash as Pakistan defeated Bangladesh in the final Super Four match on Thursday to book their place in the Asia Cup 2025 final against arch-rivals India. The highly-anticipated final will be played on Sunday, September 28, in Dubai. Pakistan's victory sets up what will be the first-ever Asia Cup final between the two cricketing heavyweights, intensifying a

rivalry that transcends sport. Pakistan won by 11 runs. It will first time in the history of Asia Cup that Pakistan and India will be facing each other. In what was essentially a virtual semi-final, Bangladesh put up a spirited effort. Batting first, the Tigers' bowlers executed a disciplined plan, successfully containing the powerful Pakistani batting line-up to a decent, yet chaceable, total. However, the momentum shifted during the chase.

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Bilawal for political solution to Balochistan issues

"Terrorism is Pakistan's biggest challenge, but Balochistan's solution is political," says PPP chairman

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: To bring permanent peace to the province, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Thursday that terrorism remains the country's biggest challenge, stressing that Balochistan's issues must be resolved through political consensus to ensure decisions benefit its people. "Terrorism is Pakistan's biggest challenge, but Balochistan's solution is political... Decisions must be taken with consensus so that people truly benefit," said Bilawal while addressing a press conference in Karachi. The country, particularly in the bordering provinces of KP and Balochistan, has witnessed a surge in cross-border terror incidents since Taliban rulers returned to Afghanistan in 2021. In August, the incidents surged by 74% compared to July, according to a report by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS). Last month, the United States formally designated the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its militant faction, the Majeed Brigade, as a Foreign Ter-



rorist Organisation (FTO). The move also adds the Majeed Brigade as an alias to BLA's previous listing as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) group. The BLA, first designated as an SDGT in 2019, has claimed responsibility for multiple attacks since then, including suicide bombings carried out by the Majeed Brigade. PPP chairman, while speaking over flood devastation in his presser, has called for stronger federal support to revive the agriculture sector and provide relief

to flood-affected farmers, stressing that food security challenges could intensify if urgent steps were not taken. Bilawal said that the country's farmers had suffered enormous damage during the recent floods, particularly in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB). "[The] floods dealt a major blow to our agriculture. Even today, water remains in parts of Multan, Lodhran and Bahawalpur. If food security is compromised, the whole nation will suffer," he warned. hile defending the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), PPP chairman said that PML-N leaders had consistently acknowledged the programme's success. "If [the] ruling party had taken a U-turn on its stance, it was for them to explain," he said. The PPP leader highlighted that BISP had been recognised internationally as an effective social safety initiative, with other countries seeking to replicate its model. He added that Punjab remained the province with the highest number of beneficiaries. Commenting on constitutional reforms,

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Maryam Nawaz criticizes PPP for politicizing flood relief

ABID RAZA

LAHORE, September 25: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has strongly criticized the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for what she termed "politics over floods," saying relief efforts should remain above political point-scoring. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said the PPP leadership, including Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, had demanded that financial aid for flood victims be routed through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Maryam Nawaz rejected this proposal, arguing that BISP provides only Rs 10,000 to each beneficiary, while her government is extending up to Rs 1 million in most cases to those severely affected. "The PPP's campaign is deeply disappointing. Instead of supporting the victims together, they are pushing for political mileage," she said. "Our priority is to stand by the people who have lost everything, not to indulge in political gimmicks." Maryam Nawaz added that the provincial government had already disbursed significant amounts to thousands of affected families and would continue to do so transparently. She urged all parties to work jointly for the rehabilitation of flood victims rather than turning relief work into a political battlefield. "Flood response should be free from politics," she stressed.



Governor, digital media experts discuss youth empowerment

Governor Kundi emphasized that the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were highly talented and only need proper platforms and support to fully realize their potential. He reiterated that the Governor House would remain accessible to initiatives aimed at nurturing and empowering young people

PESHAWAR: Renowned digital media specialist and Presidential Award recipient Fahad Malik, along with Ayab Ahmed, Advisor on the Standing Committee for Cabinet Secretariat, called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House on Thursday. The meeting centered on equipping the province's youth with digital expertise and creating more opportunities for their professional growth. Governor Kundi emphasized that the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were highly talented and only need proper platforms and support to fully realize their potential. He reiterated that the Governor House would remain accessible to initiatives aimed at nurturing and empowering young people. Fahad Malik praised the Governor's consistent efforts and unwavering commitment to the empowerment of both

women and youth across the province. Meanwhile, Naheed Shah Afridi, Director of Daily Frontier Post, called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House. The meeting reflected on the long-standing affiliation of her late father, Rehmat Shah Afridi, and the Frontier Post with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Building on this historic bond, Naheed Shah Afridi expressed her resolve to revive and further strengthen the relationship in the spirit of growth and cooperation. The discussion focused on initiatives to empower women and equip the youth with essential skills to enable their meaningful participation in the province's progress. Governor Kundi emphasized that women's active involvement was vital to building an inclusive society. He further underlined the importance

of creating opportunities for young people to unlock their potential, reaffirming that the Governor House will continue to support programs dedicated to women's empowerment and youth development. Naheed Shah Afridi lauded the Governor's vision and his unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity and establishing platforms that uplift women and youth across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Similarly, a delegation led by Pir Muhammad Anwar Junaid Shah of Ghamkol Sharif Kohat, called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. The meeting included an exchange of views on the country's prevailing political situation, the vital role of religious scholars in promoting peace, ensuring state stability, safeguarding national unity, and other matters of mutual interest.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, held a meeting today with Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik.

AIOU digital revival of Qur'anic manuscripts

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), on Thursday, signed an agreement regarding the preservation, documentation and scholarly revival of Qur'anic manuscripts. The purpose of this agreement was to safeguard this great intellectual and spiritual heritage in line with modern requirements and to transmit it to future generations. The agreement was reached between the Department of Qur'an and Tafseer at AIOU and Pakistan's renowned Digital Quranics Manuscripts Project, signed by Project Head Prof Dr Muhammad Samiullah on behalf of Quranics, while Prof Dr Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi, Dean Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies on behalf of AIOU, said a press release. This agreement was not only a revolutionary step toward preserving Qur'anic treasures in digital and research-based formats but would also provide new direction to the academic world. According to the agreement, workshops, seminars and research activities at BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD levels would be promoted. Scholarships and research opportunities were also provided for faculty and students. Under this landmark collaboration both parties expressed their commitment to align the scholarly and research heritage of Qur'an and Tafseer with contemporary digital standards. Speaking the occasion, Prof Dr Muhammad Samiullah said, "We will collect comprehensive data on ancient Qur'anic manuscripts available across Pakistan, centralize it, subject it to scientific analysis and research.—DNA

NCHR organises workshop on KP Protection, Welfare Policy on Transgender

PESHAWAR: The Social Welfare Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and Blue Veins, organized a Validation Workshop on the proposed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Protection and Welfare Policy on Transgender & Intersex Persons 2025. The workshop brought together representatives from government departments, including the Police Department, NADRA, Health, Right to Information and Services Commission, Child Protection &

Welfare Commission, Commission on Status of Women, Directorate General of Law and Human Rights, civil society, academia, legal experts, media, and transgender leaders to discuss and validate the draft policy, a landmark step toward ensuring dignity, rights, and equal opportunities for transgender persons in the province. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Umara Khan, Additional Secretary, Social Welfare Department, reaffirmed the government's commitment: "The Social Welfare Department

is dedicated to creating an enabling environment where transgender persons can live with dignity and equal rights. This policy reflects our resolve to translate constitutional guarantees into reality and to ensure no one is left behind." Farzana Jan, President of the TransAction Alliance, appreciated the inclusive process of policy development and called for its swift enactment: "For years, the transgender community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been waiting for meaningful policy reforms.—APP

Embassy of Portugal to Participate in cultural programme in Lahore

LAHORE: The Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad will participate in the European Day of Languages 2025 in Lahore from 26th to 27th September. The European Day of Languages celebration is co-organized by the Annemarie-Schimmel-Haus (German Cultural Centre) and the Alliance Française de Lahore, with the support of the EU Delegation, highlighting Europe's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. Ambassador of Portugal Frederico Silva, will also visit Forman Christian College to hold an interactive session with students and faculty on the themes "Portugal and Pakistan Bilateral Relations" and "Portuguese Language – A Global Voice" and emphasize the global relevance of Portuguese language, spoken by more than 260 million people across continents.] During his stay in Lahore, the Ambassador will also meet Ministers of Punjab Government, other prominent Lahore business and cultural personalities, reaffirming Portugal's commitment to dialogue, inclusivity, and strengthened bilateral ties with Pakistan.—DNA

Pak Army shatters India's arrogance: Barrister Saif

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Adviser on Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, has said that the Pakistan Army, with the prayers of Pakistani mothers and the support of the nation, has crushed India's arrogance. Speaking at a ceremony held in connection with "Operation Bunyan Marus" here Thursday, Barrister Saif said India believed it could defeat Pakistan, but by the grace of Allah, the enemy was handed such a defeat that it will remember for a lifetime. "The victory of our armed forces is the victory of the entire nation, and for this we must thank Allah Almighty," he remarked. He further emphasized that nations are not built by airplanes or skyscrapers but through the spirit and support of their people. He urged the youth to remain vigilant in the era of fifth-generation warfare, which seeks to instill hatred in people's hearts against their own country. "Your hearts should carry the colors of the Pakistani flag. As long as this spirit lives within us, the enemy will never forget the strength of Pakistan," Barrister Saif said. The adviser also highlighted that Pakistan's progress is only possible with public support and national unity.—APP

Maryam inaugurates first electro bus service in S Punjab

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Thursday inaugurated the first-ever electro bus service in Dera Ghazi Khan, terming it a historic milestone in transforming the transport culture of south Punjab. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the Chief Minister announced the launch of a Metro Bus Service for Dera Ghazi Khan and declared that every district of South Punjab – including Rajanpur, Layyah, Muzaffargarh and Taunsa – would be provided with electric buses. Under the first phase, 101

electro buses are being allocated for the Dera Ghazi Khan division. She further revealed that a South Punjab Secretariat would convene in Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan every month to address people's grievances directly. Beginning her speech in Saraiki, she said, "It is a matter of joy for me to be among you. Where there is the seat of Lahore, there will also be the seats of Bahawalpur, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan." Maryam Nawaz described the project as a gift for or-

inary citizens, students, women and especially persons with disabilities. She personally instructed the bus conductor to give special care to differently-abled passengers and awarded him a prize. The Chief Minister traveled on the newly launched electro bus from Jail Road Bus Stop to the ceremony venue. Citizens showered flowers on the vehicle along the route, while schoolchildren in traditional attire presented her bouquets. The Border Military Police and women officers of Baloch Levies offered her a guard of honour upon arrival.—APP

NHA to complete Rs1.4t uplift schemes

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority (NHA) is poised to complete around 39 development projects worth over Rs 1,406.3 billion during the current fiscal year. According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, these schemes were approved last year and subsequently executed. Originally, they were part of the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP). The approved cost of the schemes was Rs1,111.8 billion, which was later revised to Rs1,406.3 billion. As per the documents, the allocated cost of Rs1,406.3 billion includes foreign aid of Rs56.7 billion and local funding of Rs1,349.6 billion. —DNA

Recognition by Europe slap in Israel face: Nusrat



ISLAMABAD: Political and social leader Nusrat Khan has said that the recogni-

tion 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. —DNA

ISSI forges collaborative partnership with Kuwaiti think-tank RRC

ISLAMABAD: Building on its international partnerships, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Reconnaissance Research Centre (RRC) – Kuwait's first independent, non-governmental think-tank. The MoU was signed by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General, ISSI, and Mr. Abdulaziz M. Al-Anjeri, Founder and CEO, Reconnaissance Research Centre, respectively. The on-line event was attended by Pakistan's Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal; and Ms. Amina Khan, Director, Centre for Afghanistan,

Middle East, and Africa (CAMEA), ISSI. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his remarks on the occasion, commended the leadership of RRC for promoting dialogue and exchange of knowledge in the Gulf region. He expressed special appreciation for the initiative taken by Ambassador Dr. Zafar Iqbal and proactive support extended to help forge this institutional relationship between the two think-tanks. Noting the long-standing historical, cultural and diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Kuwait, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stressed the signing of the MoU would pave the way for

deeper research and academic collaboration. He highlighted the wide range of subjects for joint cooperation, fostering people-to-people links as a vital component of the overall fraternal relations between the two countries. He reaffirmed ISSI's commitment to developing intellectual and institutional synergies with RRC, and working towards the realisation of practical goals. Mr Abdulaziz M. Al-Anjeri described the signing of the MoU as a significant milestone that will enable pursuance of a concrete plan of action. He appreciated the support extended by the Pakistan Ambassador in

Kuwait in facilitating the MoU and stressed the importance of building a practical and result-oriented partnership. Emphasizing concrete steps for forging an impactful relationship, CEO Dr. Al-Anjeri expressed the intention to establish a dedicated unit at RRC for follow-up on the MoU and to focus on Kuwait-Pakistan cooperation and related regional issues. Ambassador Dr. Zafar Iqbal expressed his gratitude at the signing of the MoU and reaffirmed his continued support for closer people-to-people relations between Pakistan and Kuwait including between the think-tanks. He also lauded the Recon-

naissance Research Centre and ISSI for working together to pursue new avenues of cooperation. The MoU marks a vital step forward in strengthening closer collaboration between Pakistan and Kuwait, particularly in the academic, research and think-tanks domains. The central element of the MoU is the exchange of officials and experts for the purposes of research, field study, professional training, exchange of views, and sharing of experience in the areas of common interest. Joint scientific research, events, and exchange of publications will also constitute part of the agreed framework of cooperation.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER	
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Pakistan and Italy reaffirm strong bilateral partnership

Senator Sarmad Ali thanked Italian Ambassador for her support and emphasized the importance of parliamentary exchanges in promoting closer cooperation. He expressed optimism that sustained interaction between the two Friendship Groups would continue to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy and contribute to an enduring Pakistan-Italy partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, reaffirmed today the warm and cooperative relations between Pakistan and Italy, emphasizing that the partnership is rooted in mutual respect and expanding collaboration. He made these remarks at a luncheon hosted in honor of the Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, Mrs. Marilina Armellini, by Senator Sarmad Ali, Chairman of the Pakistan-Italy Parliamentary Friendship Group, in Islamabad. Chairman Senate noted that Italy remains one of Pakistan's largest trading partners within the European Union, underscoring the importance of strengthening economic and political linkages. He highlighted the role of the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in Italy, which continues to serve as a vital bridge between the two nations. The Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan expressed appreciation for the work of the Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the parliaments of both countries. Conveying the greetings of Ms. Sara Ferrari, Chairperson of the Italy-Pakistan Friendship Group in the Italian Parliament, she expressed hope that Ms. Ferrari will be visiting Pakistan soon. Noting that the Senate Chairman and Senate delegations had visited Italy twice in the last year, she voiced confidence that members of the Italian Parliament and Senate would reciprocate such engagements to further deepen bilateral ties. Senator Sarmad Ali, in his remarks, thanked the Ambassador for her support and emphasized the importance of parliamentary exchanges in promoting closer cooperation. He expressed optimism that sustained interaction between the two Friendship Groups would continue to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy and contribute to an enduring Pakistan-Italy partnership. The luncheon was attended, among others, by the Federal Law Minister Senator Azam Nazir Tarrar, Minister of State for Law Barrister Aqeel Malik, MNA Syed Naveed Qamar, Senator Shahadat Awan, and Advisor to Chairman Senate & Ambassador ISC Misbah Khar.



Govt unveils national resilience plan

ISLAMABAD:The federal government has begun shaping a new National Resilience Plan 2025-2026 to better prepare Pakistan for the next monsoon season, aiming to reduce the destruction caused by floods and other natural disasters. At a meeting in Islamabad on Thursday, Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik agreed on a roadmap to strengthen disaster preparedness, response, and recovery mechanisms. "The National Resilience Plan must be

outcome-focused, with clear strategies to reduce the losses resulting from such calamities—whether in terms of human lives, infrastructure, crops, or livestock," Dr. Malik said, stressing the need for tangible results for vulnerable communities. The NDMA chairman underscored the importance of mapping Pakistan's most vulnerable regions and tailoring disaster readiness to local risks. "Floods, cloudbursts, glacial melt, GLOFs (glacial lake outburst floods), and landslides all require different responses. Preparing for these localized risks is essential for building resilience," Lt. Gen. Malik noted. Pakistan has faced repeated

devastation from extreme weather in recent years, most notably the catastrophic 2022 floods, which displaced millions and caused billions in damage. Officials say the upcoming plan seeks to avoid a repeat by identifying high-risk areas, integrating scattered response systems, and ensuring faster, more coordinated relief operations. Dr. Malik also acknowledged weaknesses in the current system, calling it fragmented. "It requires integration into a single, streamlined framework that is quick, coordinated, and effective," he said, reaffirming the government's commitment to working closely with NDMA and other stakeholders.—APP

Future of Pakistan belongs to its youth: Mashhood

ISLAMABAD :The National Youth Summit 2025 was held on Thursday at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in Islamabad. The event was organized by Act International in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) under the theme "Youth Action, Global Impact." Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, while addressing the summit as chief guest, said that Pakistan's progress and global standing depend on the strength and determination of its youth. He declared that "We must provide our youth an environment where their future can flourish as the future of Pakistan, and indeed the world, belongs to its youth." He emphasized that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government is utilizing all available resources for youth empowerment. He lauded the participation of young leaders from across Pakistan — including Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan — and praised their determination, calling it "commendable." Highlighting the govt's commitment to merit, Mashhood recalled that in the past the Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif eliminated the "booti mafia" and nepotism culture in Punjab, enabling talented students to succeed. "A girl from Yazman topped her exams despite being the first in her family to study beyond matriculation. This is what happens when a fair system supports talent," he noted. He further underlined Pakistan's recognition on the international stage, referring to the recent defense agreement with Saudi Arabia. "This is a positive development, and protecting Saudi Arabia is now our responsibility," he remarked. The summit featured a Training of Trainers (ToT) supported by UNFPA and Canada, where 92 members of the National Youth Council were trained in leadership, climate action, health, and gender equality. Sessions also included a debate on "Climate Justice and Resilience," a panel on "Life Skills and Reproductive Health Education," and creative performances highlighting youth aspirations. Mubashir Banuri, CEO of Act International, shared that his organization has reached over 4.6 million individuals, trained 3,000 teachers, supported 34,000 youth through helplines.—APP

Soya, palm oil imports grew 92.34% & 29.14%

ISLAMABAD:Edible oil imports, including soya bean and palm, into the country during the first two months of the current financial year grew by 92.43 per cent and 29.14 per cent, respectively as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-August, 2025, 609,996 metric tons of palm oil worth \$639.629 million were imported as compared to the imports of 529,621 metric tons valued at \$495.291 million of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Meanwhile, 39,039 metric tons of soya bean oil costing \$42.738 million were also imported in order to fulfill the local requirements of vegetable ghee and cooking, as against the import of 22,960 metric tons worth of \$22.210 million of the same period of the last year. However, sugar imports in the last two months of the current financial year decreased by 19.48 per cent as 559 metric tons of sugar valued at \$571,000 were imported as compared to the imports of 696 metric tons valued at \$709,000 of the same period of the last year.—APP

PTA hosts community-centered connectivity workshop

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) organized a two-day workshop on Community-Centered Connectivity (CCC) Chairman PTA Major General (R) Hafeez ur Rehman reviewed the mock CCC models developed by participants. According to a news release, the Chairman emphasized that digital access and inclusion remain central to PTA's vision, and CCC offers an innovative and sustainable solution to "connect the unconnected." Based on the training content and tools, workshop participants developed four CCC solution models tailored for Pakistan, designed to be built, operated, and sustained by local communities. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the ISOC and the GDIP. The workshop was attended by representatives from MoIT&T, PTA, FAB, USE, NRSP, SRSP, Community Development Foundation, as well as telecom operators.—APP

Aleem assures support for business friendly environment

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to upgrading the road network across the country, terming it vital for the masses and the business community. He said this while addressing an impressive ceremony titled "A Night of Celebration" held in honour of renowned business personality and newly elected President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood. The event was hosted by Chaudhry Abdul Rauf, Chairman Fair Deal Group of Companies. Highlighting major road projects, the Minister said that the Sukkur-Hyderabad

and Hyderabad-Karachi Motorway, the country's most important motorway, will soon be inaugurated this year and is expected to be fully completed within two years. He said this project will connect Sukkur with Karachi Port, playing a pivotal role in boosting the national economy. He also informed that the N-25 (Karachi-Quetta) project is under construction and will be completed soon. He announced that another strategic project from Mansehra to Kaghan, Naran, and Babusar Top is under consideration, to be built on a motorway pattern, serving as an alternate to the Karakoram Highway. He further disclosed that work on the

Sialkot-Kharian-Rawalpindi Motorway is about to begin, which will reduce the Lahore-Islamabad distance by 100 kilometers, cutting travel time to just two and a half hours. Similarly, a Kasur-Lahore-Okara-Sahiwal road link connected with the Karachi Motorway is also being considered. Abdul Aleem Khan said that Pakistan is blessed with immense opportunities and resources, and despite challenges, the nation has the resilience to bring the country back on the path of progress. He assured the business community of his full support, pledging to act as their advocate for ensuring a business-friendly environment.—DNA

NUML signs strategic MoUs to foster sustainable urban uplift

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages (NUML) successfully hosted a Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signing ceremony, bringing together leading organizations from Pakistan's real estate, planning, and financial sectors to strengthen academia-industry linkages for sustainable community development. Director General NUML, Brig Nadeem Asghar (Retd), signed the MoUs on behalf of the university with eminent leaders of the real estate industry. The distinguished signatories included Dr. Ayesha Khan, CEO of the Akhter Hameed Khan Foundation (AHKF); Mr. Muhammad Ejaz, CEO of Arif Habib Dolmen REIT Management Limited (AHDRL); Ch. Naeem Qamar, CEO of The Garden Residence; Dr. Ghulam Sarwar Sandhu, Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Council of Urban Planners; Mr. Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman of Zahid Latif Khan Securities (Pvt.) Ltd. and ZLK Islamic Financial Services (ZLKIFS); and Mr. Sagheer Mushtaq, CEO of ISE Tower REIT Management Company Limited. Speaking on the occasion, Rector NUML, Maj Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M) (retd) emphasized that these partnerships are a step towards building sustainable, affordable, and inclusive housing while promoting resilient cities in Pakistan. He noted that NUML is committed to providing knowledge inputs, research forums, and the innovative energy of young minds, while industry partners will reciprocate by offering logistical support, sponsorships, and platforms for advocacy and knowledge sharing. He stressed that while academia and industry alone cannot bring large-scale impact, collective efforts can achieve meaningful and lasting change. The Rector also highlighted NUML's dedicated think tank, the Pakistan Society for Real Estate Studies (PRES), which has been established with

greater industry participation than academia to foster deeper engagement and collaboration. PRES serves as a bridge between thought and practice, advancing research-based policy dialogues, capacity-building, and innovative solutions to address Pakistan's urban challenges. He further expressed op-

timism that forthcoming initiatives such as the International Conference on Real Estate (ICRE) and the development of policy papers under NUML and PRES will act as torchbearers for inclusive, sustainable, and resilient cities, ensuring safe and prosperous living for future generations.



Briefs

Speeding van
overtakes
near Chakri
road

ISLAMABAD: Nine people were injured when a speeding van overturned near Chakri Road in Rawalpindi on Thursday morning. According to rescue officials, the driver lost control of the vehicle due to overspeeding and flipped over, causing injuries to all passengers on board, a private news channel reported. The injured were shifted to a nearby hospital, where some are reported to be in serious condition. Rescue officials said four of the injured were treated on the spot, while the other five were shifted to a nearby hospital—APP

Expert calls
for stronger
lung cancer
awareness

ISLAMABAD: Expert marking World Lung Cancer Day stressed the importance of combating smoking and environmental hazards, with lung cancer impacting 65 million people globally and ranking as the third most common cancer. A leading pulmonologist, Prof. Dr. Faisal Asad, in an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, emphasized the urgent need for public awareness about the causes and prevention of lung cancer. Every year on September 25, World Lung Day is observed as an important reminder of the need to protect and care for our lung health. Aimed at building a future with healthier lungs, the day brings together individuals, healthcare experts and organizations worldwide to raise awareness and advocate for improved strategies and policies for the prevention and control of lung diseases, he explained. He highlighted that smoking remains the leading risk factor, but environmental pollution and occupational exposure to harmful substances also significantly contribute to the rising number of lung cancer cases. Dr. Faisal particularly stressed the importance of educating the public, especially the youth, about the long-term health impacts of smoking and poor air quality.—APP

BGI offers 500
Genomics,
Biotechnology
training

ISLAMABAD: The Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI) has announced 500 training scholarships for Pakistani experts in genomics and biotechnology, marking a new frontier in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that extends cooperation beyond infrastructure into health, food security, and advanced science. According to a statement from the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, during his visit to BGI headquarters in Guangzhou, hailed the initiative as a milestone for Pakistan's development, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday.—APP

Romina, Balochistan CM vow
united action on climate change

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, and the Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam have agreed to accelerate the climate agenda through new projects and closer cooperation between provinces and the federal government. During a meeting in Islamabad, the two sides discussed Pakistan's evolving climate priorities and the launch of initiatives supported by international climate financing mechanisms. The talks focused on aligning federal and provincial efforts to strengthen climate resilience, improve environmental governance, and tap resources from institutions such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Green Climate Fund. Both officials underlined the urgency of large-scale projects addressing climate adaptation, renewable energy, sustainable water management, and nature-based solutions, alongside programs designed to empower communities and improve livelihoods. Alam reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to providing provinces with technical and institutional support to secure international climate funding, stressing that timely engagement with donors and strong project design would be key to unlocking resources and delivering

Ali Pervaiz hosts
PARCO board members

Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz reiterated the government's resolve to address challenges facing the petroleum sector, while the Board members acknowledged his leadership and support in driving reforms and sectoral development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, hosted a dinner in Islamabad in the honor of Board of Directors of Pak-Arab Refinery Limited (PARCO). The gathering reflected the government's commitment to fostering collaboration with the energy sector and advancing Pakistan's refining and petroleum industry. The event, held to welcome the foreign board members from Mubadala Energy, was attended by a gathering of high-profile dignitaries, including Federal Ministers, Members of Parliament, senior officials from the Petroleum Division, and other distinguished guests from the energy sector. Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz reiterated the government's resolve to address challenges facing the petroleum sector, while the Board members acknowledged his leadership and support in driving reforms and sectoral development. The dinner was attended by Mr. Momin Agha,



Chairman PARCO Board and Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division); along with other PARCO Board members Mr. Adnan Omar Bu Fateem, Vice Chairman

PARCO Board and Chief Operating Officer, Mubadala Energy; Dr. Mikael Berthod, Head of Joint Venture Management, Refining & Business Development, OMV

Refining & Marketing MEA, Abu Dhabi; Mr. Zayed Al Mazrouei and Mr. Salem Al-Braiki, Representatives of Mubadala Energy; as well as Mr. Irteza Ali Qureshi, Manag-

ing Director, PARCO, and other dignitaries. The event provided a platform to reinforce strong partnerships and align on shared priorities for Pakistan's energy future.

Minister unveils
blue economy plans

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Thursday called for urgent international efforts to protect oceans, warning that the world's seas are under mounting pressure from climate change, pollution, and overuse. In a message marking World Maritime Day, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said oceans stand at a "pivotal point" and must be safeguarded as vital to environmental sustainability, economic growth, and global security. The 2025 World Maritime Day theme, "Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity," highlights the shipping industry's responsibility to ensure sustainable practices while recognizing the economic and climate benefits oceans provide. "Our oceans are not limitless; every action on land echoes in the sea," the minister said, urging governments, industries, scientists, and citizens to share responsibility for protecting marine ecosystems. Minister Chaudhry cited plastic waste, untreated effluents, sea-level rise, and ocean acid-

ification as key threats to marine life and coastal communities. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to international maritime and climate agreements, pointing to mangrove restoration and wetland conservation projects as part of national adaptation efforts. He also praised technological advances in maritime logistics, digital monitoring, and renewable ocean energy, describing them as essential to building a "green blue economy." The minister said Pakistan's location along the Arabian Sea gave it both "opportunities and responsibilities" to balance development with conservation. He called for stronger regional cooperation, scientific research, and public awareness campaigns to tackle maritime challenges. Minister Chaudhry further stressed inclusive participation in the sector, urging greater involvement of youth, women, and local communities. "Together, we can protect our oceans for future generations while harnessing their potential for development," he said, calling for deeper international partnerships, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. Turning

to national initiatives, the minister announced that Pakistan Maritime Week would be held from November 1 to 7, 2025, bringing together stakeholders to showcase the country's maritime potential. He also unveiled ambitious projects for the sector, including making the Gaddani Ship Recycling Yards compliant with the Hong Kong Convention, setting up an Artificial Intelligence Maritime Secretariat (AIMS), and digitizing seaport operations. He said the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation's fleet is to expand to 30 vessels within a year, while maritime incubators, the country's first solar-powered fishing boat, and digital pollution monitoring systems at Karachi Port will also be introduced. "Scientific surveys will be carried out in the Exclusive Economic Zone, and Gwadar Port and Free Zone will be developed in line with International Maritime Organization standards," he added. Junaid Anwar Chaudhry concluded by paying tribute to seafarers, fishermen, scientists, environmentalists, port and terminal operators, and those involved in various maritime-related jobs.

Parking issue at Pak
Secretariat resolved

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's Pak Secretariat has long struggled with a lack of proper parking space for government employees and visitors and after years of complaints and frequent traffic congestion, the district administration, Capital Development Authority (CDA), and traffic police have jointly implemented a new strategy that has eased the situation. The initiative includes a valet service, designated parking sheds, and stricter enforcement against illegal parking. For many years, employees and visitors at the Secretariat faced difficulties due to inadequate parking facilities. Cars were often parked along the roads, in front of office blocks, and even on pedestrian walkways, creating serious hurdles for movement. The shortage of proper parking not only inconvenienced staff but also led to frequent traffic jams inside the Secretariat premises. The district administration, in collaboration with the CDA and traffic police, introduced a detailed plan to address the problem. A valet service has been launched across the Secretariat, ensuring that vehicles are parked systematically in designated spots. The service is now operational and has been receiving positive response from government staff. To enforce the new system, the traffic police have deployed

additional personnel in and around the Secretariat. Their task is to keep an eye on vehicles, ensure smooth entry and exit, and take prompt action against illegal parking. In addition, lifters are being used to remove cars parked in unauthorized places. Officials have clarified that the operation applies equally to all vehicles, regardless of department or rank. The Assistant Commissioner for the Secretariat has been tasked with monitoring parking arrangements on a daily basis. This step is intended to ensure that the new plan is not only implemented but also sustained in the long run. District officials explained that each block now has space allocated for vehicle sheds, and these areas are the only authorized parking points. Authorities have further announced that if any vehicle is found parked outside the designated sheds, it will be towed and shifted to the police station. This measure, they say, is necessary to discourage violations and maintain order. One of the key benefits of the new parking scheme is that pedestrian movement has improved. Earlier, footpaths and walking routes were often blocked by vehicles, forcing staff and visitors to walk on the roads. With the new system, footpaths have been cleared, making movement safer and more convenient.

HEC announces
mandatory professional
certifications

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced a landmark initiative to enhance the employability of Pakistani graduates by making professional internships and industry-relevant certifications a mandatory part of all undergraduate degree programmes. This policy, which builds on the Undergraduate Education Policy 2023, is designed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and the practical skills required by today's job market. The directive, issued to all public and private universities and degree awarding institutions, emphasizes the critical importance of equipping students with hands-on experience and globally recognized competencies. All undergraduate programmes will now require a minimum of three credit hours of supervised internship. Universities have been encouraged to forge formal partnerships with corporate entities, SMEs, and public sector organizations to secure meaningful placements that are directly relevant to students' fields of study. The advisory also promotes leveraging online internship platforms and remote working opportunities to adapt to evolving market trends. In addition to internships, the new policy advises universities to integrate mandatory, industry-relevant certifications into their curricula. These certifications, which can be earned through recognized national and international bodies, are intended to provide students with job-ready skills.

Universities have also been advised to accept credit hours for certain certifications, provided they align with the course learning outcomes and are from a credible and recognized body. This move incentivizes students to pursue additional professional development and allows their certifications to count towards their academic progression. Specifically for Computer Science and IT programmes, international certifications equivalent to three credit hours may be used to replace elective courses. HEC's initiative underscores a national commitment to fostering a skilled workforce capable of competing on both national and international stages. By formalizing the link between education and industry, HEC aims to ensure that every Pakistani graduate is well-prepared to meet the demands of a dynamic global economy.—DNA

Ombudsman
takes notice
of rising stray
dog attacks in
Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has taken suo motu notice of the growing number of stray dogs in the federal capital, following media reports and public complaints about increasing attacks, particularly on children and senior citizens. The Ombudsman observed that negligence on the part of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Municipal Corporation of Islamabad (MCI) has resulted in a worsening situation, with incidents of dog bites becoming a serious concern. He directed the CDA and MCI to ensure full implementation of the policy developed by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) to curb the stray dog population. According to details, the Ombudsman's Secretariat received numerous complaints from residents regarding stray dogs in residential areas, parks, hospitals, and markets. Taking notice of these reports, the Ombudsman instructed the concerned authorities to find an urgent and effective solution.—APP

Fogging drive
expands across
Islamabad
to eliminate
dengue

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has intensified its anti-dengue campaign, carrying out fogging operations in different neighborhoods to prevent the spread of the mosquito-borne virus. The drive is being implemented in phases, with teams focusing on areas where dengue risk is higher due to stagnant water and thick vegetation. The latest round of fogging has covered residential sectors including G-8 and G-9, where field teams moved street by street to ensure proper spraying. Officials said the campaign is not limited to one part of the city and will gradually be extended to all urban and suburban zones. Health department representatives explained that the fogging operation is designed to eliminate adult mosquitoes before they multiply further. They added that this effort is part of a broader strategy that also includes awareness sessions.—APP

Lost & Found

My original allotment letter of my house no 141, Bahria Town Phase 3, Street No 5, which was lost, has been found. Hamidun Nisa Wife of Navid Iqbal 0300-8551810

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Silent epidemic among reproductive-aged women

OSHAZ FATIMA

POLYCYSTIC ovary syndrome is not a rare diagnosis confined to academic clinics. It is one of the most common endocrine disorders affecting reproductive aged women worldwide and imposes a profound toll on physical health, mental wellbeing, and social opportunity. Global meta analyses estimate prevalence between 5 and 12 percent depending on the diagnostic criteria used, translating into tens of millions of affected women. Even conservative estimates note that up to 70 percent of these women remain undiagnosed, allowing a treatable condition to progress into chronic disability. Pakistan sits at the center of this crisis. Clinic and community based studies repeatedly report prevalence rates far higher than global averages. While worldwide prevalence ranges between 5 and 12 percent, Pakistani hospital based studies have documented prevalence as high as 21 to 30 percent. In different provinces, figures fluctuate widely but often cluster in the high teens to over thirty percent. Specialty infertility clinics show that PCOS is the leading cause of anovulatory infertility in women presenting for care. These numbers are reinforced by rising trends in obesity, insulin resistance, menstrual irregularity and psychological distress, all of which track closely with PCOS. Several forces explain why the condition is both common and under recognised in Pakistan. South Asian women are genetically predisposed to insulin resistance and central obesity, and urbanisation, dietary westernisation and sedentary lifestyles magnify this risk. South Asian women also develop type 2 diabetes four to seven years earlier than women of European ancestry, and often at lower body mass indices. Around 50 to 70 percent of women with PCOS show insulin resistance. Despite this, cultural attitudes discourage open discussion of reproductive symptoms such as irregular menstruation or hirsutism. Surveys suggest more than 60 percent of Pakistani women first resort to traditional remedies before consulting a doctor for reproductive complaints. Primary care services do not routinely screen for menstrual disorders, and frontline clinicians are often not well trained in applying international diagnostic criteria. Consequently, women often present late, usually when infertility or overt metabolic disease emerges. Diagnosing PCOS is conceptually straightforward but operationally difficult. Criteria require combinations of menstrual irregularity, hyperandrogenism and ovarian morphology. Yet there is variation between guideline

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



sets, and differences in clinician interpretation. Ultrasound and biochemical testing are unevenly available, especially outside urban centers. As a result, prevalence estimates vary depending on whether studies use self reported surveys, biochemical screening or ultrasound criteria. Treatment is effective but unevenly distributed. Lifestyle modification is the foundation; weight loss and physical activity can restore ovulatory cycles and improve metabolic outcomes. Metformin enhances insulin sensitivity, regulates cycles and facilitates ovulation. PCOS is also under researched on a global scale. Although described decades ago, research has been concentrated on reproductive outcomes in high income countries. Few large scale longitudinal studies from low and middle income nations have mapped the long term metabolic and cardiovascular sequelae of PCOS. This is a critical gap because the South Asian phenotype differs markedly from that of women of European descent. The way forward requires multipronged public health strategies. Primary care providers should be trained in pragmatic diagnostic algorithms that combine clinical features with affordable tests. School based education about menstrual health can reduce stigma and encourage timely help seeking. Training for general practitioners and gynaecologists must include early detection of metabolic risks and integration of mental health support. Policy makers should treat PCOS not merely as an individual reproductive disorder but as a significant contributor to the burden of non communicable disease. Population wide interventions to reduce obesity and improve nutrition will reduce PCOS morbidity. Fertility services need to be made affordable and equitably accessible. Research efforts within Pakistan must expand. Standardised prevalence studies are needed to provide reliable national data. Prospective cohorts following adolescents into adulthood could illuminate the interaction between genetics and environment. Health systems research can identify practical models to deliver integrated care at the primary care level. Community engagement is essential to dismantle cultural taboos. Partnerships with schools and women's organisations can spread the message that menstrual irregularity is a medical issue that warrants care. When diagnosis and treatment are delivered early, outcomes improve dramatically. Regular cycles, improved fertility and better metabolic profiles are achievable. Just as importantly, the validation of women's symptoms reduces psychological distress and restores dignity. Reframing PCOS as a common, treatable medical condition rather than a private source of shame will reduce stigma, encourage healthcare utilisation and allow health systems to allocate resources appropriately. Failing to act perpetuates a quiet epidemic that undermines individual lives and national health. The evidence base is already strong enough to justify national strategies that combine prevention, detection and treatment. Pakistan cannot afford to ignore this hidden burden any longer.

Trump's UNGA Speech Collapses Before a Defiant World

Qamar Bashir



This shift was not sudden; it was the culmination of years of resentment. Trump's doctrine of "America First" had alienated allies, embittered partners, and emboldened adversaries. By weaponizing tariffs, sanctioning friend and foe alike, and dismantling international agreements, Washington had eroded the very leverage it once wielded. Countries that once tolerated American dominance out of necessity now saw little reason to comply. As one European delegate noted privately, "When the US withdraws, others rush in

THE United Nations General Assembly this year became the stage for one of the most dramatic reversals of American diplomatic influence in modern memory. Sponsored jointly by Saudi Arabia and France, the extraordinary emergency conference convened to debate Israel's naked, blatant, and cruel aggression on Gaza and the West Bank. For decades, the United States, with its vast economic, military, and diplomatic clout, had compelled nations to fall in line—whether by promises of aid, threats of sanctions, or pressure through investment and trade. But this time, before the eyes of the world, Washington's narrative failed. The global mood was unmistakable. Israel's policies of ethnic cleansing, occupation, and near-genocidal assault on the Palestinian people were denounced with unprecedented unity. Trump, standing at the podium, echoed Benjamin Netanyahu's language of "security" and "self-defense," but those words fell flat. What was once the unchallenged script for Western allies now sounded hollow, archaic, and dangerous. Far from rallying behind the United States, the overwhelming majority of nations broke away, defiantly recognizing Palestine as a sovereign state and announcing they would deal with it directly in bilateral and multilateral forums. This was not only a symbolic rebuke but also a practical shift: future investment, aid, and diplomatic engagement would now flow through Palestinian authorities, bypassing Israel. What made the session even more remarkable was that not a single major leader spoke in favor of the United States or Israel. From Brazil's Lula da Silva to Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, from Jordan's King Abdullah II to France's Emmanuel Macron, from Australia's Anthony Albanese to Britain's Keir Starmer, from Canada's Mark Carney to South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa, and from South Korea's Lee Jae-myung to leaders across Asia, Africa, and Latin America—the verdict was universal. Israel's narrative, supported and promoted by Trump, had collapsed. The applause in the chamber made clear that the United States, for the first time in UN history, stood alone. Trump did not hide his contempt. He lashed out not only at the leaders present but at the institution itself. Climate change, he declared, was the "greatest con job in history," dismissing decades of scientific evidence on rising seas, melting glaciers, intensifying hurricanes, and the planetary threat of unchecked emissions. Gasps rippled through the assembly as he accused the UN of

peddling fear and lies. He mocked international agreements on climate, insisting that America would burn coal, drill oil, and expand nuclear power without apology. To many, it was more than denial—it was an open invitation to environmental catastrophe. Nor did Trump stop at Gaza or climate change. He derided the United Nations as useless, ineffective, and irrelevant. He promised to pull U.S. representatives out of key agencies, and he vowed to slash funding—that, for decades, Washington had leveraged as its ultimate instrument of control. But instead of weakening the UN, Trump's threat spurred others into action. Within hours, China, the European Union, and several emerging economies pledged to fill the financial gap, signaling that they would seize the leadership America was relinquishing. It was a symbolic passing of the torch: power, influence, and responsibility were no longer to be monopolized by Washington. For Trump, the United States remained the indispensable nation. He warned that no country could survive without its blessing, invoking America's military might and economic reach. Yet his words rang hollow against the backdrop of near-total isolation. In the past, weaker nations might have bowed to U.S. pressure, clinging to trade deals or fearing the loss of aid. But now, emboldened by collective strength, they no longer needed to. The unifying cause of Palestine's recognition had given the world a new confidence. America's threats sounded less like the dictates of a superpower and more like the frustrated cries of a bully whose grip was slipping. This shift was not sudden; it was the culmination of years of resentment. Trump's doctrine of "America First" had alienated allies, embittered partners, and emboldened adversaries. By weaponizing tariffs, sanctioning friend and foe alike, and dismantling international agreements, Washington had eroded the very leverage it once wielded. Countries that once tolerated American dominance out of necessity now saw little reason to comply. As one European delegate noted privately, "When the U.S. withdraws, others rush in. They may have forgotten, but we have not." The recognition of Palestine marked a decisive moment. It was not simply a diplomatic statement; it was a strategic realignment. Humanitarian aid would bypass Israel. Sanctions would be imposed directly on Tel Aviv. Military sales would be withheld. Pension funds and sovereign wealth investments would be divested. These measures, adopt-

ed with overwhelming consensus, marked the first time Israel faced comprehensive, global punitive action. For decades, its occupation had been shielded by U.S. vetoes and Western complicity. Now, the shield was shattered. Trump, furious, accused the assembly of hypocrisy and cowardice. He mocked the idea of collective will, insisting that only the United States could lead. But the chamber had already moved on. Leaders from every continent had made clear that the era of American dictates was over. The collective will of nations would no longer bow to one country's interest. The loudest message of the day was not in the words of presidents or prime ministers but in the silence that followed Trump's speech—an emptiness where once applause would have echoed. Perhaps the greatest irony is that America's own power remains immense. Militarily, economically, technologically, it still towers over much of the world. But power without legitimacy is fragile. Influence without trust is fleeting. Respect cannot be commanded by force alone. Those nations that are weak or dependent may still flatter America out of fear, but those that are strong from within—confident, stable, and united—see no reason to follow. They do not mistake America's bluster for leadership. What was witnessed at the UNGA was not just a rejection of a speech; it was the exposure of a failing doctrine. The belief that America could dictate terms, ignore science, crush weaker nations, and shield Israel indefinitely has collapsed. The world has spoken, not in whispers but in unison, and it has chosen a different path—one of defiance against aggression, of recognition for Palestine, of collective resistance to unilateralism. The United States, under Trump, has forgotten the wisdom of humility, gratitude, and forgiveness. A truly strong nation does not alienate the world; it unites it. A truly great power does not cling to dominance; it earns respect through fairness and justice. By abandoning these principles, America has not only lost leverage but has endangered its own place in history. The verdict from the UN General Assembly is clear: the world will no longer be dictated to by a single power, no matter how mighty. The future will be shaped not by one nation's arrogance but by the collective will of many.

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

A Scattered Ummah and the Ruthless Python

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The attack upon Iran and Qatar is a warning. Tomorrow it may be another land, another people, until the fire reaches every doorstep. The Qur'an and the Sunnah do not leave us without guidance. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He does not oppress him, nor does he abandon him, nor does he humiliate him" (Sahih Muslim)

ALLAH, the Creator of all worlds, fashioned every living being with a nature that defines its essence. The lion hunts, the dove soothes, the bee labors, and the python strikes. Each follows the course carved by its Creator, never departing from the law of nature placed within. Yet, within creation, there are moments when living beings act against what seems to be their immediate instinct, but never against the truth of their essence. Among the creatures that mankind has feared most stands the python or dragon, a beast of destruction, devouring those around it. To liken Israel to such a dragon is not exaggeration but a reflection of its character. It seeks to harm, to devour, to swallow its neighbors, never finding satisfaction in conquest, never content in blood. The attack upon Iran and then upon Qatar is not an isolated act of violence; it is a message writ in fire to the entire Muslim Ummah. It declares that Israel, in its nature, cannot belong to anyone, cannot be molded to peace, cannot be trusted with coexistence. It is the dragon that will never share the sky but seeks to burn all who dwell beneath it. The Qur'an, revealed in the pure tongue of Arabic, is explicit in its warning regarding those who transgressed the covenant of Allah. "You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity toward the believers [to be] the Jews and those who associate others with Allah" (Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:82). This was not revealed in a foreign tongue but in the mother language of the Arabs, that they may understand with clarity. And yet, how strange it is that the very custodians of that tongue seem to distance themselves from the decrees of their own Holy Book.

It pierces the heart to witness the scattered state of the Arabs. Their oil, their wealth, their palaces may shine, but their unity is dust. How can a nation, upon which Allah bestowed the Qur'an, turn away from the command of that Book? The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "The believers, in their mutual kindness, compassion, and sympathy, are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim). Yet today, while one limb burns in Gaza, another bleeds in Lebanon, and another is pierced in Syria, the rest slumber in comfort, as if severed from the body itself. The dragon strikes Iran, the dragon strikes Qatar, and the silence of Arabia echoes louder than the cries of the oppressed. Is this silence not a betrayal of the command of Allah? He says: "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you—when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers" (Surah Aal-e-Imran, 3:103). What greater division than this, that while the Ummah is devoured, those with power and wealth turn their faces away? One must ask: do they not hear? Do they not remember? The Qur'an came to them first, the verses rang in their streets, their ancestors carried the message to the corners of the earth. And yet, when the hour demands steadfastness, they falter. If the Arabs do not tremble at the wounds of their brethren, have they not lost the very heartbeat of that body? Israel, the dragon, thrives on this disunity. It knows that a divided Ummah cannot resist. It

knows that while one state pursues trade, another seeks security, and another hides behind silence, its fire can consume each in turn. The lesson of history is plain: when the wolf comes, the scattered flock falls, but when united, even the lion retreats. Why then do the Arabs not unite upon the verses of the Qur'an? Allah has already decreed: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:11). If they remain scattered, their fate will not change. The attack upon Iran and Qatar is a warning. Tomorrow it may be another land, another people, until the fire reaches every doorstep. The Qur'an and the Sunnah do not leave us without guidance. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. He does not oppress him, nor does he abandon him, nor does he humiliate him" (Sahih Muslim). What greater humiliation than to stand aside while one's brother is swallowed by the dragon? This is not the time for silence, nor for diplomacy draped in fear. This is the time for the Ummah to look back into the Qur'an, to revive the commands of Allah, and to stand as one body once more. If not, the dragon shall not only burn the fields of others, but in its hunger it shall consume those who believed they were safe behind walls of gold. Allah's promise is true: "And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance" (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:120). Let the Arabs take heed, for the Qur'an is not merely to be recited in melody but to be lived in action. The time has come to awaken, to remember, and to unite before the fire grows beyond all control.

Briefs

Energy
circular debt
elimination...

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Independent Power Producers (IPPs).” Acknowledging the financial sector’s contribution, the prime minister praised Zafar Masood, President of the Bank of Punjab, as well as teams from Meezan Bank, Habib Bank, and other commercial banks for their pivotal support. He also commended the State Bank of Pakistan and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for facilitating the plan’s execution. The Prime Minister underscored that the initiative enjoyed the “behind-the-scenes support” of Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, which strengthened the government’s reform drive. “This is Team Pakistan’s success,” he stressed, adding that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had also acknowledged Pakistan’s reform progress. “Yesterday, I met the IMF Managing Director, who praised Pakistan’s commitment and speed of implementation. This is unprecedented recognition,” he said. The Prime Minister urged all stakeholders to continue working with “courage and confidence” to overcome challenges in the energy sector. “Our macroeconomic indicators, business climate, and reforms are receiving international recognition. If we maintain this momentum, Pakistan will surely emerge from its difficulties,” he concluded. The Federal Ministers for Power, Petroleum, and Advisors on Privatization were also present at the signing ceremony. Representatives of banks from COCPPA, Meezan Bank, and Habib Bank, formally endorsed the agreement on behalf of the financial sector.

Asia Cup
crescendo:
it’s India...

FROM PAGE 01

Despite a commendable bowling performance, the Bangladesh batsmen struggled to build partnerships against a charged-up Pakistani attack. Their innings ultimately faltered, leading to a comfortable win for Pakistan and securing their spot in the final alongside India. With India already securing their final berth earlier in the week, cricket fans across the globe will now witness the ultimate face-off for the continental title. The two teams have already met twice in the tournament, with India emerging victorious in both encounters. All eyes now turn to Sunday, where the rivalry will finally culminate in a grand finale. Earlier, Pakistan managed to post a modest target of 136 runs for Bangladesh. Taskin Ahmed returned economical bowling figures of 3/28 and helped Bangladesh curtail Pakistan to a below-par total in the high-stakes match. Bangladesh’s stand-in captain Jaker Ali’s decision to field first paid dividends as his team’s bowling unit restricted Pakistan to 135/8 in 20 overs.

Fmr French
President
Sarkozy...

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law, and for the trust one can have in the justice system,” he told reporters. “If they absolutely want me to sleep in jail, I will sleep in jail, but with my head held high,” he said, adding that he was innocent and that the ruling was scandalous. Sarkozy was found guilty of criminal conspiracy over efforts by close aides to procure funds for his 2007 presidential bid from Libya during the rule of late dictator Muammar Gaddafi. He was acquitted by the Paris court of all other charges, including corruption and receiving illegal campaign financing. However, the jail sentence is enforceable immediately, with the judge saying Sarkozy would have just a short period to put his affairs in order before prosecutors call on him to head to jail. That should happen within a month. Sarkozy, who has always denied the charges, was accused of making a deal with Gaddafi in 2005.

Excellent performance of
Interior Minister Naqvi

Equally significant is the Interior Minister's role in maintaining law and order. Recognizing that safety is a fundamental requirement for any modern city, he has strengthened policing, introduced innovative security measures, and ensured swift action against crime

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The capital of Pakistan, holds a unique place as the administrative, cultural and beautiful heart of the nation. In recent times, its transformation into a modern, liveable, and secure city has been credited to the dynamic leadership and excellent performance of Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi. His vision, commitment, and tireless efforts have not only uplifted the physical and civic infrastructure of Islamabad but also ensured an environment of law and order that makes the capital one of the safest in the region. Under his dynamic Islamabad has witnessed massive development projects that are reshaping the city’s image on the global stage. From modern road networks, urban beautification, improved public facilities, and smart city initiatives, to green and sustainable projects, Mohsin Naqvi has placed Islamabad on the path to becoming a world-class model capital. These developments have enhanced both the aesthetics and functionality of the city, making it more accessible, people-friendly, and aligned with international standards of urban planning. Equally significant is the Interior Minister’s role in main-



taining law and order. Recognizing that safety is a fundamental requirement for any modern city, he has strengthened policing, introduced innovative security measures, and ensured swift action against crime. His policies have

contributed to making Islamabad not only a liveable city for its residents but also an attractive destination for foreign diplomats, investors, and international visitors. The sense of security among citizens has increased, further reflecting the government’s success in building trust with the public. The Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharief has highly appreciated the excellent efforts of Mohsin Naqvi, acknowledging his excellent achievements in promoting development and ensuring safety. This recognition reflects the government’s confidence in his ability to lead Islamabad into a new era of progress and prosperity. It also demonstrates how effective leadership, guided by vision and determination, can bring visible improvements in a short span of time. Due to excellent leadership of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Islamabad stands as a model of effective governance, development and beautification. By prioritizing both development and security, he has transformed Islamabad into a city that is not only liveable and safe but also an emerging symbol of modernity and progress in the world. His efforts are paving the way for Islamabad to be recognized internationally as a model capital, one that truly reflects the aspirations of a forward-looking Pakistan.

Julián Álvarez Hat-Trick Lifts
Atlético Madrid Past Rayo

DNA

PARIS: Julian Alvarez scored a hat-trick to help Atletico Madrid snatch a thrilling 3-2 win over Rayo Vallecano in La Liga on Wednesday. The Robiblancos fell behind in the 78th minute, but Alvarez, who had opened the scoring, struck twice more in the final stages to claim three points for Diego Simeone’s side. The Argentina international helped Atletico secure only their second win from six league matches during a shaky start to the campaign. Atletico are ninth and trail league leaders Real Madrid

by nine points ahead of Saturday’s derby clash against Xabi Alonso’s side. “We needed to get three points to get confidence from winning, we’ve been playing well but because of small details we weren’t getting good results,” Alvarez told Movistar. “We have to keep working and improve some things to get on a winning run.” Alvarez, who missed a penalty in Atletico’s frustrating draw at Mallorca last weekend, opened the scoring at the Metropolitan stadium. The 25-year-old, who joined from Manchester City in 2024, volleyed home from Marcos Llorente’s looping

Two world
title fights
to headline
PFL Lyon

NEW YORK: The Professional Fighters League has announced a landmark two world title fights at the LDLC Arena in Lyon, France, on Saturday, Dec. 13. PFL Lyon will be headlined by a heavyweight main event between former Bellator champion Vadim Nemkov (18-2) and 2024 PFL heavyweight tournament champion Renan Ferreira (13-4). In the co-main event, one of the greatest female fighters of all time, Cris Cyborg (28-2) will face undefeated rising Australian contender Sara Collins (6-0) for the PFL featherweight title. The card will also showcase the 2025 PFL Europe Tournament Finals in the lightweight and bantamweight divisions, where two champions will be crowned in Lyon before a global audience. “French MMA fans have been tremendous supporters of the PFL, and we are proud to deliver a card worthy of their passion and loyalty,” PFL CEO John Martin said in a press statement recently. “On Dec. 13 at the LDLC Arena in Lyon, fans will experience some of the biggest names and most exciting matchups in the sport, a true showcase of world champions, rising stars, and hometown heroes.” Nemkov vs. Ferreira for the heavyweight belt Nemkov arrives as one of the most complete fighters in the sport, a former Bellator champion and protege of the legendary Fedor Emelianenko. With 10 knockouts and five submissions, Nemkov blends precision striking with dangerous grappling, a balance that has carried him to the top of every promotion he has entered. Ferreira, nicknamed “Problema,” is a towering heavyweight whose raw power has made him one of the most feared finishers in the division. Eleven of his 13 victories have come by knockout, most in devastating fashion. Cyborg vs. Collins for the women’s featherweight title Cyborg has been a champion in every major organization in which she has competed, with a legacy of ferocious striking and relentless pressure that has produced 23 stoppage victories. The undefeated Collins is one of the division’s most promising new talents. Collins is taking on the biggest challenge of her career. – APP

North Korea could have up to two
tonnes of highly enriched uranium

SEOUL: North Korea is believed to possess up to two tonnes of highly enriched uranium, South Korea’s unification minister said Thursday. The North has long been known to hold a “significant” amount of highly enriched uranium, the key material used to produce nuclear warheads, according to South Korea’s defence ministry. But in a rare public confirmation, South Korea’s unification minister said that “intelligence agencies estimate Pyongyang’s stockpile of highly enriched uranium - more than 90 percent pure - at up to 2,000 kilograms.” “Even at this very hour, North Korea’s

uranium centrifuges are operating at four sites,” Chung Dong-young told reporters. “Only five to six kg of plutonium is enough to build a single nuclear bomb,” said Chung, adding that 2,000 kg of highly enriched uranium, which could be reserved solely for plutonium production, would be “enough to make an enormous number of nuclear weapons”. Chung said that “stopping North Korea’s nuclear development is an urgent matter”, but argued that sanctions will not be effective and that the only solution lies in a summit between Pyongyang and Washington. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said this week that he was open to US talks provided he can keep his nuclear arsenal. North Korea, which conducted its first nuclear test in 2006 and is under rafts of UN sanctions for its banned weapons programmes, has never publicly disclosed details of its uranium enrichment facility until last September. The country is believed to operate multiple uranium enrichment facilities, Seoul’s spy agency has said, including one at its Yongbyon nuclear site, which Pyongyang purportedly decommissioned after talks – although it later reactivated the facility in 2021. – DNA

Sakhawat calls
Azerbaijan to recruit
more skilled workers
from Bangladesh

DHAKA: Labour and Employment Adviser Brigadier General (Retd) Dr M Sakhawat Hossain has made a call to Azerbaijan to recruit more skilled workers from Bangladesh, as he held bilateral meeting with the country’s Minister of Labor and Social Security Anar Aliyev in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. At the meeting, they discussed issues such as improving the living standards of Bangladeshi workers, workplace safety, visa procedures and other facilities, said a PID release today. The Labor Adviser emphasized on increasing technical cooperation to ensure the rights and benefits of Bangladeshi workers working in Azerbaijan. He also called for strengthening cooperation among the countries of OIC. The Labor Advisor requested the Azerbaijani Minister to recruit more skilled workers from Bangladesh. In addition, he also called for increasing technical cooperation in the labor sector and investing in special economic zones in Bangladesh. Sakhawat invited Anar Aliyev to visit Bangladesh. The Azerbaijani minister proposed the formation of a joint working group to advance cooperation in labor and investment between the two countries, which could include representatives of relevant ministries and organizations of the two countries. – Agencies

Terrorists receive ‘state
patronage’ in Afghanistan

FROM PAGE 01

Islamabad has also urged Kabul to choose between maintaining ties with its neighbour or harbouring terrorists. But, Afghan authorities have consistently denied the allegations. Earlier in the press conference, he shared details of a intelligence-based operation conducted in Chagai yesterday, in which he two men were killed and another surrendered. He said one of the two killed “terrorists” was a lawyer by profession. He detailed that the lawyer was traced following some arrests over the killing of Pakistan Air Force men on May 8 in Dal Badin. “We observed him for two to three months, and yesterday surrounded his house. Then, through a loud speaker, we asked him to surrender, and as soon as we did that, firing started from their end.” A Federal Constabulary soldier was martyred, and retaliatory firing by security personnel led to a fire exchange which went on for two to three hours, he said, adding that eventually two of the “terrorists” were killed and their third companion surrendered. Answering a question, he said efforts were being made to gather terrorist organisations in Balochistan. He went on to say that this was “war” facilitated and funded by Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing. “They have foisted an intelligence-based war on us, and they are trying to bring together all those who want to destabilise Pakistan.” Bugti also touched upon the suspension of 4G mobile network services in Balochistan. “We faced criticism for suspending 4G services,” he said, clarifying that the authorities’ intention behind such moves was not to cause inconvenience for the people.

Famed ‘sponge cities’
Chinese architect dead
in Brazil plane crash

SAO PAULO: Chinese landscape architect Kongjian Yu, known for his so-called nature-mimicking “sponge cities,” has died in a small plane crash in Brazil with two filmmakers documenting his work, police said Wednesday. The 62-year-old was considered a leading figure in sustainable urban planning; his “sponge cities” replace concrete surfaces with natural features that better absorb water in flood situations. The award-winning Yu was in Brazil for the recording of a documentary about his work when he perished with two filmmakers and the pilot in a plane crash late Tuesday in Brazil’s Mato Grosso do Sul state. Police said the cause of the accident was not known. The other three deceased were documentary makers Luiz Fernando Feres da Cunha Ferraz and Rubens Crispim Jr, as well as the pilot, who owned the aircraft. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said he felt “sadness and dismay” after learning of the crash. “In times of climate change, Kongjian Yu has become a global reference with his sponge cities, which combine quality of life and environmental protection: something that we want – and need – for the future,” he said in a post on X. Brazil’s Council of Architecture and Urbanism, which recently hosted Yu as a speaker at an international conference, said his “sponge cities” concept has been applied in more than a thousand projects in 250 cities. “His contribution has influenced environmental public policies in China and other countries,” it said in a statement expressing condolences to the architect’s family, friends and colleagues. – Agencies

ICC reviews PCB complaint against India captain Yadav

Suryakumar's post-match remarks after group-stage match against Pakistan trigger ICC scrutiny

DNA

DUBAI: India captain Suryakumar Yadav has landed in serious trouble after the International Cricket Council (ICC) accepted a complaint filed by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and ordered a review of his post-match comments made after India’s Asia Cup group-stage win against Pakistan on September 14, Indian media reported. The ICC has said it is examining the PCB’s complaint, which accuses Suryakumar of politicising cricket and breaching the code of conduct relating to neutrality. A formal hearing may be convened, with Yadav given the option to accept the charge or face proceedings before the ICC match referee, alongside representatives of the BCCI and PCB. Sources said the PCB submitted a detailed letter to the ICC, demanding strict action against Suryakumar. The letter alleged that the Indian captain had “involved the game

in politics and damaged its reputation.” It maintained that all clauses of the ICC’s code of conduct applied to the September 14 match and that Yadav had deliberately referenced the Pahalgam incident and Operation Sindoor. According to the letter, Suryakumar’s conduct went against the spirit of the code of conduct and warranted action. It recalled that the ICC had already declared slogans such as “Free Gaza” and “Freedom is Human Right” to be violations of the code of conduct. The PCB further warned that if action was not taken, “the cricket field would risk becoming a political arena,” and concluded that the Indian captain’s statements were directly against Pakistan, requiring the strictest possible measures. The review comes against the backdrop of an ongoing row between the arch-rivals, stemming from the group-stage clash, which attracted considerable attention both on and off the field. The drama began when the Indian cap-

tain crossed all boundaries of sportsmanship by using his post-match presentation speech to drag politics into cricket, a move described by many observers as “unprecedented” and “damaging for the spirit of the game”. Compounding the tension was India’s refusal to exchange a traditional handshake at the toss ceremony – an omission reportedly directed by match referee Andy Pycroft. Matters escalated to the point where the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) considered pulling out of the Asia Cup altogether. The situation was defused only after Pycroft admitted to mishandling aspects of the controversy and expressed regret, according to PCB. India won the September 14 group match by seven wickets in Dubai and afterwards refused to shake hands with their opponents, angering Pakistan. It was their first meeting between the neighbours since a four-day armed conflict in May left more than 70 people dead. Following India’s victory, Suryakumar dedicated the win to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack and expressed solidarity with the armed forces. “Perfect occasion, taking the time out, we stand by the families of the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack. We express our solidarity... Want to dedicate the win to all our armed forces who showed a lot of bravery,” he said during the presentation ceremony. At the post-match press conference, Yadav went further, saying the Indian team avoided handshakes with Pakistani players on the instructions of the BCCI and the Indian government. “Our government and BCCI, we were aligned today... We came here to just play the game,” he remarked. The PCB said these statements crossed the line, alleging that Suryakumar used the match as a platform for political messaging. With the ICC now admitting the PCB’s complaint, Suryakumar faces potential disciplinary action if the hearing proceeds. A final decision is expected soon.

PM Shehbaz
lauds Gates
Foundation's
support

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digitisation and revitalisation of economy, the prime minister especially acknowledged the practical, positive and valuable cooperation of Gates Foundation. Prime Minister Shehbaz and Bill Gates reaffirmed their shared commitment to continue working together to advance the cooperation in sectors of health, nutrition, digital transformation and larger socio-economic development of the country.

Bilawal for
political
solution...

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Bilawal said the PML-N had yet to share any draft amendments. He reiterated that the PPP would engage in consultation if the government wished to proceed with changes. Meanwhile, he welcomed the entry of his cousins, Fatima Bhutto and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Jr., into politics, stating that he holds no personal differences with them. Responding to a journalist’s question during a press conference in Karachi, Bilawal said his cousins had been active in politics for some time and that he respected their decision to engage in public life.

Man dead,
son injured
in landmine
explosion...

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The body and injured have been shifted to District Headquarters Hospital. Police said that an investigation into the incident has been initiated. However, so far no one has accepted the responsibility of it. The tribal elders have condemned the incident and demanded cleansing of the area of landmines and awarding punishment to the elements behind the incidents of terrorism.

FBR
clarifies
changes
in 2025...

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This development caused concern among taxpayers, especially as the filing deadline draws near. In its clarification, the FBR stated that no new SRO has been issued in this regard. The additional column, it said, had been incorporated into the form on August 18. The stated purpose of the new column is to determine the market value of assets, enabling the collection of authentic data for better policymaking. The FBR stressed that the requirement to declare the market value of assets has no bearing on tax liability and would not be used to initiate proceedings against any taxpayer.

Abbas
rejects
Hamas...

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documented and monitored, and it will be recorded in history books and in the conscience of humanity as one of the most horrific chapters of human tragedy in the 20th and 21st centuries. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Palestine, the extremist Israeli government continues implementing colonial policies through illegal settlement expansion and annexation projects, the latest being the construction plan in E1, which divides the West Bank, isolates occupied Jerusalem from its surroundings, and destroys the two-state solution, in blatant violation of international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, foremost among them Resolution 2334. This is in addition to the Israeli Prime Minister’s announcement of his so-called “Greater Israel” plan, which we categorically reject and condemn, as it includes expansion into sovereign Arab states. We also condemn the recent brutal attack against the sister State of Qatar, which we consider a dangerous escalation.

Briefs

US pledges support to build a unified Syria

DUBAI: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Wednesday that Washington and its partners want to give Syria “every possible opportunity” to become a strong, unified state that reflects the diversity of its society. Rubio said Syria’s stability was essential for regional peace, preventing extremists and foreign actors from using the country as a base for destabilizing activities. This is a moment of “historic opportunity” to achieve progress that had seemed unimaginable just a few years ago, Rubio said during a meeting with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. “President Donald Trump remains committed, not just from a unilateral US perspective, but in partnership with many countries, to giving Syria every opportunity to build a strong, unified state that respects the diversity of Syrian society, is a stable place, and is no longer a base of operations for extremists or foreign actors,” Rubio said. GCC Secretary-General Jassim Mohammed Al-Budaiwi said the importance of safeguarding Syria’s sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and rejected foreign interference in its internal affairs. _APP

GCC, UK ministers condemn humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza

RIYADH: A ministerial meeting between the Gulf Cooperation Council and Britain condemned on Wednesday the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip and Israel’s restrictions on aid that have exacerbated famine and human suffering. The ministers, meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, called on all parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations under International Humanitarian Law, including those related to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The UK and the GCC resolved to continue working closely together to pursue peace in unstable and conflict-afflicted regions, a joint statement said. They underscored their countries’ commitment to promoting peace and working together to resolve conflicts and address instability. The ministers also welcomed the high-level international conference on the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian Cause and the implementation of the two-state solution, co-chaired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and France. There must be unified Palestinian-led governance in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority, said the statement. _APP

Japan’s PM warns of possible steps if Israel continues Gaza City assault

NEW YORK: Japan’s Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on Wednesday called on Israel to immediately halt its assault on Gaza City, warning that if it continues and further threatens regional stability, Tokyo will consider taking “measures in response.” Speaking at a press briefing attended by Arab News on the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, he said: “Japan strongly urges Israel to stop these operations now.” Continued unilateral military action by Israel, he added, “can never be accepted.” Ishiba reiterated Japan’s support for a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can “live side by side,” and emphasized that Tokyo’s recognition of Palestine is not a question of “if but when.” He condemned the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, saying it “can never be overlooked,” and urged all parties to work toward a peaceful resolution. APP

At least 17 killed in Gaza Strip as leaders ramp up pressure for a ceasefire

“At the UN, General Assembly I will speak our truth,” he told reporters. “I will denounce those leaders who, instead of denouncing the murderers, the rapists, the child burners, want to give them a state in the heart of the land of Israel. It will not happen.”

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip: At least 17 people were killed Thursday in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, according to local health officials, as international pressure for a ceasefire continued to grow. On the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, French President Emmanuel Macron told that his country had recognized a Palestinian state on the conviction it “is the only way to isolate Hamas,” which has proved itself able to regenerate even after many of its leaders have been killed. “Total war in Gaza is causing civilian casualties but can’t bring about the end of Hamas,” he said in the interview Wednesday. “Factually, it’s a failure.” He said he had been lobbying US President Donald Trump to press Israel again for a ceasefire, telling him “you have an important role to play – you who supports peace, who wants to bring peace to the world.” “You cannot stop the war if there is no path to peace,”

the French president added. Deadly strikes hit central and southern Gaza. Meanwhile in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, 12 people were killed in an Israeli attack on the central town of Zawaida that hit a tent and a house, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the nearby city of Deir Al-Balah. Eight children were among the victims, according to the hospital, and family members said another girl was still under the rubble. The hospital said another girl was killed in an airstrike that hit a tent in Deir Al-Balah, and that it was caring for seven others injured in that attack. In the southern city of Khan Younis, another Israeli attack hit an apartment building, killing four people, according to the Nasser Hospital where the bodies were taken. On Monday ahead of the opening of the UN General Assembly meetings, France, Andorra, Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, and Monaco announced or confirmed their recognition of a Palestinian state in the hopes of

galvanizing support for a two-state solution to the Mideast conflict. Their announcements came a day after the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Portugal did the same, in defiance of Israel and the United States. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lashed out at the idea early Thursday before heading to New York himself where he was to address the assembly on Friday. “At the UN, General Assembly I will speak our truth,” he told reporters. “I will denounce those leaders who, instead of denouncing the murderers, the rapists, the child burners, want to give them a state in the heart of the land of Israel. It will not happen.” At separate events in New York on Wednesday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Trump’s lead negotiator Steve Witkoff both offered optimistic views about what Witkoff called a “Trump 21-point plan for peace” that was presented to Arab leaders on Tuesday. The US has not released de-

tails of the plan or said whether Israel or Hamas accepts it, but Netanyahu suggested Israel’s position had not changed. The Israeli leader said when he travels from New York on to Washington to meet with Trump, he would “discuss with him the great opportunities our victories have brought and also our need to complete the goals of the war: to return all our hostages, to defeat Hamas and to expand the circle of peace that is open to us.” The US, along with Egypt and Qatar, have spent months trying to broker a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release. Those efforts suffered a major setback earlier this month when Israel carried out an airstrike targeting Hamas leaders in Qatar. Israel launched another major ground operation earlier this month in Gaza City, which experts say is experiencing famine. More than 300,000 people have fled, but up to 700,000 are still there, many because they can’t afford to relocate.—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmed Shah meeting with the Korean peace delegation of HWPL to discuss joint efforts for peace and development.

Russia ‘firmly rejects’ involvement in Denmark airport drones

COPENHAGEN: The Russian embassy in Denmark said Thursday that Russia “firmly rejects” speculation that it was involved in drone flights that caused Danish airports to close twice this week, calling the incidents a “staged provocation.” “It is evident that the incidents involving reported disruptions at Danish airports are a staged provocation,” the embassy said in post to social media. “The Russian side firmly rejects the absurd speculations of involvement in the incidents,” it added. Drones flew over multiple airports across Denmark and caused one of them to close for hours, police said Thursday after a similar incident this week prompted Copenhagen airport to shut. The latest incidents in Danish skies follow similar events in Poland and Romania and the violation by Russian fighter jets of Estonia’s airspace, which have raised tensions in light of Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine. Drones were spotted at Denmark’s airports in Aalborg, Esbjerg, Sonderborg and at the Skrydstrup air base before leaving on their own, police said. Aalborg airport, located in northern Denmark and one of the country’s biggest after Copenhagen, was shut down before reopening several hours later. “It was not possible to take down the drones, which flew over a very large area over a couple of hours,” North Jutland chief police inspector Jesper Bojgaard Madsen said about the incident in Aalborg. “At this time, we have not apprehended the drone operators either,” he added in a statement. South Jutland police said they had “received several reports of drone activity at the airports in Esbjerg, Sonderborg and Skrydstrup,” late Wednesday evening.—APP

Over 1,000 Indonesians sick from school meals in more food poisoning outbreaks

“We must evaluate those running the program... And the most important thing is how to deal with the students’ trauma after eating the food,” Mulyadi said, adding small hospitals in West Bandung were overwhelmed by sick students

BANDUNG, INDONESIA: More than 1,000 children in Indonesia’s West Java have suffered food poisoning this week from school lunches, authorities said, the latest in a series of outbreaks and another setback for the president’s multi-billion-dollar free meals program. The mass poisoning was reported in four areas of West Java province, its Governor Dedi Mulyadi told Reuters on Thursday, which came as non-governmental organizations issued calls to suspend the program due to health concerns. The latest cases follow the poisoning of 800 students who ate school lunches last week in West Java and Central Sulawesi provinces, supplied under President Prabowo Subianto’s signature free nutritious meals program. Questions have been raised about standards and oversight of the scheme, which has expanded rapidly to reach over 20 million recipients, with an ambitious goal of feeding 83 million by year-end. The program’s 171 trillion rupiah (\$10.2 billion) budget will double next year. Governor Mulyadi said more than 470 students fell sick in West Bandung on Monday after eating the free lunches, and three more outbreaks took place there on Wednesday and in the Sukabumi region, affecting at least 580 children. “We must evaluate those running the program... And the most important thing is how to deal with the students’ trauma after eating the food,” Mulyadi said, adding small hospitals in West Bandung were overwhelmed by sick students. Prabowo’s office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the latest cases. Dadan Hindayana, head of The National Nutrition Agency that oversees the free meals program, said kitchens with poisoning cases had been suspended. Surge in cases Lisa Bila Zahara, 15, said she fell ill after eating a school lunch of chicken and tofu cooked with soy sauce on Wednesday. “Around 30 minutes later, I felt nauseous and had a headache,” the high school student told Reuters at a sports hall turned into a makeshift treatment center in West Bandung. “I want it stopped (the program) ... I fear this will happen again,” she said. Zahara’s mother forbade her from consuming the free meals in future. Before this week’s incident, at least 6,452 children nationwide had suffered from food poisoning from the program since it was launched in January, according to think tank Network for Education Watch. Governor Mulyadi said kitchens were tasked with feeding too many students and were located far from the schools, forcing them to start cooking very early, sometimes the night before the lunch. “When the food was still warm, it was immediately put on the tray and the tray was closed, making it spoiled,” he said, adding that authorities had declared a health emergency. Iqbal Maulana, the head of a kitchen that had provided some of the free meals, said: “We do it according to the standard operating procedure.—DNA

Politics of convenience, how states have bend their principles in accordance to their interests

MOHAMMAD DANİYAL PERVAIZ

It has been observed in the global politics that moral principles have always been regarded high and the states have boasted about how they’re the champions and torch bearer of democracy, human rights, peace and territorial sovereignty but in reality these principles are bent, twisted or even broken, just to serve their purpose when they are in the middle of the conflict or when it collides with their national interests. This is where the politics of convenience may come into play, the potential of states to quickly drift away from their narratives, policies, morality and even alliances in global political arena is astonishing. However, this phenomena is not new to the international affairs but recent incidents in South Asia and Middle East are evident examples of it. Recently, India has been a victim of this, always blowing one’s own trumpet about its strategic partnership with USA and other Western Powers but what we saw during the recent Pakistan-India conflict was totally a shift of policy by its dear friend ‘Donald Trump’. India had mistaken that the partnership must have come with the unconditional backing by the western allies but USA asked both the parties to show restraint and it was then, the Delhi was taken a back and wanted more from the western ally. USA on the other hand, realised the sensitivity of the matter, as the region is a nuclear flashpoint and could not support India’s claims after Pakistan had shot down 6 of their aircrafts, which was actually given to the Indian government for deterrence to contain Chinese hegemony in the region, it was then in the best interest of the United States to come out globally as a mediator between the two nuclear powers rather than showing solidarity to India. This, right here, illustrates how America was conscious of its global image and at that time what best suited USA was to conveniently shift its policy of being a mediator.

Talking about a conflict, I must say that 2025 has been so far



other hand, Israel is the greatest ally in the region. Both the states had a rough past week, as Israel, doing what it does the best, bombing sovereign states and clearly violating UN Charter and Security Council resolutions but what seemed to be interesting was how USA responded. It did condemn the attack and at the same time, it made it clear that this was necessary, hence, it satisfied nobody but navigated through the situation by choosing diplomatic words as Washington could not afford to abandon Doha and upset Tel Aviv by taking sides of either one of them. The Attack on Doha had a regional condemnation by all Arab and Islamic States, including Pakistan, which is an enemy of the friend of Israel, India - most important player when it comes to trade with Middle Eastern countries. The circumstances had a shift of 360 degrees when Saudi Arabia signed a Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement with Pakistan which categorically stated “An act of aggression on either of the countries would be considered as an act of aggression against both”, Saudi Arabia, expected more from USA after the Qatar attack, thought the best possible option to protect its territorial sovereignty is to bring itself under Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella to create deterrence against Israel’s designs to expand its territory in the region under the ‘Greater Israel’ campaign. Therefore, conveniently putting its interest first and totally ignoring the fact that Pakistan’s arch rival, India, is their one of the biggest trading partners. Political and strategic analysts have studied states behavior since ages and they have come to a conclusion that states are rational actors, they act and pursue to achieve national interests, take advantage of any given opportunity to survive in the global political landscape. Realism, the school of thought of International Relations is what triggers them, morality is subjugated by the state’s interests, the quest for power politics is what they desire. However, there are no free lunches and everything comes with a cost and while states indulge in politics of convenience, their honesty and trustworthiness is questioned and their credibility is seen with the lens of skepticism.

Philippines cancels classes, flights as new storm looms

MANILA: The Philippines shut schools and scrapped flights on Thursday as a fresh storm threatened to hit just days after a super typhoon killed nine people in the archipelago. Severe Tropical Storm Bualoi is forecast to intensify into a typhoon on Friday and then slam into the southern end of the Philippines’ largest island, Luzon.

“Widespread flooding and landslides in mountainous areas are possible,” Benison Estareja from the nation’s weather service told a briefing. The Philippines is hit by an average of 20 storms and typhoons each year, putting millions of people in disaster-prone areas in a state of constant poverty. Scientists warn that storms are becoming more powerful as the world warms due to the effects of human-driven climate change. Authorities warned of a “high risk of life-threatening storm surge” of up to three meters (10 feet) with the coming storm. The Philippine Coast Guard said around 1,500 people were stranded in ports of Bicol, the region where the typhoon is forecast to hit.

Thousands were also still displaced in the rain-soaked nation after Super Typhoon Ragasa passed over the country’s far northern end and killed at least nine people. The weather bureau said the outer bands of Bualoi might also bring rains to the northern Philippines. “These rains are continuous and may cause renewed flooding, and landslides, especially in areas that are already saturated,” Civil Defense Administrator Harold Cabreros said late Wednesday.—APP

French militant who claimed Nice attack to be tried in Iraq

BAGHDAD: Adrien Guihal, who claimed the 2016 Nice attack for the Daesh group, will be tried in Iraq alongside 46 other French nationals recently transferred from Syria, a source close to the investigation told AFP. “Adrien Guihal, known as Abu Osama Al-Faransi, is still under investigation,” said the source, speaking on condition of anonymity because they are not allowed to speak to the media. Guihal “was brought to Iraq two months ago with another 46 French nationals that will be tried here,” the source added. A veteran member of France’s militant networks, Guihal made headlines when he was recognized as the man behind the voice that claimed responsibility for the July 2016 attack which killed 86 people in the French city of Nice. He is thought to be among the most dangerous members of the French contingent in the ranks of the Daesh group, whose self-styled “caliphate” spanned huge swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria before collapsing in 2019. Guihal, who joined Daesh in 2015, was detained in the Syrian city of Raqqa in May 2018. The country still has mass graves and many personal testimonies of Daesh brutality to be investigated.

In 2024, after the mission of the UN body investigating Daesh crimes ended, Iraq created the National Center for International Judicial Cooperation (NCICJ) to gather evidence and document Daesh crimes. The center serves as the main point of contact for foreign jurisdictions investigating alleged offenses.—APP

Jordan’s army foils border infiltration attempt

DUBAI: Jordan’s Northern Military Zone on Wednesday said it had thwarted an attempt by an individual to illegally cross the border on the kingdom’s northern front. Border guards arrested the suspect, and transferred him to the authorities, a military source told Petra news agency. The army reaffirmed that it will continue to deal firmly with any attempts to undermine the security of Jordan’s borders.—APP

Briefs

Aurangzeb terms Rs1.2tr circular debt deal 'largest financing'

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has hailed the Rs1.2 trillion bank loan secured to settle Pakistan's circular debt as the "largest financing and largest restructuring transaction" in the country's history. On Wednesday, the government signed loan facilities worth approximately Rs1.225tr with 18 banks to settle the outstanding dues of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) parked in circular debt. These dues will be serviced through a Rs3.23 per unit surcharge on consumers for a period of six years. The signing ceremony was held at the PM Office, witnessed virtually by the prime minister from New York. No official announcement was made, although ministers confirmed the signing of the agreement. Under the agreement, the government will have 30 days to request disbursements from banks for prompt utilisation to avoid penalties. Today, the ceremony was aired on television, with both the premier and the finance minister addressing the gathering. In his remarks, Aurangzeb said that facility "resolves the structural issues of the power sector". "Ultimately, it's all for the benefit of Pakistan and the benefit of the consumers," he said, branding it a "win-win situation". Lauding the efforts of the authorities involved in arranging the loan facility, the finance minister remarked.

President's powers to transfer high court judges conditional

Transfer of judge by president cannot be construed as "fresh appointment", reads verdict

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench on Thursday released its detailed verdict in a case pertaining to the seniority and transfer of Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges, ruling that the president's powers to transfer high court judges are independent but subject to certain conditions. The Supreme Court's larger Constitutional Bench was headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and included Justices Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, Justice Salahuddin Panhwar, and Justice Shakeel Ahmad. "It is clearly articulated under Article 200 of the Constitution that the powers of the president for the transfer of a Judge of the high court from one high court to another high court is an independent Article in its application, but with some safety measures and safeguards and these powers are not dependent upon any other article of the Constitution," read the 3-2 judgement.

Pakistan pushes for UN Charter's oversight of AI

The meeting was chaired by President Lee Jae Myung of South Korea, which holds the 15-member Council's presidency for the month of September

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Warning against the dangers of unregulated artificial intelligence (AI), Pakistan has emphasized that its use, especially military applications, must be "fully" governed by the UN Charter and international law. "AI must not become, a tool of coercion, or technological monopoly," Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif told the UN Security Council on Wednesday. "Applications, without meaningful human control, should be prohibited," he said in a high-level debate on artificial intelligence (AI) under the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security". The meeting was chaired by President Lee Jae Myung of South Korea, which holds the 15-member Council's presidency for the month of September. In his remarks, Khawaja Asif also noted that AI is the most consequential, dual-use technology, capable of accelerating socio-economic progress, but said it was equally capable of deepening inequalities, and destabilizing international order. "States must commit to measures that prevent destabilizing use, and pre-emptive incentives," he told presidents and foreign ministers from around the world. "Unregulated and irresponsible use of AI enables disinformation campaigns, offensive cyber operations, and development of new types of armaments," Khawaja Asif pointed out. "The accelerating weaponization of AI, through autonomous weapon systems, and AI-driven command and control systems, poses a grave danger." In this regard, Khawaja Asif emphasized that in the recent conflict in the subcontinent between India and Pakistan, for the first time, autonomous munitions and high-

AI must not decide humanity's fate, UN chief warns

NEW YORK: Artificial intelligence holds vast potential but poses grave risks if left unregulated, UN Secretary-General António Guterres told the Security Council. "AI is no longer a distant horizon – it is here, transforming daily life, the information space, and the global economy at breathtaking speed," Guterres said at the Council's high-level debate on the technology's security implications for transforming warfare. "The question is not whether AI will influence international peace and security, but how we will shape that influence."

Used responsibly, the UN chief said, AI can help anticipate food insecurity, support de-mining operations, and identify outbreaks of violence before it spills out of control. "But without guardrails, it can also be weaponised," he cautioned, pointing to AI-enabled targeting in recent conflicts, cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, and deepfakes capable of fuelling polarisation or derailing diplomacy. Guterres set out four priorities for governments: maintaining human control over the use of force, building coherent global regulatory frameworks, protecting information integrity, and closing what he called the "AI capacity gap between rich and poor nations". The Secretary-General highlighted steps already underway, including the creation of an independent scientific panel on AI and a new global dialogue on AI governance – due to take place in New York on Thursday. "Together, these initiatives aim to connect science, policy and practice; provide every country a seat at the table; and reduce fragmentation," he said. – DNA

speed dual-capable cruise missiles "were used by one nuclear-armed State against another during a military exchange - which manifests the dangers which AI can pose". These developments raise serious questions for the future of warfare, he stated, as AI lowers the threshold for use of force, making wars more politically and operationally feasible, and compresses decision-time narrowing the window for diplomacy and de-escalation. "AI blurs domain bounda-

ries, merging cyber, kinetic, and informational effects in unpredictable ways." The Charter of the United Nations and international law must fully govern the development and use of AI applications, the defence minister added. "We must ensure that AI is harnessed to promote peace and development, not conflict and instability," Khawaja Asif said, adding, "Let us preserve the primacy of human judgment, in matters of war and peace, ensuring that, even in an age of intelligent machines, innovation is guided by principles of morality and humanity." Opening the debate, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that AI is "no longer a distant horizon – it is here, transforming daily life, the information space and the global economy at breathtaking speed". Used responsibly, AI can strengthen prevention and protection in myriad ways, including anticipating food insecurity, supporting de-mining, and helping identify potential outbreaks of violence. However, "without guardrails, it can also be weaponized", he stressed. Citing AI-enabled cyberattacks that can disrupt critical infrastructure in minutes and threats to information integrity, he emphasized: "Innovation must serve humanity – not undermine it." The UN chief recalled that last month, the General Assembly established an Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and an annual Global Dialogue on AI Governance. Addressing priorities, he stated that "humanity's fate cannot be left to an algorithm" as "humans must always retain authority over life-and-death decisions". Urging the Council and Member States to ensure that human control and judgment are preserved in every use of force, he again called for a ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems operating without human control, with a legally binding instrument by 2026. Similarly, any decision in nuclear weapon use "must rest with humans – not machines", he stressed. Yejin Choi, Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, told the Security Council that current progress in AI is too concentrated among a handful of companies and countries.

Pakistan, ADB mull housing sector initiatives

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) called on Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, at his office on Thursday to explore avenues for mutual cooperation on land data bank and housing sector initiatives. The meeting focused on exploring avenues of mutual cooperation, particularly the establishment of a Land Data Bank, which the Ministry aims to develop for comprehensive information on federal assets, with special emphasis on prime land holdings across the country. Welcoming the delegation, the minister thanked ADB team for their cooperation in key areas to uplift the housing and real estate sector in Pakistan. While emphasizing the importance of ADB's technical and financial support, Minister underlined the Government's commitment to ensuring transparency, optimal utilization of resources, and attracting investment through modern data-driven systems. Secretary Housing, Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh, highlighted that the purpose of the Land Data Bank is to compile accurate and accessible data on the federal government assets. – DNA



NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, inaugurating newly renovated Consular Services Area, at Consulate General of Pakistan. – DNA

Pak, Bahrain reaffirm commitment to strengthening ties

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday met with Bahrain's Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani on the sidelines of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The two leaders reaffirmed the close and enduring ties between Pakistan and Bahrain, expressing resolve to deepen cooperation across a wide range of sectors. They emphasized enhanced engagement in economic cooperation, regional connectivity, and collaboration at multilateral fora, while underscoring their shared commitment to peace and stability. Dar and Al Zayani also discussed the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, stressing the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire and the provision of humanitarian relief to the affected population. The meeting reflected the shared vision of both countries to further strengthen their longstanding partnership and coordinate efforts on regional and international issues of common concern. – APP

Donald Trump demands probe into UN 'triple sabotage'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump demanded an investigation Wednesday into what he called "triple sabotage" after an escalator, teleprompter and sound system malfunctioned as addressed the United Nations. The UN has said the events which happened while Trump was at its headquarters in New York on Tuesday were accidental, and partly blamed them on White House staff. But in a long, angry social media post, Trump described the string of mishaps on Tuesday as "very sinister," called for people to be arrested and said the Secret Service was also probing. "This wasn't a coincidence, this was triple sabotage at the UN. They ought to be ashamed of themselves," Trump said on his Truth Social platform. "I'm sending a copy of this letter to the Secretary General, and I demand an immediate investigation. No wonder the United Nations hasn't been able to do the job that they were put in existence to do." Footage showed the 79-year-old president and First Lady Melania Trump getting on the escalator at UN headquarters on Tuesday before it stopped with a lurch, forcing them to walk up. Then, as he began his speech, he noted his teleprompter was not working. He spent much of the rest of the speech bashing the world body, accusing it of funding illegal migration that was turn-

ing Western countries into "hell" and failing to support his peace efforts in Gaza and Ukraine. But while Trump struck a mostly joking tone about the escalator on Tuesday, his mood hardened a day later. "A REAL DISGRACE took place at the United Nations yesterday. Not one, not two, but three very sinister events!" he wrote. Trump said the escalator stop could have been a "real disaster." "It's amazing that Melania and I didn't fall forward onto the sharp edges of these steel steps, face first," he said. Trump then complained that his teleprompter for his speech was "stone cold dark" for the first 15 minutes, and that the sound in the UN auditorium was "completely off." The US president called for the security tapes for the escalator to be saved, adding: "The Secret Service is involved." The United Nations did not immediately react to Trump's statement. But it insisted on Tuesday that there were simple explanations for it all. A videographer from the US delegation "may have inadvertently triggered the safety function" on the escalator, causing it to stop, Stephane Dujarric, a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said in a statement. "Regarding the teleprompter, we have no comment since the teleprompter for the US president is operated by the White House." – Agencies

GB traders reject agreement reached with federal government

NEWS DESK

GILGIT: Traders in Gilgit-Baltistan have decided to continue their sit-in despite the government agreeing to conditionally exempt imports routed through the Sost Dry Port from key federal taxes, trade leader Javed Hussain – who has been leading the protest – told Dawn.com on Thursday. Local traders in GB have been staging a protest sit-in, blocking the port since July. The protest was launched against the government's taxation policies and suspension of customs clearance at the port.

Yesterday, the government agreed to tax exemptions on imports coming through the port – provided that the goods were for local consumption and meet strict eligibility conditions. The total annual value of tax exemptions was capped at Rs4 billion. This was announced after talks between the federal government, GB government and local business leaders in Islamabad. "After the agreement and its announcement in Islamabad, it was suggested to us to end the protest. But we don't agree with this [suggestion] and have decided to continue the sit-in and keep the trade suspended," he said. Hussain said traders would now have a sitting with its representative body that held talks with the government. If its members were able to give a satisfactory justification regarding yesterday's agreement, traders would deliberate on whether to continue the protest, he added. "Setting a limit on imports and placing a cap of Rs4bn goes against our demands," he asserted, adding that traders' demands were based on GB's "legal status" in the country and the "exemption it was provided under the Constitution".

Trump, Erdogan discuss F-35s

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump suggested the US could lift sanctions on Turkey and allow it to buy US F-35 jets as he kicked off talks with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, but said he wanted Ankara to stop purchases of Russian oil. Erdogan's first visit to the White House in about six years comes at a time when Ankara is keen to take advantage of a US administration eager to make deals in return for big-ticket arms and trade agreements. Seated side by side in the Oval Office, Trump called Erdogan a "very tough man" and said he would like to see Turkey stop purchases of Russian oil. Turkey, Hungary, and Slovakia are the main European purchasers of Russian oil and Trump is pressing for them to stop. "I'd like to have him stop buying any oil from Russia while Russia continues this rampage against Ukraine," Trump said of Erdogan. Asked whether he was willing to make a deal to sell F-35s to Turkey, Trump told reporters: "I think he'll be successful in buying the things that he wants to buy."

Imran Khan claims verdicts in cases against him 'pre-written'

PTI alleges jail trial irregularities, demands immediate bail for Bushra Bibi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Aleema Khan, sister of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, on Wednesday has said that the incarcerated former prime minister believes the verdicts and sentences in his cases were "pre-written". Speaking to reporters outside Adiala Jail, she quoted Imran as saying that his hearings are repeatedly adjourned and that he had been pressured from the outset to leave the country, but chose instead to face all proceedings. Aleema also pointed to alleged irregularities in the jail trial, claiming one witness had been proven false. She demanded immediate bail for Bushra Bibi in the Al-Qadir Trust case, contending that "the script is that she will be sentenced in Toshakhana first, then granted bail in the Qadir case." She further relayed Imran Khan's sorrow over the martyrdom of youth in Tirah. The former prime minister and his wife have accused the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) of acting as a tool of the establishment and their political oppo-

nents to keep them out of the political arena. In their statements during the investigation of the Toshakhana-2 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. Meanwhile, PTI Secretary General Barrister Salman Akram Raja, after meeting Imran Khan in jail, echoed the party founder's stance that sustainable peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the wider region requires engagement of all stakeholders. "Killing people and blowing up bombs will not bring peace," he said, adding that Imran had conveyed messages to Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. Separately, on the occasion of the 95th Independence Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, on behalf of its founder chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan, extended warm felicitations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the people of Saudi Arabia. In a statement issued by PTI's Central Media Department, the party lauded the recently concluded Strategic Defence Mutual Agreement (SDMA).

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11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-8488394