



Islamabad POST

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Sri Lanka greatly values relations with Pak: envoy

Detailed News On Page-08

Will call Trump if it is in the interest of UK

Detailed News On Page-08



Trump to face challenges in Nov elections

Detailed News On Page-08



Middle East tension

War to widen if US resumes attacks: Iran

Iran army says it has halted retaliatory strikes in Middle East after US stopped attacks

CENTRELINE REPORT

TEHRAN: Iran's army warned on Sunday that the Middle East war would widen if the United States chose to press ahead with attacks on the Islamic republic, ahead of the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington. "I believe that if the Americans once again fall for the Zionists' deception, or move in line with them, and insist on continuing the war, particularly through air strikes, geographically this will expand further," army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia told state television. He said the war had already expanded to the Bab Al-Mandab Strait at the entrance of the Red Sea. "The scope of our operations now encompasses the entire region, from US bases in Jordan to the countries along the Arabian Gulf," he said. Akraminia said the situation in the Middle East for the United States is "difficult and unsettled," predicting that Washington was now looking "for a new strategy." "We are prepared for each of the options and scenarios that appear likely," he added. On Friday, Israel said Netanyahu will meet US President Donald Trump at the White House on Tuesday. Iran says progress in Oman talks on Hormuz strait management Iran said on Sunday it had made progress in talks with Oman on management of the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic waterway crucial for oil and gas trade that both countries border. The latest talks come after the United States resumed attacks on Iran in an effort to end Tehran's control of the strait, following a June

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US military says it redirected 12 ships

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: The US military on Sunday said it had redirected 12 commercial vessels trying to run its blockade of Iranian ports. In a post on X, the Central Military Command said US forces disabled two ships that refused to comply, and boarded two more "to ensure total compliance." Earlier on Saturday, US forces "completed a verification boarding aboard Comoros-flagged M/T Charminar in the Arabian Sea, and the tanker is now continuing its journey," CENTCOM said. It added that US forces disabled on July 24 the Mozambique-flagged M/T Lavine in the Gulf of Oman "after the crew attempted to violate the blockade multiple times and ignored repeated warnings. The ship is no longer transiting to Iran." Iran's Revolutionary Guards, meanwhile, said Saturday that their forces stopped four ships attempting to transit the strategic Strait of Hormuz. "Four vessels that had intended to transit through the southern area of the Strait of Hormuz via an illegal and unsafe route were stopped over the past 24 hours after warning shots were fired by the IRGC Navy," the IRGC said in a statement quoted by state television, adding that the ships had "altered course."

Pak, Saudi FMs talk on phone

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan held talks on Saturday with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to discuss regional developments and efforts to ease tensions. During a telephone call, the two ministers reviewed the latest developments in the region and stressed the importance of continued coordination and consultation, the Saudi Foreign Ministry said. They also emphasized the need to intensify efforts to reduce escalation, contain tensions, and safeguard navigation in the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, as part of wider efforts to reach peaceful and comprehensive solutions that enhance regional and international security and stability.

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Polling in some areas of AJK today

DNA

MIRPUR — Preparations for the upcoming elections in Mirpur are in full swing as polling material is being dispatched under strict security arrangements. The District Returning Officer, Jahangir Ahmad Jral, is overseeing the process to ensure smooth delivery ahead of the polls scheduled for July 27. According to officials, polling material is being sent to all 611 designated polling stations across the district. Presiding officers have

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NEW YORK: Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, met with Mr. Carl Skau, Acting Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), to discuss the humanitarian situation in conflict-affected regions. DNA

Fitna al Hindustan

16 terrorists killed so far in Balochistan Ops

The report said Balochistan emerged as the most affected province during the month

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Security forces have so far killed 16 terrorists during the ongoing Operation Al-Azm in Balochistan, state media reported on Sunday, citing security forces. "Continuing intelligence-based operations under Operation Al-Azm against Fitna-al-Hindustan in Balochistan, security forces [have] killed 16 terrorists, destroyed multiple terrorist hideouts and recovered weapons and explosive materials," state-run Pakistan TV reported. The government uses the term "Fitna al-Hindustan" for Balochistan-based groups to highlight India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan. Operation Al-Azm was launched after a

shooting on a Karachi-bound coach coming from Quetta claimed three lives and injured five others on Wednesday. It takes place as Balochistan continues to face security challenges, with the military saying on Wednesday that 10 terrorists had been killed and two suicide bombers and their facilitator had been apprehended during operations in Balochistan's Mastung and Surab in a span of 48 hours. Earlier this month, security forces and law enforcement personnel jointly launched Operation Shaban in Balochistan in retaliation for a deadly attack on a police post at the Mangi Dam pumping station in Ziarat on July 6. During that assault, armed attackers kidnapped and killed 27 police officers.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Israeli settlers torch two mosques

NEWS DESK

QUSRA: Palestinian officials said Israeli settlers set fire to two mosques in the occupied West Bank overnight Sunday, after this week's deadly clashes in the territory left six people dead. Violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank has surged since the Gaza war began with Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel. Abdel Azim Wadi, mayor of the town of Qusra, south of the city of Nablus, told AFP that settlers torched a mosque under construction in the southern part of the town. "The fire destroyed the mosque's entrance and even damaged its stonework," Wadi said.

PMD issues GLOF alert

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Sunday issued a glacial lake outburst flood (Glof) alert for Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the first week of August. Meanwhile, commuters were stranded in various parts of GB as road access to several areas remained cut off for the fifth consecutive day due to flash floods and Glofs. In continuation of the alert issued on July 17, the combined effect of warm thermal regime and ongoing intermittent precipitation was likely to continue across GB and KP till the first week of August, the PMD said. "This significant warming with intermittent rain will substantially accelerate snow and ice melt in the glaciated valleys of these regions," it added.

India funding elements in Kashmir, says Tarar

The minister highlighted that election rallies organized by the PPP and PML-N drew massive crowds, demonstrating public support for mainstream politics

SAIFULLAH ANSAR/DNA

ISLAMABAD — Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar has accused India of being behind the recent unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), alleging that New Delhi sought to destabilize the region and damage relations between the Kashmiri people and Pakistan. Speaking to reporters, Tarar said that the people of AJK have "rejected violent trends" and stood firmly with Pakistan's democratic process. The minister highlighted that election rallies organized by the PPP and PML-N drew massive crowds, demonstrating public support for mainstream politics. He claimed that India has been funding certain elements in Kashmir to spread chaos, pointing to the activities of the Joint Action Committee and its social media campaigns, which he said were "proven to be financed by India." According to Tarar, those involved must answer to the nation for "taking money



from the enemy to malign Pakistan and its leadership." Tarar emphasized that Pakistan's adversaries are "not happy

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Nearly 400 sq km of Punjab under water

Chenab flood level eases from medium to low; PMD forecasts more rain in upper parts of Punjab from July 29

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: While a vast area of Punjab, covering nearly 400 square kilometres, has come under water following ongoing torrential rains and the overflow of several drains carrying water far beyond their designed capacity, the Chenab and Ravi rivers are expected to reach medium to high flood levels over the next 24 hours. The warning at a time when the flooding has already caused widespread damage to standing crops, livestock and infrastructure prompted district administrations in several areas to expedite flood-response measures, including the establishment of relief camps. "The situation is very alarming this time, as a vast area of around 400sq-kms has come under water in Sheikhpura, Muridke, Gujranwala, Narowal, Sambrial and Pasrur,

which fall within the Lahore and Gujranwala divisions," a senior official of the Punjab irrigation department told Dawn on Saturday. "The current situation resembles an inland sea because of the vast expanse of floodwater," the official added, requesting anonymity. The situation is both unprecedented and highly challenging during the ongoing monsoon season, according to the official. "Let me tell you that the flow in the Ravi at Shahdara (Lahore) is 22,000 cusecs, whereas at Balloki (downstream) it has surged to 87,000 cusecs. The question is: where did the additional 65,000 cusecs come from? It is water flowing into the river through drains and rainfall," he explained. "Ordinarily, the flow in the Ravi should decrease by the time it reaches Balloki. Instead, it has

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‘Blood and Toil’ launched at IoBM

DNA

The Global and Regional Studies Center (GRSC) at the Institute of Business Management (IoBM) hosted the launch of Blood and Toil, authored by Brigadier Tariq Khalil, SJ, SI(M), IS Galantry (Bar), (Retired), on Saturday, July 26, 2026. Blood and Toil is a memoir that chronicles Brigadier Tariq Khalil's military career while highlighting the values of discipline, sacrifice, resilience, ethical leadership, and national duty. Drawing on his personal experiences, the book offers readers a firsthand perspective on military life and a deeper understanding of Pakistan's armed forces and the principles that underpin effective leadership. The event brought together academics, professionals, retired military officers, and students to discuss the book and its reflections on leadership, service, governance, and national responsibility. A panel of distinguished reviewers comprising Lt. Gen. (R) Moinuddin Haider, Col. (R) Mukhtar Butt, Syed Manzar Naqvi, and Dr. Zaituna Shah shared their perspectives on the book. Representing IoBM at the event were Talib Karim, President; Prof. Dr. Tariq Rahim Soomro, Rector; Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kashif, Dean, CBM; Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abbas, Dean, CCSIS, and Ambassador G. R. Baluch, Director GRSC, along with faculty members, heads of departments, and students. Speaking on the occasion, Talib Karim said Blood and Toil would enrich research and learning at IoBM by offering valuable insights into leadership, governance, and national affairs. Referring to developments in South Asia, he said

the book encourages reflection on leadership, governance, and the role of young people in national development. He added that such experiences offer valuable lessons for policymakers and future leaders. Brigadier Tariq Khalil (Retired) described Blood and Toil as the story of his life, beginning in the pre-Partition era and covering his experiences during Pakistan's conflicts with India, including the 1971 war. He said the book is a compilation of articles and reflections documenting different phases of his military career and the country's history, making it a useful reference for historians, researchers, and professionals. He also spoke about the changing geopolitical environment, observing that Pakistan is navigating a transition towards an emerging multipolar world and must prepare itself for the challenges ahead. Reviewing the book, Lt. Gen. (R) Moinuddin Haider said the generation that witnessed Partition and Pakistan's early wars is gradually fading, making it essential to preserve their experiences for future generations. He noted that Brigadier (R) Tariq Khalil's experience in the military, public service, and the corporate sector gives the book a distinctive perspective. He observed that many of the issues raised in the author's newspaper columns nearly five decades ago remain relevant today and appreciated his efforts to encourage informed national debate. Col. (R) Mukhtar Butt said the global order has shifted from a unipolar to a multipolar system, creating new geopolitical realities. Stressing the importance of regional cooperation, he said Pakistan must strengthen relations with neighbouring countries while promoting national unity, internal stability, and ef-

fective governance to address future challenges. Syed Manzar Naqvi, described Blood and Toil as an important historical account that documents Pakistan's journey through the author's personal experiences. He praised Brigadier Tariq Khalil for preserving significant moments in the country's history and expressed his appreciation for the author's continued contributions. Dr. Zaituna Shah said the book presents a comprehensive account of the regional and geopolitical developments that have shaped Pakistan's history. She noted that it provides readers with valuable insights into national and international affairs through the author's personal observations and experiences. Earlier, in his welcome address, Ambassador G. R. Baluch said that by hosting book launches, IoBM continues to uphold the vision and values on which the Institute was founded. Referring to the late founder of IoBM, Mr. Shahjehan S. Karim, he said universities should not only impart education but also promote critical thinking, knowledge creation, and meaningful contributions to society. He added that IoBM's book launch programme provides a platform for scholars, diplomats, policymakers, military professionals, journalists, and students to engage in intellectual dialogue and exchange ideas. Referring to the author, Ambassador Baluch said Brigadier Tariq Khalil writes from firsthand experience, enabling readers to gain a deeper understanding of the events, decisions, and historical developments that have shaped Pakistan. He added that Blood and Toil is not merely a memoir but a valuable contribution to the country's intellectual discourse.



MURREE: Advisor to the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Khurram Schehzad, addressing the National Tax Seminar jointly organized by the Pakistan Tax Bar Association and the Lahore Tax Bar Association at Pearl-Continental Hotel Bhurban, Murree

Strict action warned against hoarding

RAWALPINDI: Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Rawalpindi Maliha Sehar has reiterated that ensuring stability in prices of essential commodities and providing relief to the public remain the top priorities of the district administration. She made these remarks while chairing a meeting of the District Price Control Committee held at the DC Complex Rawalpindi. The meeting was attended by committee members, officials from relevant departments, and representatives of various stakeholders. During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted of the prices of essential goods across the district, measures taken for price control, the prevailing market situation and steps being implemented to facilitate relief for citizens. ADCG Maliha Sehar directed officials to ensure strict implementation of prices fixed by the Punjab government and ordered continued action against profiteering, hoarding, and artificial inflation without any discrimination. She said that the provision of quality and affordable food items to citizens is the foremost responsibility of the district administration. She instructed the concerned departments to conduct daily inspections of markets, ensure prominent display of official price lists, and take strict legal action against those violating price regulations.—APP

Balochistan wind resource key to industrial growth

LAHORE: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Ifthikhar Ali Malik on Sunday called for fully harnessing Balochistan's vast renewable energy resources to produce affordable electricity, ensure sustainable industrial growth and help overcome Pakistan's persistent energy crisis. In a statement, he said Balochistan has an estimated renewable energy potential of 1.2 million MW of solar power and 20,000 MW of wind energy, particularly in the Chagai and Makran regions. He called for greater public-private investment, improved security, policy stability and easier access to financing to attract local.—APP

Chenab water levels remain stable

LAHORE: The flood situation in various rivers of Punjab caused by monsoon rains remained stable during the last 24 hours, with a notable decline in water levels recorded in the River Chenab, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). A PDMA spokesperson said low-level flooding was continuing in the River Chenab at Marala, Khanki, Qadirabad and Trimmu. The water flow at Marala was recorded at 143,000 cusecs, Khanki at 138,000 cusecs, Qadirabad at 135,000 cusecs and Trimmu at 184,000 cusecs. The spokesperson said low-level

flooding was also being observed in the River Indus at Kalabagh, Chashma and Taunsa. The water flow at Kalabagh was recorded at 334,000 cusecs, Chashma at 370,000 cusecs and Taunsa Barrage at 313,000 cusecs. The authority said water flow in the Sutlej and Jhelum rivers remained normal, while low-level flooding persisted in the River Ravi at Balloki and Head Sidhna. The water flow at Balloki was recorded at 81,000 cusecs and at Head Sidhna at 60,000 cusecs, while the situation at Jassar and Shahdara remained normal. The PDMA further

reported low-level flooding in the Basantar drain of Narowal, while a high-level flood was recorded in Wazirabad's Phalko drain, where the water flow stood at 5,000 cusecs. Director General PDMA Omar Abbas Mela said rainfall in upper catchment areas had increased river flows; however, the flood situation in the Chenab River improved significantly after the rains subsided in its upper catchment areas. He said the PDMA was continuously monitoring the situation, while all relevant departments remained alert to deal with any emergency arising from the ongoing monsoon spell.—APP

Improved management transforms DHQ Wana into trusted healthcare

PESHAWAR: Improved management, strengthened governance, upgraded medical facilities and a patient-centred approach have significantly enhanced healthcare services at the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Wana, making it one of the most trusted healthcare institutions in South Waziristan. Located in one of Pakistan's most remote and strategically important regions, DHQ Hospital Wana has undergone a remarkable transformation since the Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF) assumed responsibility for its management under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's outsourcing initiative. MERF, an international humanitarian organization, works with governments to improve access to quality, equitable, efficient and affordable healthcare services. "A key driver of this transformation has been the strengthening of the hospital's human resources," says Dr. Abdul Basit, Provincial Manager MERF KP. Every month, the hospital provides emergency care, trauma management, critical interventions and essential medical services to hundreds of patients from South Waziristan and adjoining areas. Dr. Abdul Basit said the hospital is staffed by 14 specialist doctors providing expert care across multiple disciplines, while 24 medical officers ensure round-the-clock healthcare services. The workforce is further supported by 22 trained nurses, 38 paramedics and around 150 administrative and support staff. Hospital performance indicators reflect substantial progress in service delivery as Outpatient Department (OPD) attendance increased from 64,414 to 742,964 patients, demonstrating growing public confidence and improved access to healthcare services. Maternal health services also recorded significant improvement, with the number of normal and Caesarean-section deliveries increasing from 690 to 13,547, contributing to safer childbirth and improved maternal and newborn care. Diagnostic services expanded considerably, with laboratory investigations increasing from 9,471 to 939,693, enabling timely diagnosis and more effective treatment. Similarly, inpatient admissions rose from 2,419 to 132,162, reflecting improved access to quality hospital care. The hospital's surgical services also witnessed substantial growth, with the number of surgical procedures increasing from 677 to 29,201, enabling thousands of patients to receive quality surgical care within their own district. Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) services also improved, with the number of fully immunized children increasing from 161 to 1,228, strengthening child health and protection against vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition to expanding healthcare services, MERF upgraded key hospital facilities, including the registration unit, emergency department, emergency ward, outpatient department, operation theatre, laboratory, labour room, inpatient wards and dental unit. The improvements have enhanced patient flow, strengthened infection prevention measures and created a safer and more efficient healthcare environment. Officials attributed these achievements to the joint efforts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department, MERF, healthcare professionals and hospital staff, working together to improve healthcare delivery in South Waziristan. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening public healthcare services through improved governance, transparency, accountability and professional excellence, ensuring that quality healthcare remains accessible to communities living in one of the country's most underserved regions.—DNA

Better facilities for devotees during urs

LAHORE: Punjab Secretary Auqaf and Chief Administrator Dr. Ehsan Bhutta on Sunday stated that providing maximum facilities to hundreds of thousands of devotees expected to attend the annual Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh (Ali Hajveri) remained the top priority of the Punjab government. Chairing a high-level review meeting at Data Darbar, he said all relevant departments had been fully mobilized to ensure that pilgrims arriving from across Pakistan and abroad faced no inconvenience during the grand spiritual event. The meeting was attended by Admin-

istrator Data Darbar Muhammad Ali Khan, Khateeb of Data Darbar Mosque Mufti Mukhtar Ahmad Nadeem, Convener Langar Committee Mansoor Rizvi, Convener Milk Sabeel Committee Imran Hanafi, SSP Special Branch Tariq Aziz, and senior officials of the shrine administration. Briefing the participants, Mufti Mukhtar Ahmad Nadeem announced that two days of preliminary religious programmes would be held on July 30 and 31, while the three-day annual Urs celebrations will officially take place from August 2 to 4. The events will feature international Qirat and Naat competitions, spiritual gatherings, and scholarly conferences with the participation of eminent scholars and Qaris from Pakistan and abroad. Administrator Data Darbar Muhammad Ali Khan informed the meeting that, in line with the Regional Peace Committee's directives, comprehensive arrangements had been finalized for round-the-clock langar distribution, CCTV-based security monitoring, and foolproof security measures. Concluding the session, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta directed the authorities to ensure proper accommodation and food for devotees, set up first-aid medical camps, maintain an uninterrupted supply of chilled drinking water, uphold strict cleanliness, provide adequate parking facilities, and manage smooth traffic to ensure the Urs concludes in a peaceful and spiritually conducive atmosphere.—APP

Upgraded WASA system accelerates drainage: Punjab CM

CM Maryam Nawaz said the government was receiving encouraging public feedback from various districts, with residents of Lahore, Gujrat, Sialkot and Rawalpindi appreciating the significant improvement in drainage operations and acknowledging the efforts of the provincial administration.

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said the provincial government's comprehensive monsoon management strategy, backed by modern machinery, AI-based digital monitoring and coordinated field operations, was delivering improved rainwater drainage across the province. In a statement on Sunday, the CM said monsoon rains were continuing across Punjab while WASA teams remained engaged in round-the-clock operations, adding that more than 1,000 machines and thousands of sanitation workers had been deployed to ensure uninterrupted drainage of accumulated rainwater. The CM said 300 modern cameras linked with the Punjab Safe Cities Authority's AI-based monitoring system were being used to identify waterlogging, while a 24/7 digital surveillance mechanism was

keeping underpasses and other vulnerable locations under constant observation. She said the provincial administration, PDMA, Rescue 1122 and WASA had demonstrated exemplary coordination under a unified response plan to tackle monsoon-related challenges. CM Maryam Nawaz said that, under the provincial government's preparedness plan, around 400 kilometres of sewer lines, more than 700 kilometres of drains and over 225,000 manholes had been cleaned before the monsoon season, with the positive impact of these measures now becoming visible. She said newly established WASA districts had been equipped with dewatering sets, sucker machines, sewer jetting machines, shovel excavators, sewer desilting machines, water bowlers and cranes to strengthen drainage operations. The CM said

a centralized dashboard had been made fully operational, while rainfall data from 134 rain gauges was being monitored continuously to support timely decision-making. She added that monsoon emergency relief camps had been established in every city, while WASA teams remained active in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Attock, Chakwal, Murree, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Faisalabad and other districts to ensure swift disposal of rainwater. CM Maryam Nawaz said the government was receiving encouraging public feedback from various districts, with residents of Lahore, Gujrat, Sialkot and Rawalpindi appreciating the significant improvement in drainage operations and acknowledging the efforts of the provincial administration.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01/Japan Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada National Day

July 01/Somalia Independence Day

July 04/USA Independence Day

July 05/Algeria Independence Day

July 09/Argentina Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day

July 14/France National Day

July 15/Brunei Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium National Day

July 20/TRNC Independence Day

July 23/Egypt National Day

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July 26/Liberia National Day

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RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Children busy in drawing during Back to School Summer Camp at local mall in the Federal Capital.

Outgoing Azer, Kazak envoys honoured for promoting scientific collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTEC) hosted farewell at its Secretariat in Islamabad in honour of the outgoing Ambassadors of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, recognizing their outstanding contributions to strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan and advancing cooperation with COMSTEC in science, technology, higher education, research, innovation, and capacity building. The farewell brought together members of the diplomatic corps, senior government officials, vice chancellors, eminent scientists, academicians, and distinguished guests from OIC Member States, observer states and friendly countries. Among those in attendance were the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Turkmenistan, ambassadors and representatives from Tajikistan, Thailand, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yemen, Nepal, Rwanda, Mauritius, Jordan, Qatar, Iraq, Malaysia, Bangladesh, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the British High Commission, and other diplomatic missions. Speaking on the occasions, Coordinator General OIC-COMSTEC, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, paid tribute to H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, and H.E. Mr. Khazar Nadir Farhadov Ambassador of Azerbaijan, for their exceptional contributions to strengthening scientific and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and their respective countries. Highlighting cooperation with Kazakhstan, Prof. Choudhary said Ambassador Kistafin had played a pivotal role in transforming bilateral scientific engagement into a vibrant institutional partnership. During his tenure, COMSTEC and Kazakhstan successfully launched a number of landmark initiatives, including the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform the Global Al-Farabi Forum the Al-Farabi-Iqbal International Forum in Almaty, the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Alumni Forum COMSTEC-IJOF Fellowships in Food Security, and a series of international workshops on climate-resilient agriculture, biosafety, biosecurity, artificial intelligence, big data and data security. He also appreciated Kazakhstan's active participation in the COMSTEC Consortium of Excellence as well as the expansion of academic collaboration between leading universities and research institutions of both countries. Prof. Choudhary further noted his close academic association with Kazakhstan as President of the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Alumni Forum and the Al-Farabi and Iqbal Forum describing

these platforms as important bridges for strengthening academic mobility, scientific cooperation, cultural understanding and people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Paying tribute to Ambassador Farhadov, Prof. Choudhary appreciated his unwavering support in expanding cooperation between Azerbaijan and COMSTEC. He particularly recalled the visit of a high-level delegation from the Institute of Botany of Azerbaijan to the COMSTEC Secretariat, which opened new avenues for collaboration in plant sciences, biodiversity, higher education and scientific research. He also acknowledged the Ambassador's support in strengthening partnerships between Azerbaijani universities and COMSTEC's network of universities under the COMSTEC Consortium of Excellence promoting academic exchange, joint research and institutional collaboration. Prof. Choudhary said both ambassadors had remained steadfast friends of COMSTEC and consistently supported initiatives aimed at promoting science diplomacy, academic mobility, research collaboration and capacity building across the Muslim world. He emphasized that science, education and innovation have become powerful instruments for peace, sustainable development and shared prosperity among OIC Member States. As a token of appreciation,

Prof. Dr. Choudhary presented Certificates of Appreciation to Ambassadors Yerzhan Kistafin and Khazar Nadir Farhadov in recognition of their distinguished diplomatic services and valuable contributions to advancing cooperation with COMSTEC during their tenure in Pakistan. Expressing their gratitude, both ambassadors thanked COMSTEC and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary for the warm hospitality, friendship and close institutional partnership extended throughout their assignments in Pakistan. They highly appreciated COMSTEC's leadership in promoting science, technology, higher education, research, innovation and human resource development across OIC Member States, and expressed confidence that cooperation between COMSTEC and their respective countries would continue to grow in the years ahead. The receptions concluded in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual respect, reaffirming the enduring partnerships between Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and reflecting COMSTEC's continued commitment to strengthening science diplomacy, academic cooperation and international scientific collaboration across the Muslim world.

ISLAMABAD: Director Information Technology (IT) Atif Abbas chaired a meeting to review the performance of digital systems and directed the early completion of software upgradation and system improvement initiatives across Islamabad Police offices. A police official told on Monday that the meeting reviewed the functioning of software applications currently being used in various police offices and discussed measures to enhance their efficiency and reliability. Atif Abbas directed the officers concerned to expedite the renewal and upgradation of software, improve the overall performance of IT systems and ensure the timely completion of assigned targets. He emphasized that modern, reliable and efficient digital systems are essential for improving administrative performance, strengthening service delivery and enhancing the overall operational efficiency of Islamabad Police.—APP

Police net 13 in anti-crime crackdown

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have arrested 13 suspects, including proclaimed offenders and court absconders, during a crackdown against crime in different parts of the federal capital, recovering narcotics and illegal weapons from their possession. An official told APP on Monday that the operation was launched on the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi as part of the ongoing campaign to curb crime and ensure the safety of citizens. He said police teams of Phulgran, Kirpa and Industrial Area police stations arrested nine suspects involved in drug peddling and illegal possession of weapons. During the operation, police recovered 1,745 grams of ice (methamphetamine), four pistols of different calibres along with ammunition, and two daggers from the possession of the arrested suspects. Separate cases have been registered against them and further investigation is underway. The official said Islamabad Police also arrested four proclaimed offenders and court absconders during a special drive aimed at apprehending wanted criminals and habitual offenders. SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza said Islamabad Police remained committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens and would continue indiscriminate action against criminals.—APP

Director IT orders software upgrades

ISLAMABAD: Director Information Technology (IT) Atif Abbas chaired a meeting to review the performance of digital systems and directed the early completion of software upgradation and system improvement initiatives across Islamabad Police offices. A police official told on Monday that the meeting reviewed the functioning of software applications currently being used in various police offices and discussed measures to enhance their efficiency and reliability. Atif Abbas directed the officers concerned to expedite the renewal and upgradation of software, improve the overall performance of IT systems and ensure the timely completion of assigned targets. He emphasized that modern, reliable and efficient digital systems are essential for improving administrative performance, strengthening service delivery and enhancing the overall operational efficiency of Islamabad Police.—APP

Crack down on illegal shisha cafés, Spa centre

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested 21 suspects during a major crackdown on illegal shisha cafés and spa centres operating in a private housing society on the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi An official told on Sunday that the operation was carried out by Lohi Bher Police under the supervision of SHO Muhammad Yousaf Jutt as part of the ongoing drive against illegal businesses and immoral activities During the raid on a shisha café, police arrested 15 individuals and recovered eight shisha units, shisha pipes and various tobacco flavours. The recovered items were taken into custody and legal proceedings were initiated. In the same crackdown, police also raided several spa centres in the private housing society and arrested six men and women allegedly involved in immoral activities. Cases have been registered against the suspects under relevant legal provisions, while further investigation is underway to identify and arrest other individuals linked to the network. The official told that SHO Muhammad Yousaf Jutt reaffirmed that indiscriminate action against illegal shisha cafés, drug peddlers and those involved in immoral activities would continue throughout the jurisdiction of Lohi Bher Police Station.—APP

President felicitates Maldives leadership

“President Zardari stated that Pakistan attaches great importance to its fraternal relations with the Maldives,” it was added

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Sunday, extended felicitations to the President of the Republic of Maldives Dr Mohamed Muizzu, the Government and people on their Independence Day. The president highlighted the special significance of this year's Independence Day as it also marked the 61st anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Maldives, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. He noted that this important milestone reflected more than six decades of enduring friendship, mutual trust and close cooperation between the two countries. “President Zardari stated that Pakistan attaches great importance to its fraternal relations with the Maldives,” it was added. He expressed confidence that the bonds of friendship would continue to grow stronger, further enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation and contributing to the peace, progress and prosperity of the people of both nations.—DNA

Facilitation Center issues 2,226 public service documents

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration has reported continued delivery of public services through its Citizen Facilitation Center, where 2,226 documents and certificates were issued over the past week. The weekly performance report showed that the center processed 604 international driving permits, 859 domiciles, 204 character certificates, 149 birth certificates, and 207 MRCs and DRCs, reflecting the range of services available to residents under one roof. According to the district administration, the Citizen Facilitation Center has been established to provide multiple public services at a single location, reducing the need for residents to visit different offices for routine documentation and certification requirements. The weekly report revealed that 604 international driving permits were issued during the reporting period. In addition, 204 character certificates were

provided to applicants, while 859 domicile certificates were processed and delivered. The center also issued 149 birth certificates during the week. Another 207 cases related to Marriage Registration Certificates (MRCs) and Death Registration Certificates (DRCs) were completed and handed over to citizens. The report further stated that 47 surety bond cases were processed during the same period. Meanwhile, officials handled 156 document attestation cases, enabling applicants to obtain verification of important records through the facility. District administration officials said the center continues to provide a broad range of services under one roof, helping residents complete official procedures through a centralized system. The administration noted that the facility has been equipped with modern service infrastructure to

support efficient public service delivery. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon said that citizens visiting the center are being provided access to various government services at a single location. He added that efforts are continuing to improve service standards and ensure timely processing of applications. The deputy commissioner also highlighted the role of the Citizen Complaint Box, stating that feedback received from visitors is reviewed and acted upon on a daily basis. The mechanism is being used to identify areas where service delivery can be improved and to address concerns raised by members of the public. A district administration spokesperson said that the performance of the Citizen Facilitation Center is being monitored through real-time statistical tracking, allowing officials to review service trends and operational efficiency on an ongoing basis.—DNA

Briefs

Minister inspects Islamabad model jail construction progress

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Tala Chaudhry visited the under-construction Islamabad Model Jail on Saturday to review the progress of the long-awaited project, directing authorities to accelerate work while maintaining the highest construction standards. During the visit, the minister received a detailed briefing on the ongoing development work and inspected various components of the project. Officials from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) were also present. Tala Chaudhry described the Islamabad Model Jail as a priority project of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, saying the facility reflects the government's commitment to modernizing the country's correctional infrastructure. He said the project had remained pending for years before the current government moved to translate it into reality and initiated work at a fast pace. According to the minister, development projects across the country are being completed at a record speed under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. —DNA

Balochistan operations to continue: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD, JUL 25 (DNA): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has praised security forces for carrying out successful intelligence-based operations against militants in Balochistan under Operation Al-Azm, commending their professionalism and effectiveness in counterterrorism efforts. In a statement, Naqvi said security forces are conducting effective operations against militants across Balochistan as part of Operation Al-Azm. He specifically lauded the successful operation against militants in the Khad Kocha area of Mastung district. The interior minister commended the professionalism of the security forces, noting that 13 militants had been killed in operations conducted under Operation Al-Azm so far. —DNA

IRRI, China support technology transfer for Pakistan rice

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has completed a six-year rice productivity enhancement project in Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, introducing modern farm machinery, water-saving technologies and improved rice varieties to help narrow the gap between actual and potential yields. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the government adopted an integrated approach focused on modern technology, research and development, improved access to quality inputs and farmer capacity building. —APP

IIRIS, Indonesia Embassy host international seminar

Representing the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Rahmat Hindiarta, Minister Counselor and Coordinator for Information, Social and Cultural Affairs, shared Indonesia's perspective on ASEAN-Pakistan cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan – The International Institute for Regional and International Studies (IIRIS), in collaboration with the Indonesian Corner, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Islamabad, and Women University Mardan, successfully organized an international seminar titled "Reviving the Silk Road to Connect ASEAN and Pakistan: Unlocking Trade, Tourism, and Investment Potential." The seminar brought together diplomats, parliamentarians, academics, researchers, students, and policy experts to explore new avenues for strengthening Pakistan-ASEAN relations through enhanced economic cooperation, tourism, regional connectivity, and educational collaboration. The event commenced with welcome remarks by Mr. Shafiqat Rasool, President of IIRIS, who warmly welcomed distinguished guests, members of the diplomatic community, scholars, students, and participants from across Pakistan. In his address, he emphasized the growing importance of ASEAN

as one of the world's most dynamic regional organizations and highlighted the immense opportunities for expanding Pakistan's engagement with Southeast Asia. Mr. Rasool underscored the significance of the upcoming ASEAN Summit in the Philippines, noting that the evolving regional and global geopolitical landscape presents new opportunities for Pakistan to strengthen partnerships with ASEAN member states. He stressed that deeper cooperation in trade, tourism, investment, education, and people-to-people exchanges would contribute to regional prosperity and sustainable development while reviving the historic spirit of the Silk Road. The Speaker Dr. Sadiya Sulaiman, Associate Professor at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, delivered the keynote address, emphasizing that effective regional connectivity requires not only sound economic policies but also strong political commitment, visionary leadership, and sustained institutional cooperation. She highlighted the importance of academic institutions and policy research in shaping practical strategies for regional integration.

Addressing the seminar, Guest of Honour Maulana Nazim Ali Shah, Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, discussed Pakistan's growing engagement with ASEAN countries and emphasized the role of parliamentary diplomacy in promoting regional partnerships, economic cooperation, and sustainable development. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to expanding constructive relations with ASEAN member states. Representing the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Rahmat Hindiarta, Minister Counselor and Coordinator for Information, Social and Cultural Affairs, shared Indonesia's perspective on ASEAN-Pakistan cooperation. He highlighted Indonesia's continued commitment to strengthening collaboration with Pakistan in trade, investment, tourism, education, cultural exchange, and regional dialogue. He also reaffirmed Indonesia's support for initiatives that promote greater connectivity between Pakistan and ASEAN. Speaking Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana, Vice Chancellor of Women University Mardan,

emphasized the critical role of universities in promoting innovation, research collaboration, entrepreneurship, and international partnerships. She noted that higher education institutions serve as vital platforms for building mutual understanding and preparing future leaders capable of advancing regional cooperation. The seminar was honored by the presence of distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, including:

- H.E. Admiral (Retd.) Ravindra Chandrasiri Wijegunaratne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan.
- H.E. Munsoo Kurimbaccus, Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritius to Pakistan.
- Mr. R.A.L. Sewtohl, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Mauritius.

Diplomats representing the Embassy of Vietnam in Islamabad. Their participation reflected the growing international interest in strengthening regional dialogue and expanding multilateral cooperation between Pakistan and ASEAN countries. During the interactive discussions, participants highlighted the strategic importance of reviving the Silk

Road as a platform for enhancing regional connectivity, promoting sustainable tourism, facilitating investment, expanding trade corridors, encouraging cultural diplomacy, and strengthening educational partnerships between Pakistan and ASEAN member states. The seminar concluded with closing remarks emphasizing that the revival of the Silk Road is not merely a historical aspiration but a practical pathway toward building stronger economic partnerships, expanding regional connectivity, and fostering lasting peace and prosperity across Asia. Speakers reaffirmed that closer collaboration among governments, academia, businesses, and civil society will be essential to unlocking the full potential of ASEAN-Pakistan relations. The International Institute for Regional and International Studies (IIRIS) reaffirmed its commitment to promoting international dialogue, evidence-based policy research, and academic diplomacy by providing platforms that strengthen regional cooperation and contribute to sustainable development across Asia.

Islamabad police dismisses 12 officers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a strict disciplinary action, the Islamabad Police has dismissed 12 officers, including two Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs), for being absent without cause from their assigned duties during the arrival of foreign delegations in the capital. The dismissed personnel include ASIs Waqar and Abid, along with ten constables. All officers were deployed at highly sensitive locations for VIP security duties. However, during a routine checking operation, they were found to have abandoned their posts without any valid reason. The constables who have been terminated from service include Asif, Umar Munir, Hamza, Faizan, and Irfan. Additionally, Ghulam Murtaza, Khurram Shehzad, Tazeem Mushtaq, Asad Islam, and Shehzad Aslam were also dismissed for gross negligence and dereliction of duty. Authorities have emphasized that such strict measures are being taken to ensure the highest standards of security and professionalism, particularly during high-profile international visits. The dismissals serve as a strong warning to all personnel against complacency while performing sensitive duties.

ANF arrests three drug suppliers

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) conducted three successful operations across the country, arresting three drug suppliers and recovered 36.8 kilograms of drugs with an estimated value of more than Rs 3.3 million. According to an ANF spokesperson, the operation targeting international drug smuggling was conducted at a courier office on Shah-rahe-Faisal in Karachi. Officials intercepted a parcel bound for Australia and recovered 210 grams of opium concealed inside a pair of shoes. In another operation near the Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza, ANF personnel intercepted a vehicle and seized 16.8 kg of hashish and 3 kg of crystal meth (ice). Three drug pushers were arrested during the operation. Separately, in District Mansehra, ANF recovered 16.8 kg of hashish from a motorcycle near Balakot Road. The ANF said cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Control of Narcotic Substances Act (CNSA), 1997, and further investigations are underway. —APP

Pakistan aims to double exports to Libya

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted a seminar titled "Enhancing Pakistan-Libya Trade and Economic Cooperation", attended by Major General (Retd.) Mumtaz, Ambassador-Designate of Pakistan to Libya. The seminar was presided over by LCCI President. Among those present were Vice President Khuram Lodhi, Executive Committee Members Nadeem Ansari, Rana Shouban Akhtar, Waqas Aslam, and Firdos Nisar. Convenor, LCCI S/C on Pakistan-Libya Trade Promotion, Sami as well as chamber members including Kamal Amjad Mian, Irfan Sohni, Malik Riaz Iqbal, Javed Iqbal, Amad Butt, Murtaza Nadeem, and Shafiq. In his welcome address, LCCI President emphasized the longstanding friendly relations between Pakistan and Libya and highlighted the need to transform strong political ties into robust economic partnerships. He noted that despite significant trade potential, bilateral trade remains far below its true capacity. Addressing the participants, Major General (Retd.) Mumtaz, Pakistan's Ambassador-Designate to Libya, described his new assignment as a mission to serve Pakistan by reconnecting businesses with a market that offers considerable untapped opportunities. He emphasized that his primary role would be that of a facilitator and connector between Pakistani and Libyan stakeholders. Stressing the importance of chamber-to-chamber engagement, he encouraged organized business delegations and institutional cooperation to strengthen commercial ties. The Ambassador-Designate informed participants that Libya presents significant opportunities despite perceptions about instability. —DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen, Mr./Muhammad Mutahar Al-Ashabi. During the meeting, there was a pleasant conversation and an exchange of views on matters of mutual interest. DNA

Foreign secretary urges stronger science diplomacy

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTEC) Saturday launched the first 2026 issue of the Journal of Science Communication and Diplomacy at a ceremony held here, marking two years of the journal's successful publication. Foreign Office, COMSTEC launch first 2026 issue of Journal of Science Communication and Diplomacy. Foreign Secretary Ambassador Anna Baloch, who was the chief guest at the ceremony, called for stronger science diplomacy and emphasized that today's global challenges require collective solutions through enhanced scientific cooperation and evidence-based policymaking. The ceremony was attended by ambassadors, diplomats, scientists, academics, heads of national organizations, members of the journal's editorial board, and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and COMSTEC. Ambassadors from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Tajikistan and Mauritius, diplomats from Jordan and

Azerbaijan, as well as senior officials of the ECO Science Foundation, Higher Education Commission, Pakistan Academy of Sciences and representatives of other leading scientific and academic institutions also attended. Addressing the ceremony, Foreign Secretary Ambassador underscored that today's global challenges require collective solutions and highlighted the increasingly important role of science diplomacy in bridging science and foreign policy. She emphasized the need for enhanced scientific cooperation within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and greater participation of developing countries in shaping the governance of emerging technologies. She also appreciated the collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and COMSTEC in publishing the journal, describing it as a significant initiative to strengthen science diplomacy and international cooperation. Speaking on the occasion, Coordinator General COMSTEC Prof. Dr. Iqbal Choudhary said science diplomacy had become one of the most effective instruments for addressing global challenges through international cooperation, scientific knowledge and innovation. —APP

Pakistan-Türkiye \$5 billion trade vision made a reality

Says ICCI gears up global outreach to Position Pakistan as an investment destination

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), under the leadership of its President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has intensified its economic diplomacy efforts to position Pakistan as a preferred destination for trade, investment and industrial collaboration while translating the shared vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan into tangible economic outcomes. Talking to visiting trade and industry leaders at the Chamber House on Saturday, Sardar Tahir Mehmood said ICCI is fully committed to supporting the leadership of both countries in achieving the ambitious target of increasing bilateral trade from around US\$1.4 billion to US\$5 billion. He said that while many are still discussing ways to achieve this goal, the ICCI has moved beyond delib-

erations by taking practical initiatives through business-to-business meetings, joint ventures, business matchmaking and direct engagement between the private sectors of Pakistan and Türkiye. He said promoting Pakistan's economic interests through proactive international outreach has become one of ICCI's foremost priorities. The Chamber will continue to project Pakistan's positive image, attract foreign investment, boost exports and establish long-term commercial partnerships with friendly countries. Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that, in line with this vision, the ICCI is leading a high-powered business delegation to Istanbul to organize the Pakistan-Türkiye Business Opportunities Conference and Excellence Award Ceremony on August 13, 2026. The conference will bring together leading entrepreneurs, industrialists and investors from both countries to explore joint ventures, strengthen business-to-business linkag-

es and identify new opportunities for bilateral trade, investment and technology transfer. He said the conference will feature structured B2B meetings, sector-specific interactions and business matchmaking between Pakistani and Turkish companies to facilitate concrete commercial agreements and long-term strategic partnerships. The initiative is being organized with the active support of the Embassy of Pakistan in Ankara, the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Islamabad, and other relevant government and trade institutions of both countries. The visiting business leaders appreciated ICCI's proactive efforts to strengthen Pakistan's economic diplomacy and expressed optimism that the Pakistan-Türkiye Business Opportunities Conference would usher in a new era of bilateral trade, investment and industrial collaboration, bringing the business communities of the two brotherly nations closer than ever before.

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Monsoon is an Invitation to Build Green Pakistan

DR. MUHAMMD AKRAM ZAHEER



EACH summer brings fresh warnings from climate scientists and each year those warnings become more difficult to ignore. Rising temperatures are no longer distant projections confined to scientific journals; they have become part of daily life. Across the world, heatwaves are lasting longer, forests are burning more frequently, glaciers are shrinking and weather patterns are becoming increasingly unpredictable. Pakistan stands among the countries most vulnerable to these changes. From prolonged droughts to devastating floods and increasingly severe heatwaves, the country has already begun to experience the consequences of a warming

planet. The challenge before us is immense, but nature continues to offer opportunities for meaningful action. One of the greatest of these arrives every year with the monsoon. For most people, the rainy season evokes memories of cool evenings, the fragrance of wet soil and relief from the scorching heat. Yet the monsoon represents far more than a welcome change in weather. It is nature's annual invitation to restore what has been lost. Rainfall creates ideal conditions for tree plantation. The softened soil allows roots to spread quickly, while the increased moisture reduces the stress that young saplings often experience after transplantation. Natural rainfall also lessens the need for constant irrigation, improving survival rates and reducing maintenance costs. These are precisely the reasons why many countries organise their largest afforestation campaigns during the rainy season. Trees remain among the most effective allies in the struggle against climate change. They quietly perform services upon which human civilisation depends. By absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, they help moderate the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Their shade lowers surface temperatures, reducing the urban heat island effect that makes cities significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas. Their roots hold soil together, limit erosion, recharge groundwater and lessen the destructive impact of heavy rainfall. Their branches provide shelter for birds, insects and countless other forms of life that sustain healthy ecosystems. Pakistan has every reason to embrace this natural solution with renewed determination. The country has witnessed an alarming decline in tree cover over several decades. Rapid urbanisation, expanding road networks, commercial development and unchecked construction have steadily replaced green spaces with concrete. While economic growth demands infrastructure, development that ignores ecological balance eventually imposes far greater costs through declining air quality, water shortages and extreme weather. Lahore illustrates this transformation with painful clarity. Once celebrated for its gardens,

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tree-lined avenues and canals, the city now struggles with dense smog during winter and intense heat during summer. Expanding residential schemes, shrinking open spaces and increasing traffic have altered both the landscape and the climate. Similar trends are visible in many other urban centres where green belts continue to disappear. Unless this trajectory is reversed, future generations may know these cities only through photographs and nostalgic descriptions. The value of trees extends beyond environmental protection. Green surroundings contribute significantly to public health and social well-being. Parks and shaded streets encourage outdoor activity, reduce stress and improve mental health. Children benefit from safe places to play, while elderly citizens find relief from harsh summer temperatures. Research across the world has consistently shown that neighbourhoods with greater tree cover enjoy healthier living conditions and stronger community interaction. A greener city is often a more liveable and humane city. Yet tree plantation must not become a numbers game. Public campaigns often celebrate the distribution of millions of saplings, but far less attention is paid to whether those plants survive beyond the first season. Plantation without maintenance produces little lasting benefit. A single mature tree contributes more to the environment than hundreds of neglected saplings that fail to take root. The emphasis, therefore, should be on quality rather than publicity. Indigenous species adapted to local climatic conditions deserve priority because they require less water, support native biodiversity and generally survive better than imported varieties. Species such as banyan, peepal, neem, shisham, kikar, jamun, beri, moringa and dharek have long flourished in Pakistan's environment and continue to provide valuable ecological services. Their restoration should become an essential component of both public policy and community participation. Government institutions undoubtedly have an important role to play through urban planning, forest conservation and effective enforcement against illegal tree cutting. However, environmental responsibility cannot remain the exclusive domain of the state. Schools, universities, religious institutions, businesses, industries and neighbourhood organisations all possess the capacity to transform local landscapes. Every available space, whether within educational campuses, public parks, roadside corridors or residential communities, offers an opportunity to expand tree cover. Families also have an important responsibility. Environmental awareness begins at home and children who grow up planting and caring for trees are more likely to value conservation throughout their lives. A tree planted to celebrate a birthday, graduation, marriage or other family milestone carries a meaning that extends far beyond the occasion itself. It becomes a living reminder that personal happiness can also contribute to the common good. Islamic tradition further strengthens this sense of responsibility. Caring for the earth, protecting living creatures and planting trees are regarded as virtuous acts that continue to benefit others long after the planter is gone. Every traveller who rests beneath a tree, every bird that builds a nest among its branches and every child who enjoys its shade becomes part of a continuing legacy of service. Environmental stewardship is therefore not only a civic obligation but also a moral one. The urgency of the moment cannot be overstated. Climate change is accelerating and each passing year narrows the window for effective action. Delaying meaningful environmental restoration will only increase the burden placed upon future generations.

Why Is China Emerging As A Superpower? Part-II

Qamar Bashir



By 2025, China's nominal GDP exceeded US\$20 trillion, while its economy measured by purchasing power parity (PPP) remained the largest in the world, reflecting the immense scale of its domestic productive capacity. These figures underscore that China is no longer merely a large developing economy; it is one of the two dominant economic powers shaping the international system. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), China has been the world's largest manufacturing economy since 2010, accounting

CHINA'S emergence as the United States' principal strategic challenger did not occur through territorial conquest or military expansion alone. It resulted from one of the most remarkable economic transformations in modern history. Over four decades, China systematically invested in manufacturing, infrastructure, education, science, technology and global trade, creating an economic foundation that now supports its geopolitical ambitions. Unlike the Soviet Union, whose influence depended primarily upon military alliances and ideological competition, China has woven itself into the fabric of the global economy. Today, its factories, research laboratories, ports, logistics networks and financial investments touch nearly every region of the world. The World Bank estimates that China's economy expanded at an average annual rate of about 9 percent for more than three decades, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and transforming the country into the world's largest manufacturing nation. By 2025, China's nominal GDP exceeded US\$20 trillion, while its economy measured by purchasing power parity (PPP) remained the largest in the world, reflecting the immense scale of its domestic productive capacity. These figures underscore that China is no longer merely a large developing economy; it is one of the two dominant economic powers shaping the international system. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), China has been the world's largest manufacturing economy since 2010, accounting for roughly 30 percent of global manufacturing value added—more than the combined output of several other leading industrial economies. This production spans consumer goods, industrial machinery, electronics, telecommunications equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, high-speed rail systems and advanced engineering products. Chinese firms no longer compete solely on low-cost labour. They increasingly compete on productivity, engineering capability, economies of scale and integrated supply chains. Entire industrial ecosystems—from raw materials and component suppliers to final assembly and global logistics—operate within China, enabling manufacturers to reduce costs, accelerate innovation and respond rapidly to changing market demand. This industrial concentration has no modern historical parallel. China's leadership is particularly evident in electric vehicles (EVs) and advanced battery technologies. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), China accounted for more than 70 percent of global electric-vehicle production in 2025. It also produced over 80 percent of the world's lithium-ion battery cells, approximately 85 percent of cathode materials, and more than 90 percent of anode materials used in EV batteries. These integrated supply chains provide Chinese manufacturers with significant cost advantages over competitors

in Europe and North America. The IEA further reports that battery-electric vehicles manufactured in China can often be produced at costs more than 30 percent lower than comparable vehicles assembled in advanced economies. These advantages arise not only from labour costs but from industrial clustering, supplier proximity, mature logistics systems and large domestic demand. This leadership extends well beyond automobiles. Batteries are essential for renewable energy storage, consumer electronics, defence systems and future grid infrastructure, making China's dominance strategically significant. China's influence is magnified through trade. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), China remains among the world's largest merchandise exporters and importers. It has become the principal trading partner for 150 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. This extensive commercial integration creates relationships that differ fundamentally from Cold War alliances. Economic interdependence therefore provides China with forms of influence that cannot be measured solely through military power. President Xi Jinping institutionalized China's outward economic strategy through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013. Rather than establishing military alliances, the BRI seeks to strengthen connectivity through ports, railways, highways, airports, industrial parks, energy facilities, fibre-optic networks and logistics corridors. Research by the Green Finance & Development Center at Fudan University estimates that approximately 150 countries have participated in BRI cooperation in various forms. By the end of 2024, cumulative Chinese engagement through construction contracts and investments exceeded US\$1.1 trillion. These projects span Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and parts of Europe. The initiative has produced numerous transport corridors, ports and energy projects that have improved regional connectivity and reduced transport costs. The World Bank concludes that, accompanied by sound domestic reforms and transparent financing, BRI transport investments can reduce travel times, lower trade costs and stimulate economic growth. Whether viewed as an economic development strategy or a geopolitical instrument, the BRI has substantially expanded China's international influence. China's rise is no longer driven only by manufacturing. It increasingly rests upon scientific capability. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that China's research and development expenditure has grown rapidly over the past decade, approaching the scale of American investment. China's R&D intensity has reached approximately 2.7 percent of GDP, reflecting sustained national commitment to scientific advancement. Innovation is also visible in intellectual prop-

erty. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Chinese inventors generated the world's largest number of patent families in generative artificial intelligence between 2014 and 2023. China has published more generative-AI patent families annually than all other countries combined since 2017, demonstrating the scale of its research ecosystem. China's scientific progress demonstrates that it is no longer merely adopting foreign technology—it is increasingly contributing to global technological advancement. China has also become central to the global transition toward renewable energy. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) reports that the world added a record volume of renewable generating capacity in 2024, with China accounting for well over half of all new installations. Chinese manufacturers dominate global production of solar photovoltaic panels, wind turbines and battery storage systems. This industrial leadership creates strategic leverage extending far beyond environmental policy. Countries seeking to reduce carbon emissions often depend upon Chinese-produced equipment to meet their renewable-energy objectives. The result is a paradox: governments attempting to reduce strategic dependence upon China frequently rely upon Chinese technology to achieve their own climate commitments. Perhaps no sector better illustrates China's strategic importance than critical minerals. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), China produced approximately 70 percent of the world's mined rare-earth elements in 2024 and maintains an even stronger position in processing, refining and manufacturing rare-earth permanent magnets. These materials are indispensable for electric vehicles, wind turbines, smartphones, fighter aircraft, precision-guided munitions, radar systems and countless advanced technologies. Recognizing this vulnerability, the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan and European partners are investing heavily in alternative mining and processing facilities. However, developing complete supply chains requires years of investment, environmental approvals, technical expertise and substantial capital. Consequently, critical minerals have become one of the defining strategic battlegrounds of the twenty-first century. China's influence no longer rests simply upon the size of its economy. It rests upon its central role in the industries that will shape the future global economy. (Part III will examine the United States' response—including tariffs, export controls and Indo-Pacific strategy—and explain why Washington now views China, rather than Russia, as its principal comprehensive strategic competitor.)

—The Writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France
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Shocks and Aftershocks by Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



A parallel drama of sudden upheaval and lingering aftershocks has unfolded more recently, though this time the forces at work have been those of human conflict rather than nature's blind fury. Late in February 2026, long-simmering tensions between Iran and USA erupted into open warfare, with Israel joining the fray in decisive fashion

IN the autumn of 2005, the earth rose in wrath against the ancient hills of Kashmir. On the eighth day of October, a violent convulsion of 7.6 magnitude tore through the region, its epicentre lying a mere 19 kms northeast of Muzaffarabad. The tremor was felt far beyond Pakistan's borders, reverberating through Afghanistan and Tajikistan, across the valleys of India, and even into the remote expanses of Xinjiang. It proved one of the deadliest natural disasters of that decade, claiming thousands of lives and reducing entire villages to rubble. For months the ground refused to rest; careful records later counted no fewer than 497 aftershocks between October and the following March. During such uncertainty a sobering lesson emerged; buildings erected with care and strength stood firm against the repeated tremors, while those raised hastily or without conscience crumbled into dust and despair. A parallel drama of sudden upheaval and lingering aftershocks has unfolded more recently, though this time the forces at work have been those of human conflict rather than nature's blind fury. Late in February 2026, long-simmering tensions between Iran and USA erupted into open warfare, with Israel joining the fray in decisive fashion. Large-scale aerial and missile assaults struck hundreds of targets across Iran, homing in upon military bases, nuclear facilities, and centres of leadership. The loss of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the opening strikes sent shockwaves through the region and beyond. Tehran responded with barrages of missiles and swarms of drones that lit the night skies and struck at targets across several countries. For several weeks in March and April the fighting intensified, leaving thousands dead—most of them in Iran and Lebanon—and threatening to engulf wider circles of involvement involving Hezbollah and other actors. Shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, that vital artery of global energy, faced grave peril, and the world watched anxiously as oil supplies trembled on the edge of disruption. A measure of relief arrived around the middle of June when a MOU was concluded between the United States

and Iran. The accord promised a halt to major combat operations, the reopening of the strait to peaceful navigation, and the beginning of serious negotiations concerning Iran's nuclear program. For a brief season hope flickered that reason might yet prevail. Yet by the seventh and eighth of July the ceasefire had fractured. Iranian forces struck at merchant vessels in the Hormuz passage; the United States answered with fresh waves of airstrikes and the reimposition of a naval blockade. Iran, in turn, launched retaliatory attacks upon American and coalition positions in Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and elsewhere. As July draws toward its close, the pattern of nocturnal American strikes and Iranian counterblows continues, holding the Gulf in a state of restless tension. Though the principal theatre of war lies distant from our frontiers, its aftershocks have travelled with merciless swiftness to the streets and bazaars of Pakistan. The initial convulsion in global oil markets followed hard upon the early phase of hostilities. Petrol prices in Pakistan surged to an unprecedented four hundred and fifty-eight rupees and forty-one paise per litre on the third of April—a record born of disrupted supplies and fevered speculation. Diesel climbed still higher, touching five hundred and twenty rupees and thirty-five paise. The consequences touched every corner of national life; transporters raised their fares, farmers faced higher costs for machinery and transport, and ordinary households tightened their belts as inflation rippled outward. For a time, as diplomatic channels—including Pakistan's own quiet mediation efforts—bore fruit and the strait began to function once more, prices eased and a measure of stability returned. Yet the renewed outbreak of fighting in July has shattered that fragile calm. Oil prices have again become uncontrollable, climbing under the pressure of uncertainty and fresh speculation. The government, its options narrowed by heavy reliance on international loans and a vulnerable economy, has found itself compelled to adjust domestic fuel rates almost daily, basing decisions as much upon forecasts of fu-

ture trouble as upon present realities. Thus, the nation has endured a great initial shock followed by persistent aftershocks, much like the Kashmir earthquake two decades earlier. Each fresh tremor in the Gulf sends another wave through our foreign exchange reserves, our transport sector, and the fragile purchasing power of the common citizen. Industries dependent upon steady fuel supplies have curtailed operations; the cost of everyday commodities has risen in sympathy; and the burden has fallen most heavily upon those least able to bear it. Pakistan's economy, long accustomed to navigating external storms while standing upon borrowed foundations, feels these disturbances with particular acuity. Even in these challenging times, the dry wit of everyday Pakistanis remains unshaken. One recalls an incident from the days when the Daily Pakistan newspaper was under the ownership of Akbar Bhatti. A reporter rushed into the newsroom one afternoon declaring that Bhatti Sahib's car had met with an accident. Before concern could fully form, another veteran journalist remarked with a knowing smile that this surely meant salaries would not arrive on time that month. The quip, though light, spoke volumes about the precariousness of life and livelihood when those at the helm encounter misfortune. Pakistan has passed through many such seasons of trial—political upheavals, economic tempests, and natural calamities alike. Each time the nation has gathered its scattered strength, mended what could be mended, and pressed onward. The present difficulties arising from the conflict in the Gulf, with their daily toll upon fuel prices and economic confidence, constitute yet another test of our collective endurance. The strong institutions and resilient spirit of the people have served as anchors in the past; they remain our surest hope today. God willing, this too shall pass, and Pakistan shall emerge from these aftershocks steadier and more united, its foundations reinforced by hardship and its future secured by the unyielding will of its citizens.

Briefs

War to widen...

FROM PAGE 01

memorandum of understanding aimed at ending the war that had briefly eased tensions. Foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said several rounds of negotiations were held in Iranian capital Tehran on Friday and Saturday between Iranian and Omani deputy foreign ministers. The discussions focused on "common principles and operational mechanisms" for ensuring the safe passage of shipping through the strait while respecting the sovereign rights of the two states, Baqaei said. He described the talks as "useful" and said progress had been made, adding that "technical and political consultations between the two sides were continuing." In June, Oman and Iran said they would discuss imposing service fees, a move Washington opposes. But Muscat also said ships could transit Hormuz via its waters, angering Tehran, which responded with a pattern of escalation. Iran said on Saturday that it had not recorded any US attacks after nearly two weeks of strikes. According to news site Axios, the Pentagon presented US President Donald Trump with a plan for a 14th consecutive night of strikes, but he declined to authorize it in favor of renewed talks. The report said Trump made the order to hold fire after an Omani delegation arrived in Tehran "for talks on a new arrangement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz." Responding to a separate question, Baqaei said there had been "no change" in the status of shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

16 terrorists killed ...

FROM PAGE 01

A monthly security assessment released in early June by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) said that after two consecutive months of improvement, Pakistan's security situation deteriorated sharply in May, driven primarily by escalating terrorist violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The report said Balochistan emerged as the most affected province during the month. The province recorded 71 terrorist attacks, compared with 34 in April, representing a 109pc increase. The deteriorating security situation was further reflected in a surge in kidnappings, it said. Of the 54 abductions reported nationwide during May, 52 occurred in Balochistan alone, highlighting the growing operational reach and confidence of terrorist groups in the province, it said. On July 9, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the country's civil and military leadership had taken a "mutual and singular decision" to end terrorism after multiple major terrorist incidents in Balochistan. He made the remarks at a meeting in Quetta of the Provincial Apex Committee on the National Action Plan, with Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir also present. On Saturday, the federal and Balochistan governments reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening security coordination, accelerating the implementation of a comprehensive peace strategy, and ensuring the writ of the state across the province, declaring there would be "no space for terrorists" in the province. The commitment was made during a high-level law and order meeting co-chaired by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti in Quetta. CM Bugti briefed participants on the prevailing security situation, progress in ongoing operations, and the strategy for addressing security challenges. The meeting decided to further enhance the professional capacity of the Balochistan Counter-Terrorism Force and the provincial police, while expediting previously approved reforms to strengthen the force.

Foreign Ministers of Uzbekistan and Pakistan hold meeting

Both ministers emphasized that enhanced cooperation will contribute to peace, prosperity, and stability across the region, underscoring the importance of continued dialogue and partnership under the SCO framework.

DNA

BISHKEK: On the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting, the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov held talks with Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The meeting was marked by warm exchanges, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to advancing the Uzbekistan-Pakistan strategic partnership. Discussions focused on translating the new momentum in bilateral relations into practical outcomes. Key areas highlighted included: Bilateral trade: Harnessing untapped potential to expand economic cooperation. Transport connectivity: Strengthening infrastructure links to facilitate smoother movement of goods and people. Interregional ties: Expanding collaboration across diverse sectors to deepen mutual understanding. International cooperation: Reinforcing close coordination within multilateral and regional organizations. Both ministers emphasized that enhanced cooperation will contribute to peace, prosperity, and stability across the region, underscoring the importance of continued dialogue and partnership under the SCO framework.



Quetta's public transport moves from smoke to clean air

QUETTA :Every morning, 31-year-old Ehsanullah, a resident of Killi Almas on the outskirts of Quetta, waits at a Green Bus stop before traveling nearly 10 kilometers to his shop daily. He says the journey, once made on old diesel-powered buses, used to be exhausting due to smoke, heat, noise and poor sanitation.

According to Ehsanullah, although Green Buses are often overcrowded because demand exceeds supply, air-conditioned cabins, improved cleanliness and greater comfort have significantly improved the daily commuting experience. He adds that passengers have also become more conscious about keeping

the buses clean. With a population of more than 2.2 million, Quetta's growing urbanization has increased the demand for reliable public transport. The Government of Baluchistan launched its Green Bus service in 2023 with eight buses serving around 8,000 passengers daily. Following the project's expansion in 2025, the fleet now consists of 25 buses operating on four major routes and carrying approximately 25,000 passengers every day. The provincial government aims to gradually transition Quetta's public transport system to fully electric buses by 2030. Public health specialist Dr. Zaffar Iqbal Khosti warns that emissions from conventional ve-

hicles remain a major public health concern. He explains that exhaust from petrol and diesel engines contains harmful pollutants, including carbon dioxide (CO2), nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5), all of which contribute to deteriorating air quality in urban areas. While carbon dioxide is a key driver of climate change, nitrogen oxides and microscopic particles have more immediate effects on human health by contaminating the air people breathe every day, he added. According to Dr. Khosti, prolonged exposure to these pollutants significantly increases the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Fine particulate matter is particularly danger-

ous because it can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, triggering asthma attacks, worsening allergies and contributing to chronic lung conditions such as bronchitis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Long-term exposure has also been linked to reduced lung function and an increased risk of heart disease and premature death. He notes that the health burden is not shared equally across the population. Children, whose lungs are still developing, older adults and people with pre-existing respiratory illnesses are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of vehicle-related air pollution.—DNA

Sinner, Djokovic withdraw from US Open

Djokovic, 39, reached the Wimbledon semifinals, where Sinner defeated him in three sets

MONTREAL: Wimbledon champion Jannik Sinner and 24-times Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic have withdrawn from next month's US Open tune-up event in Montreal, tournament organizers said on Friday. Sinner's withdrawal is expected to make world number two Alexander Zverev and Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime the first and second seeds at the tournament which runs from August 1 to 13. Seven-times Grand Slam champion and world number three Carlos Alcaraz was ruled out already with a wrist injury. "After carefully considering all the factors together with my team, we have made the difficult decision to withdraw from Montréal. It is never easy to miss such an important event, but we believe this is the right decision to prioritize my health. I'm disappointed not to be there, but I look forward to returning to Montreal in the future," Sinner said in a statement. The 24-year-old Italian defended his Wimbledon title this month with a four-set win over German Zverev to claim his fifth Grand Slam title. Djokovic, 39, reached the Wimbledon semifinals, where Sinner defeated him in three sets.—APP

Maybe he's a racist', President Trump takes swipe at LeBron James

"I only like people that like me, so I would say Michael Jordan all the way," says US president NEW YORK: President Donald Trump, asked to weigh in on the basketball careers of Michael Jordan and LeBron James, said that James might be a racist. In a White House press conference, Fox News' Peter Doocy mentioned the Friday news that James intends to sign with the Philadelphia 76ers, then asked the president whether Jordan or James is the "best ever." Trump replied, "Michael Jordan is a guy that's a friend of mine. I play golf with him. He's a really good guy. I think LeBron is - maybe he's a racist, but maybe he doesn't like Trump. I don't know. I only like people that like me, so I would say Michael Jordan all the way." James endorsed the three candidates that ran against Trump in the past three presidential elections: Hillary Clinton in 2016, Joe Biden in 2020 and Kamala Harris in 2024. James also criticised Trump following the president's withdrawal of the Warriors' invitation to the White House in 2017, after Golden State star Stephen Curry stated that he would have declined the visit. Jordan, 63, won six NBA titles for the Chicago Bulls in the 1990s and was a five-time league MVP. James, 41, owns four NBA championship rings and has been selected MVP four times during his career with the Cleveland Cavaliers, Miami Heat and Los Angeles Lakers. He is the NBA's all-time leader in points and games played.—APP

Former PCB official Waseem Khan joins int'l basketball federation as executive director

Khan will oversee the development and administration of basketball across the continent

DNA

KARACHI: Former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief executive Wasim Khan has been appointed Executive Director of Fiba Asia and will formally assume the role in January 2027, the world basketball governing body's regional office announced. Khan, who earlier this year stepped down as the International Cricket Council's (ICC) General Manager of Cricket, has already joined Fiba Asia to begin a comprehensive handover process ahead of succeeding outgoing Executive Director Hagop Khajirian. As Executive Director of Fiba Asia, Khan will oversee the development and administration of basketball across the continent, with 44 national federations falling under his supervision. A British-Pakistani sports administrator, Wasim Khan brings extensive experience in sports governance after holding senior leadership positions across cricket. Before joining the ICC, he served as chief executive of the Pakistan Cricket Board, where he oversaw cricket operations during a key phase for Pakistan cricket. His administrative



career also includes serving as chief executive of Leicestershire County Cricket Club and the UK-based youth cricket charity Chance to Shine. Fiba said Khan has already started working with the organisation as Executive Director-designate to ensure a smooth transition before officially taking charge in January next year.

Indonesia marks first entry into China's onshore bond market

Deutsche Bank, the top foreign underwriter of panda bonds for six consecutive years, has helped German industrial giants—Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, BASF—issue panda bonds less for arbitrage than as a natural hedge, borrowing in the currency in which they already earn revenue from their vast Chinese operations

BEIJING: The Indonesian government successfully issued 7 billion yuan (around US\$1.03 billion) in yuan-denominated Panda Bonds on July 23, marking its first entry into China's onshore bond market. The offering received total orders of around 17 billion yuan, resulting in an over-subscription ratio of 2.4 times, reflecting strong appetite from investors in China's capital market. The bonds were issued in two tranches: a three-year tranche worth 5.6 billion yuan and a five-year tranche worth 1.4 billion yuan. Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa said Jakarta could consider a larger follow-up issuance if the debut transaction performs well. Indonesia has also secured a top onshore rating of AAA with a stable outlook from China Lianhe Rating, while its international ratings remain at Baa2 from Moody's and BBB from S&P and Fitch. The transaction marks a milestone: Indonesia has become the first Southeast Asian sovereign issuer of Panda Bonds—one more name on a list that has grown remarkably crowded this year. The underwriting syndicate signals how much

weight Chinese banks are placing on the deal: Bank of China is lead underwriter and bookrunner, with ICBC, CITIC Securities, CICC and DBS acting as joint leads. Indonesia has additionally secured approval to issue up to 30 billion yuan (around US\$4.43 billion) in panda bonds over the next two years. Panda-bond issuance overall has been booming this year, and sovereign governments are a small but fast-growing part of that story. Slovenia and Kazakhstan (twice, through both its treasury and its sovereign-wealth fund) made their debuts, joining repeat issuers like Hungary; Pakistan priced its own debut in May, and Brazil filed to join the queue in June, hoping to become the first Latin American sovereign to issue. The roll-call of foreign-government issuers has a decade behind it. For most of that decade the list grew slowly, one new name every year or two. Then, from mid-2025, it suddenly did not: new entrants and repeat issuers alike began arriving in quick succession. That the pace changed so abruptly, and that Beijing is plainly treating the new arrivals as strategy rather than ac-

cident, is the puzzle worth explaining. The most obvious answer is price. China's ten-year government bonds yield around 1.74%, against roughly 4.70% in America, a gap of nearly 300 basis points that has held since 2022. Emerging-market treasuries that might otherwise pay 5% or more in dollars can borrow far more cheaply in yuan, even after swapping proceeds back into dollars or local currency. Coupons on sovereign panda bonds have compressed accordingly, from 3.2% on Poland's issue in 2021 to 1.89% on Slovenia's this year. On a \$5 billion issue, a couple of percentage points is tens of millions of dollars saved annually—the arithmetic that got Mr Purbaya on a plane. But cost alone does not explain why the queue of sovereign issuers stayed so short for so long. The deeper change is institutional. A rule change at the end of 2022 let issuers freely remit proceeds abroad, removing sovereign treasuries' biggest practical objection to a bond whose proceeds had previously been hard to get out of China. A second overhaul, in January 2024, rewrote approval procedures

specifically for foreign-government issuers, cutting a process that once moved at the pace of diplomacy down to the pace of a bond deal, CEN reported. Xiao Yu, economist, associate research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), describes the shift as one from a "niche pilot" to a normalized financing channel. He notes that sovereign decisions must clear cabinets and bilateral relationships, which is why the effects of both reforms showed up with a lag, arriving conveniently just as the rate gap widened to its most attractive point. There is a geopolitical layer too. With dollar markets choppy amid Federal Reserve uncertainty and Middle East tensions, several issuers describe the yuan as an unusually stable place to raise money right now. Deutsche Bank, the top foreign underwriter of panda bonds for six consecutive years, has helped German industrial giants—Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, BASF—issue panda bonds less for arbitrage than as a natural hedge, borrowing in the currency in which they already earn revenue from their vast Chinese operations.—DNA

Pak, Saudi FMs talk...

FROM PAGE 01

The call came as concerns grow over maritime security following an escalation in attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea. Earlier this week, a Saudi commercial vessel sustained damage in an attack claimed by Yemen's Houthi militia, prompting renewed international condemnation and raising concerns about the security of one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

Polling in some areas...

FROM PAGE 01

been escorted over tight security to their respective stations to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. In total, 3,643 staff members have been deployed to manage the election operations across Mirpur's four constituencies. Authorities have also identified 320 polling stations as highly sensitive, where additional security measures have been put in place to prevent any untoward incidents. With these arrangements, the district administration has declared that preparations for the 2026 elections in Mirpur are complete. The measures reflect a strong commitment to ensuring free, fair, and transparent polling in the region.

India funding elements...

FROM PAGE 01

with the country's progress," but insisted that Pakistan now stands tall on the global stage as a peace-maker through diplomacy. He stressed that "no one can weaken Pakistan," adding that the nation remains united behind its armed forces and leadership. The minister's remarks come amid heightened political activity in AJK, where elections are underway. His statement reflects Islamabad's broader narrative that external forces are attempting to interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs, but that the resilience of the people and institutions will prevail.

Nearly 400 sq km of Punjab...

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increased," the official said, adding that it could take another three to four days for the situation to return to normal, provided there is no further rainfall. According to the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) of the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the Chenab and Ravi rivers are currently flowing at medium and low flood levels, respectively. However, water levels in both rivers are expected to rise to medium to high flood levels over the next 24 hours. The Chenab at Marala, Khanki and Qadirabad is expected to remain at medium to high flood levels, while the Ravi is also likely to reach similar levels at Balloki (Kasur) and Sidhnai (Khanewal). "River Chenab at Khanki, Qadirabad and Chinoti Bridge is at the medium flood level. River Indus at Kalabagh, Chashma and Taunsa, River Kabul at Nowshera, River Chenab at Marala and Trimmu, and River Ravi at Balloki and Sidhnai are at the low flood level. All major rivers at other gauging stations are flowing within their normal ranges," the FFD report states. As more showers are expected on Sunday, the deputy commissioners of Lahore, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Narowal, Khanewal and others have been put on high-alert in terms of flood monitoring and preparedness arrangements. The Lahore DC and his team rushed to the affected areas in the catchment area of Hudiara drain. They visited Tiba Khudpur Drain and the Hadyara Drain in Mohlanwal to review drainage operations and monitor the flow of rainwater following heavy monsoon showers across the city. The Lahore commissioner also visited Nankana Sahib to review the flood situation and emergency response arrangements. He visited Halla Waraich and inspected the river erosion occurring beyond the village.

Briefs

Strategy
urged to
unlock
digital export
potential

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Sunday stated that Pakistan's rapidly expanding gig economy presents a historic opportunity to significantly increase export earnings by leveraging its large pool of skilled technology professionals and freelancers.

Chairing a meeting of the PFC Board of Directors, he emphasized that young entrepreneurs should move beyond conventional freelancing and focus on developing value-added digital products, software solutions, and technology-based businesses to generate higher export revenues.

He stressed the need to facilitate secure digital payment systems, improve access to international freelancing platforms, and promote technology startups to further strengthen Pakistan's digital exports.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq urged policymakers to formulate a comprehensive national digital economy strategy anchored in public-private partnerships, expanded digital literacy programmes, and greater investment in innovation, research, and development. Such measures, he noted, would help Pakistan emerge as a leading exporter of digital services while ensuring sustainable economic growth.

He added that Pakistan boasts the world's fourth-largest freelance workforce, providing a robust foundation for expanding the export of digital services. He pointed out that rising global demand for software development, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing, digital marketing, graphic designing, content creation, and virtual assistance offers immense opportunities for Pakistani professionals.—APP

Cotton Body
reviews
varieties to
boost yield

MULTAN: The first meeting of the committee monitoring cotton varieties, constituted on the special directives of Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahu, was held here on Sunday at the Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture Director General Pest Warning and Quality Control of Pesticides Punjab, Dr. Amir Rasool, presided over the high-level meeting. During the meeting, participants presented comprehensive recommendations regarding new cotton varieties, testing methodologies, and the establishment of a more effective research framework. The forum reaffirmed its firm commitment to promoting modern agricultural research and ensuring that its practical outcomes reach farming communities effectively. The delegation thoroughly reviewed research activities, experimental fields, and candidate cotton varieties currently under trial.—APP

Pak, Uzbekistan explore
joint pharma ventures

He proposed that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan establish formal cooperation with leading chambers of commerce and industry in Pakistan

DNA

TASHKENT: A Pakistani business delegation led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Patron-in-Chief of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry and CEO of D. Watson Group, visited the Pharmaceutical Industry Development Agency of Uzbekistan to explore opportunities for cooperation in pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, healthcare services, research and investment. Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan also attended the meeting, demonstrating the commitment of both sides to strengthening private-sector engagement and expanding economic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Welcoming the delegation, Mirjalal, Chief Specialist at the Pharmaceutical Industry Development Agency, informed the delegation that Uzbekistan's market for medicines and medical devices was valued at approximately US\$2.5 billion and said the country was working to strengthen its position as a major pharmaceutical manufacturing and investment hub in Central Asia. He said the pharmaceutical sector had a portfolio of 32 investment projects and assured Pakistani companies interested in establishing manufacturing facilities or entering into joint ventures of the Agency's full facilitation and support. Mirjalal further stated that, 58 medicine-manufacturing companies in Uzbekistan held nation-



al Good Manufacturing Practice certificates, while pharmaceutical products produced in the country were being supplied to 55 international markets. He also briefed the delegation on Uzbekistan's investment policies, including the general corporate income-tax rate of 15 percent and the incentives available to qualifying investors in specialised pharmaceutical economic zones. He highlighted the government's efforts to develop modern research and manufacturing infrastructure, promote technology transfer, attract foreign investment and strengthen cooperation with international pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and healthcare institutions. Speaking on the occasion, Saidnazirkhanov Saidka-

mil, Director of the Department of Foreign Economic Activity at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, welcomed the Pakistani delegation and said Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoyed close and strategic relations. He said the Chamber regularly facilitated Pakistani business delegations and helped connect them with relevant companies, government institutions and business organisations in Uzbekistan. He described pharmaceuticals as one of the most promising areas of bilateral cooperation and said Uzbekistan could become an important market and investment destination for Pakistani pharmaceutical manufacturers. Saidnazirkhanov assured the delegation that the Chamber of

Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan was ready to assist Pakistani companies in identifying suitable local partners, establishing commercial contacts and benefiting from the facilities available in the country's free economic and specialised pharmaceutical zones. He said there was considerable potential for cooperation in medicines, medical equipment and supplies, including injection needles and other healthcare products. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said Pakistan had a well-developed pharmaceutical industry with significant capacity to meet Uzbekistan's growing demand for quality medicines, medical supplies and healthcare products. He said Uzbekistan of-

fered strong potential for Pakistani investors due to its expanding domestic market, strategic location in Central Asia, investor-friendly policies and increasing focus on local pharmaceutical manufacturing. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari expressed interest in exploring investment opportunities, joint ventures and the establishment of pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities in collaboration with Uzbek business partners. He emphasised the need to establish institutional linkages between the Pharmaceutical Industry Development Agency, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan and relevant pharmaceutical associations, chambers and companies in Pakistan. He said regular exchange

of business delegations, market information and investment proposals would help transform the strong political relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan into mutually beneficial economic and commercial partnerships. Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group-FPCCI, said closer cooperation between the private sectors of Pakistan and Uzbekistan was essential for increasing bilateral trade and investment in pharmaceuticals and other priority sectors. He proposed that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan establish formal cooperation with leading chambers of commerce and industry in Pakistan.

Privatization of national
imagination: AI, advertising
and synthetic Pakistan

Turn on TV or go to youtube, Ads have been increasingly using AI and AI generated advertising does not merely sell products. Increasingly, it sells realities. And those realities are constructed from the data on which algorithms are trained, not necessarily from the emotions, experiences and lived realities of the people they claim to represent. The danger is not only misinformation in the traditional sense. It is subtler. AI can slowly manufacture a synthetic Pakistan: polished, homogenized, algorithmically optimized and emotionally manipulative. A Pakistan that looks like suburban Spain, a global metropolis, or even a utopia, but not necessarily like the country itself. Corporations and algorithms are beginning to decide what Pakistan looks like. The marketing director is becoming, in effect, the country's unofficial minister of national heritage and cultural imagination. Which homes are shown? Which accents are considered acceptable? Which skin tones appear aspirational? Which cities look modern? Which citizens are visible, and which disappear into the background? The Pakistan increasingly presented in AI-generated advertisements often resembles an abstract global metropolis more than the country we actually inhabit. Its streets are impossibly clean. Its cafés look Scandinavian. Its families speak in carefully neutralized accents. Its young people dance at open-air concerts beneath neon skies. Everyone is attractive, emotionally articulate, upper-middle-class and permanently well-adjusted. But this is not merely harmless fantasy. Advertising has always idealized reality. AI changes the scale and credibility of that idealization. Over time, this has consequences. A nation begins to internalize synthetic standards of beauty, success and belonging. AI systems trained largely on globalized datasets can reproduce the same visual hierarchies repeatedly: lighter skin, elite urban aesthetics, minimalist interiors, Westernized body language, imported lifestyles and sanitized emotional cultures. AI has not merely accelerated the death of the internet. It may be contributing to the death of reality and of diversity. And, the result is not representation. It is the algorithmic filtering of national identity. Entire populations risk becoming culturally invisible. Does an AI system know anything about the Hindko spoken around Qalandarabad, KP? Does it understand the cultural world of the Kalash valleys? Can it represent the working-class commuter travelling from College Road to Suddar in Rawalpindi? Does it know what life looks like in Pattoki, or the humour of a small-town wedding, or the particular chaos of a Pakistani roadside market? The small town disappears because it is absent from the data. Regional textures disappear. Older faces disappear. Local humour disappears. Traditional, imperfect architecture disappears, unless it is aestheticized for elite consumption.

This is why the debate around AI advertising is not merely about technology. It is about sovereignty over imagination. It is about societal representation and national identity. And, ultimately, it is about who gets to define what a country looks like to itself. Who gets to define Pakistani modernity and identity? If left entirely to corporations and optimization algorithms, national imagination itself becomes privatized. And unlike elected governments, algorithms are not accountable to citizens. Their incentives are engagement, aspiration and consumption, not cultural balance, psychological health or social cohesion. This does not mean Pakistan should reject AI. Nor should art be reduced to state propaganda or rigid nationalism. Creativity requires freedom and freedom without awareness can slowly become dependency. Pakistan urgently needs a broader public conversation around AI-generated advertising and synthetic media. At a minimum, AI-generated and substantially AI-enhanced visuals in major advertisements should be transparently labelled. Regulatory bodies such as PEMRA should begin developing ethical standards around synthetic realism, manipulated representation and deceptive imagery. But regulation alone will not be enough. Pakistan also needs to begin collecting, preserving and organizing its own cultural data. We need indigenous datasets that capture the country's linguistic, regional and social diversity. We need to encourage the ethical collection and labelling of local images, voices, accents, architecture, clothing, music, humour and everyday life.

Khurram outlines
reform agenda,
budget priorities

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, on Sunday, outlined Pakistan's improving macroeconomic outlook, the government's structural reform agenda, key priorities of the FY2026-27 Budget, and the rollout of the country's New Tax Operating Model (NTOM). The advisor was addressing the four-day National Tax Seminar, jointly organized by the Pakistan Tax Bar Association (PTBA) and the Lahore Tax Bar Association (LTBA) at Murree. Schehzad said Pakistan had made significant progress in restoring macroeconomic stability through prudent fiscal management and the implementation of difficult but necessary structural reforms. He noted that improving fiscal discipline, rebuilding external buffers, strengthening debt management and restoring investor confidence have enabled the country to transition from stabilization towards sustainable, private sector-led economic growth. He said these reforms are increasingly being recognized through improved sovereign credit ratings, successful IMF programme reviews, renewed access to international capital markets, growing investor confidence and positive assessments by international financial institutions, reflecting the strengthening fundamentals of Pakistan's economy. The advisor said the budget for fiscal year 2026-27 was a balanced, responsible and pro-growth budget that supports investment, exports, industrial development and employment while maintaining fiscal discipline. He noted that the budget provides meaningful relief to the salaried class, introduces measures to enhance business competitiveness and support exporters, advances tariff reforms, encourages documentation of the economy and reinforces the government's commitment to broadening the tax base rather than placing additional burden on existing compliant taxpayers. He also highlighted the reform agenda encompassing tax administration, public debt management, privatization, state-owned enterprises, pension reforms, energy sector reforms, Digital Pakistan initiatives, capital market development and improved access to finance, noting that these reforms are strengthening institutions, improving governance, enhancing productivity and creating a more competitive and investment-friendly economy.—DNA

Oman,
Philippines
partner
in food
security, blue
economy

MANILA: Oman wants to expand partnerships with the Philippines in the sectors of food security and the blue economy, its top diplomat said on Sunday after a meeting with his Philippine counterpart in Manila. Oman Foreign Minister Badr Al-Busaidi and Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro met on the sidelines of the third Oman-Philippines Strategic Majlis — a bilateral government-and-business forum which brings together ministers, government agencies, sovereign investors, business leaders and entrepreneurs. The forum has evolved over three editions, with the first held in Cebu in 2025 and the second in Muscat in February. "Since our first meeting in Cebu, our dialogue has continued to grow, creating new avenues for cooperation and bringing our two nations closer through practical partnerships and meaningful connections," Al-Busaidi told reporters, as he announced negotiations covering agreements on investment promotion.—APP



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Briefs

Vietnam ship
sinks in China
sea

BEIJING: Rescuers are searching for 23 missing people after a Vietnamese ship carrying 62 crew members sank in the South China Sea, Chinese state media reported Sunday morning. The cargo vessel Khoi Nguyen 18 encountered trouble near Yongshu Reef, also known as Fiery Cross Reef, with 39 people rescued, state broadcaster CCTV reported.—DNA

Iran says
Ukraine
attack killed
one sailor

TEHRAN: Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned on Saturday a Ukrainian attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea, saying it resulted in an explosion that killed one sailor and injured another. Throughout the war in Ukraine, Kyiv has had to counter Iranian-designed drones deployed by Moscow. Kyiv has offered its drone interception expertise to countries in the Middle East that have suffered strikes from Iran. Tehran described the attack on its vessel as an act of aggression and said it would defend its national interests and security, while accusing Kyiv of seeking to expand the war in Ukraine. The Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned Ukraine's chargé d'affaires in Tehran to convey its protest over what it described as a "hostile and criminal" attack, Iran's state news agency IRNA reported. The Iranian denunciation coincided with comments by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that Kyiv had noted Russia was passing on its satellite observations in the Middle East to Iran to enable it to direct strikes in the region. Zelensky had earlier said that Ukraine's forces struck a Russian warship and vessels used for transporting Iranian-linked military cargo in the Caspian Sea. The Ukrainian president, in subsequent remarks posted on X, said Kyiv had recorded since the beginning of July "active Russian satellite surveillance of the Gulf states and US military facilities located there. These images subsequently appear in Iran.—APP

Will call
Trump if it
is interest of
UK: Andy

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: The investigation continues as police work to secure the city and provide answers to a community left reeling. Andy Burnham says he would be prepared to call out Donald Trump to defend Britain's "national interest before anything else" if it is the right thing to do, in his first major interview as prime minister. But asked twice if he would trust the US president, he did not say, answering, "it's a changing world isn't it, and you just obviously have to call things as they develop". In the interview, to be broadcast in full on Monday, he said: "I can't at any point say that I won't take a different opinion from him [Trump], that I will need to voice a different idea that is right for Britain." Asked if he would call out Trump if it was the right thing, he said, "of course, going on to say: "You have to defend your own national interest before anything else. That's what you're required to do if you're required to do this job properly." Burnham also said he had had "concern" about the president starting the conflict with Iran, and he "wouldn't hold back from saying what I think is right". The prime minister would not commit to a date when the government would spend 3% of GDP on defence. His Chancellor John Healey resigned from the previous government saying that unless a commitment was made to spend that amount by 2030, the country would not be safe.—APP

Sri Lanka's Political Stability
Opens Doors for Investment

With IMF guidance, Sri Lanka has regained macroeconomic stability, stabilized its currency, rebuilt reserves, and boosted export earnings. Tourism has rebounded, marking record visitor numbers. Governance reforms and anti-corruption measures have earned international recognition, including praise from IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and a 14-place climb in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Daily Islamabad Post recently conducted an in-depth interview with the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka H.E Fred Seneviratne, who shed light on the evolving partnership between Colombo and Islamabad across climate cooperation, security concerns, and Sri Lanka's internal transformation.

On the subject of climate cooperation, the High Commissioner emphasized that both countries face similar vulnerabilities, having endured severe floods, droughts, and cyclones in recent years. He explained that Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre (DMC) works closely with Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), ensuring that both nations benefit from shared expertise. Beyond bilateral ties, Sri Lanka actively participates in the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), which provides regional knowledge sharing and capacity building. Annual virtual exercises on anticipatory action for floods and droughts have become a cornerstone of cooperation, aligning early warning systems and response protocols. In 2023, Sri Lanka hosted the Sustainable Anticipatory Action Programme, a regional initiative that advanced forecast-based disaster financing. High-level visits between NDMA and DMC officials in 2022 and 2024 further strengthened collabora-



tion. Looking ahead, Sri Lanka hopes to leverage Pakistan's extensive experience in flood response and emergency logistics to enhance its own resilience.

Turning to security concerns, the High Commissioner recalled Sri Lanka's painful history with terrorism, citing the three-decade civil war against the LTTE and the Easter Sunday attacks of 2019. He noted that Pakistan currently faces similar threats, which destabilize politics, economics, and social harmony. During Sri Lanka's civil war, Pakistan provided

crucial military assistance, which Sri Lankans still recognize as a decisive factor in ending the separatist conflict. In reciprocity, Sri Lanka now offers its hard-earned expertise in counterterrorism and counter-extremism to Pakistan.

The High Commissioner suggested that both countries could deepen cooperation through joint research between defence academies and think tanks, exploring areas such as artificial intelligence, defence production, and co-development of technologies like un-

manned aerial vehicles and naval modernization. Such collaboration would not only reinforce bilateral ties but also contribute to regional stability.

In his concluding remarks, the High Commissioner addressed Sri Lanka's political and economic transformation. He acknowledged the hardships of the past: the civil war, the Easter Sunday tragedy, and the economic crisis of 2022–2023. Yet, he highlighted that Sri Lanka has emerged stronger, with the National People's Power (NPP) government securing a two-thirds majority under President Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

With IMF guidance, Sri Lanka has regained macroeconomic stability, stabilized its currency, rebuilt reserves, and boosted export earnings. Tourism has rebounded, marking record visitor numbers. Governance reforms and anti-corruption measures have earned international recognition, including praise from IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and a 14-place climb in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. Against this backdrop of stability and growth, the High Commissioner invited the Pakistani business community to explore investment opportunities in Sri Lanka, positioning the island nation as a trusted and rewarding destination. This interview underscores a narrative of resilience and reciprocity: Sri Lanka and Pakistan are not only confronting shared challenges but also building a partnership rooted in mutual support, regional cooperation, and forward-looking ambition.

Trump wave
of tariffs is
likely to stay

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump had no time for lengthy tariff investigations when he returned to office last year, wanting to hammer trading partners right away to wring concessions. What followed was a chaotic start to a trade agenda that was eventually upended by a stinging Supreme Court defeat this year. Now he and his team are moving into a new phase to build a more durable US tariff wall using more traditional and court-tested trade laws, those he had little patience for 18 months ago. His latest global tariff salvo — duties of 10% or 12.5% on 60 countries over allegedly weak enforcement of forced-labour bans — marks the first of numerous tariff actions to be unveiled in the months ahead. They include probes into excess industrial capacity, alleged intellectual property theft by Vietnam, and national security protections for strategic industries from semiconductors to robotics and industrial machinery. "We're at the end of the beginning of the Trump tariff agenda," said Dan Ujcz, associate general counsel at Canadian oil producer Cenovus Energy, who specialises in US-Canada trade. "Within the next few weeks, and certainly by the end of the summer, we will see large parts of President Trump's trade policy fully in effect.—APP

War dries
up unofficial
dollar inflows

NEWS DESK

Trump faces mid-term reckoning with 100 days to US vote

WASHINGTON: One hundred days before the US midterm elections, President Donald Trump's Republicans are staring down polling that points to the loss of the House of Representatives and a ferocious battle to retain the Senate. Trump will not appear on the ballot on November 3, but the stakes for his presidency could hardly be higher. A Democratic House would give the party control of powerful committees and subpoena authority, likely subjecting Trump's administration to two years of investigations and potentially exposing him to a third impeachment drive. Republicans enter the final stretch with a historically narrow House majority, weak presidential approval ratings and an electorate increasingly unhappy about living costs and the grinding war with Iran. US elections website Decision Desk HQ predicts that the Democratic Party has a 59-percent chance of winning the House, forecasting a 224-211 majority. The president's party usually loses ground in midterm elections, and only a handful of seats need to change hands. Gasoline prices have climbed above \$4 a gallon as the Iran war disrupts energy markets, inflation remains elevated and interest rates are high.—Agencies

KARACHI: The country's unaccounted foreign exchange inflows through the hundi and hawala network have declined sharply as the prolonged Gulf war disrupted Dubai's informal trading business, hurting small exporters and domestic manufacturers. Sources in the financial sector said that hundreds of flights every year carried people with goods not registered in the official export lists to Dubai. These people are commonly known as "khapiya". The Gulf war, which lasted about five months, crippled this business and also dealt a blow to the domestic manufacturing sector. "We have been preparing embroidery products for years, which were exported to the Dubai market.—Agencies

APNS urges govt
to address print
media challenges

The President APNS Senator Sarmad Ali in his letter to information minister also called for reforms to eliminate dummy newspapers that consume a significant share of press quotas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All-Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) has formally raised concerns over the growing challenges faced by the print media industry in Pakistan. In a letter addressed to Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Attaullah Tarar, APNS President Senator Sarmad Ali outlined pressing issues and sought immediate government intervention. During a meeting held on July 13, 2026, APNS members highlighted three major concerns: Digital advertising inclusion: Newspapers' e-papers and digital

platforms currently carry government advertisements without compensation. APNS requested that funds be allocated to support digital editions and ensure fair payment. Advertising rates and dummy publications: The society urged the government to de-link advertising rates from the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) and freeze current rates until a new mechanism is developed. It also called for reforms to eliminate dummy newspapers that consume a significant share of regional press quotas. The President said that only the APNS and CPNE member publications should be considered for the government advertisements. Registration

reforms: APNS emphasized the need to simplify registration rules under the Press, Newspapers, News Agencies and Books Ordinance 2002, ensuring transparency and efficiency. The Minister agreed in principle with APNS's observations and directed the Secretary Information to form a Joint Committee comprising representatives from the Ministry of Information, APNS, and other stakeholders. This committee will draft a comprehensive policy framework to address the concerns. Senator Sarmad Ali expressed optimism that the government's cooperation would help stabilize the crisis-hit newspaper industry.

Advisor to Finance Minister
outlines Pak reform agenda

DNA

MURREE: Advisor to the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Khurram Schehzad, addressed the four-day National Tax Seminar jointly organized by the Pakistan Tax Bar Association (PTBA) and the Lahore Tax Bar Association (LTBA), where he outlined Pakistan's improving macroeconomic outlook, the Government's structural reform agenda, key priorities of the FY2026-27 Budget, and the rollout of the country's New Tax Operating Model (NTOM). The seminar was attended by President, Pakistan Tax Bar Association, Mr. Ehsan-ul-Haq Sheikh; President, Lahore Tax Bar Association, Mr. Rana Saqib Munir; Patron, Pakistan Tax Bar Association and Chairman, Pakistan Tax Bar

Academy, Mr. Abdul Qadir Memon; Member, Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue, Mr. Zahoor Ahmed, as Guest of Honour; renowned economist Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque as keynote speaker, along with senior tax professionals, legal practitioners, chartered accountants and members of the tax fraternity from across Pakistan. Addressing the seminar, Mr. Schehzad said Pakistan has made significant progress in restoring macroeconomic stability through prudent fiscal management and the implementation of difficult but necessary structural reforms. He noted that improving fiscal discipline, rebuilding external buffers, strengthening debt management and restoring investor confidence have enabled the country to transition from stabilization towards sustainable, private sector-led economic growth.

Ebola cases in Congo surpass 3,000

The response has also been hampered by a funding shortfall, attacks on health facilities, ongoing conflict and mistrust among local communities.

BUNIA, Congo: The number of confirmed Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo has surpassed 3,000, with more than 1,300 deaths, government data showed Saturday, as health workers at a treatment center in the outbreak's epicenter went on strike over unpaid bonuses. The number of confirmed cases rose to 3,075, including 1,354 deaths, according to the latest figures. The Elikya Ebola Treatment Center in Bunia, capital of eastern Ituri province, came to a standstill after doctors, nurses and security staff stopped work, with about 100 workers protesting outside the facility. The workers said they had not received two months of performance bonuses, undermining morale and disrupting care for patients. "We need to be paid, because in the meantime the disease is spreading at the treatment center," said Martin Bolombi, one of the striking health workers. "I've already had five people die who are still inside there. A solution must be found for us," he added. In a statement issued Friday, staff said they had unanimously voted to strike until "concrete solutions" were found to resolve the payment backlog. Dr. Adelard Lufungula, operations manager for the Ebola response, said Saturday that the issue was be-

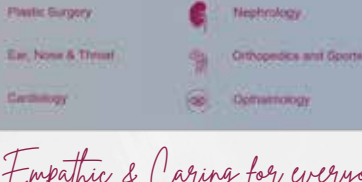
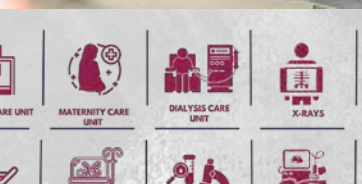
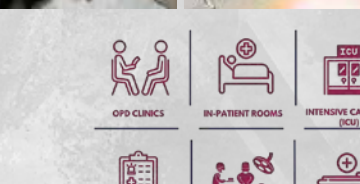
ing resolved, with workers now being paid via mobile money instead of cash. The backlog "should be cleared" in the coming days, he said. The strike came a day after Prime Minister Judith Suminwa visited Ituri to inspect treatment centers in Rwampara and Mongbwalu, where health workers also raised urgent concerns about unpaid compensation. Health workers at Bunia General Hospital, the region's largest medical facility, also went on strike last week over unpaid salaries. Some said they had received no payment since joining the outbreak response. The World Health Organization says more than 100 health workers have been infected since the outbreak began. Congo has been battling the outbreak, caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, since May 15. A total of 766 patients remain in isolation or in hospitals, while 540 have recovered, according to the Health Ministry. Ituri accounts for nearly 90 percent of confirmed cases. The outbreak has spread faster than health officials can track despite an expanding response. Authorities have yet to identify patient zero, while displacement caused by armed conflict and illegal mining has complicated efforts to trace thousands of people who may have come into contact with infected individuals.—Agencies



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