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Largest data center opened in Pakistan says PM Shehbaz

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Pakistan values relations with SCO: DPM Dar

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Mushahid pays tributes to Cuba's Castro

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Terrorism in KP

15, including 14 security personnel martyred in Tank

Last week, security forces killed 24 terrorists in KP's Bannu district and its adjoining areas in the last 24 hours, the military's media affairs wing said in a statement

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: A terrorist attack on a joint police checkpoint in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tank district martyred 15 people, including 14 security personnel, the military's media wing said on Friday. Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement that the attack took place early on Friday and was carried out by Pinnah-Bannuwar — a term used to designate members of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. Elaborating on the incident, the military's media wing said the attackers attempted to breach the checkpoint's perimeter, but their attempts were "swiftly and decisively foiled by the vigilant and resolute response of security forces". The security personnel deployed at the checkpoint displayed "unwavering courage and professional excellence" and engaged and eliminated 15 terrorists, the ISPR added. The statement added that the attackers then rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the perimeter wall. "Due to [this] blast impact, infrastructure at [the] checkpoint was seriously damaged; resultant 15 brave sons of [the] soil, including 12 military, two policemen and a government official or forest department, rendered the ultimate sacrifice and embraced shahada (martyrdom)," the statement read. ISPR added that a sanitisation operation was ongoing to track down any other terrorists in the area, vowing that under the "relentless counterterrorism campaign under vision 'Aman-e-Islam' (on approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out."

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4 terrorists neutralized in Mastung

DNA

QUETTA: Security forces have killed four more terrorists during an operation in the Khud Koh area of Balochistan's Mastung district, state broadcaster Radio Pakistan reported on Friday, citing security sources. The report said the terrorists belonged to Pinnah-Bannuwar, a term that the state uses for Balochistan-based groups to highlight India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan. Radio Pakistan quoted security sources as saying that large quantities of weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain terrorists while several others, suspected of involvement in facilitating terrorism, were apprehended. The sources further said that search and clearance operations are ongoing in the area while security forces continue to maintain comprehensive surveillance.

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Gen Aamer promoted as 4 star gen.

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has announced the promotion of Lieutenant General Aamer Raza, II(M), SBI, Chief of the General Staff of the Pakistan Army, to the rank of Four Star General and his appointment as Commander National Strategic Command. The decision marks a significant development in Pakistan's military leadership structure, coming after the latest constitutional amendment that had delayed several high-level promotions. The Prime Minister extended his congratulations to General Aamer Raza, wishing him success in undertaking this critical responsibility. According to the new law, the appointment of a Vice Chief of

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Asad Gillani new Pakistan envoy to China

SABIRUL ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's picked seasoned diplomat Ambassador Syed Ali Asad Gillani for critical foreign postings, appointing him as the new ambassador to China at a time when Islamabad and Beijing are seeking to deepen strategic cooperation. Asad Gillani, who has served in various diplomatic capacities, including as Pakistan's ambassador to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting, is seen as a "successful, stable, regionally integrated and prosperous Afghanistan which is at peace with itself and its neighbours", adding that this would be in the best interest of all SCO member states and beyond.

Continued on Page 06

Bangladesh president steps down

DNA

DHAKA: Bangladesh President Mohamed Shahabuddin has resigned, local media reported on Friday. Shahabuddin, who has been the president of the South Asian nation since April 2023, oversaw the country during a volatile period after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted in August 2024 by youth protesters and until a caretaker government was formed days later. Bangladesh's president is the head of state, but the role is largely ceremonial, with executive power resting with the prime minister and cabinet.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has announced the promotion of Lieutenant General Aamer Raza, II(M), SBI, Chief of the General Staff of the Pakistan Army, to the rank of Four Star General and his appointment as Commander National Strategic Command. — DNA

Dar speaks at SCO

Peace, stability only possible by eliminating terrorism

He said that this support was "well-documented", adding that Pakistan was at the forefront of this threat. He added that this year alone, more than 560 Pakistanis have been killed in over 2,000 terrorist attacks

DNA

BISHKEK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that durable peace and stability in the region can only be achieved by eliminating the threat of terrorism emanating from neighbouring Afghanistan. "Durable peace, stability and economic development can only be achieved with the eradication of the menace of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan," he said while speaking at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting. He said that Pakistan desired to see a "successful, stable, regionally integrated and prosperous Afghanistan which is at peace with itself and its neighbours", adding that this would be in the best interest of all SCO member states and beyond.

PICTURES ON PAGE 7 AND BACK PAGE

He said that currently, the threat of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan was one of the most serious security challenges for Pakistan. He said that terrorist organisations continued to recruit, train and operate from Afghan soil "under the watch and facilitation of the Afghan Taliban regime". He said that this support was "well-documented", adding that Pakistan was at the forefront of this threat. He added that this year alone, more than 560 Pakistanis have been killed in over 2,000 terrorist attacks. "It is also deeply concerning that Afghan nationalists have been

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Pakistan, Iran FM's discuss regional situation

NEWS DESK

BISHKEK: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Iran, Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on the sidelines of the SCO CFM Meeting in Chudayon, Kyrgyz Republic. The two Ministers reaffirmed the close and longstanding ties between Pakistan and Iran and reviewed the evolving regional situation. The DPM/PM expressed deep concern over recent regional tensions and underscored the importance of dialogue, restraint, de-escalation by all sides, and sustained diplomatic engagement to achieve lasting peace and stability.

He emphasized the need to build on the understandings reached under the Islamabad MoU of June 2026. Foreign Minister Araghchi appreciated Pakistan's continued diplomatic support and constructive efforts in promoting regional peace and security. He also thanked Pakistan for facilitating the safe return of Iranian fishermen and crew members, including those from vessels interdicted by the U.S., and for its close coordination with the Iranian,

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Briefs

Largest data centre in Islamabad inaugurated

MEHTAB PURZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday inaugurated the country's "largest" data centre and Sky47 AI cloud in Islamabad, terming the facility " awe-inspiring". The project has a capacity of 8.5 megawatts, the PM noted in his speech. Sky47 is also developing a 6MW data centre at Karachi's Port Qasim, slated for completion in September. Speaking on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said it was a privilege and an honour to be part of the ceremony. "The facility we have just visited is awe-inspiring," he added. He further said the data centre was built in record time, showcasing the best minds from across Pakistan in both the military and civilian sectors.

More rains from 24 to 28

MARNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Friday issued a weather advisory for the next three to four days, forecasting rain in southern and central parts of the country due to an active monsoon system. A press release issued by the Met Office said a low-pressure area was present over south-west Rajasthan and adjoining areas, causing monsoon currents over the southern and central parts of the country. Under the influence of these currents, it said, rain and thunderstorms were expected across the country, including Sindh, southern and central Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and northern areas of Balochistan, between July 24 and 27.

Iran rejects ceasefire offer

Those helping US in war will be dealt with sternly, says Iran

Araghchi also accused the US of violating the Islamabad memorandum ceasefire, citing attacks on civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and water facilities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi issued a stern warning declaring that "any participation" with the United States in military action against Iran will be met with accountability. Speaking at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Bishkek, Araghchi stressed that countries aiding Washington in its strikes against Iranian targets would bear international responsibility for aggression. He underscored Iran's right to self-defence under international law, stating that Tehran would consider the source of any attack a legitimate target. His remarks came amid 15 consecutive rights of US strikes on Iranian military positions, which Washington

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UN calls for evacuation of 6000 sailors

DNA

GENEVA: The United Nations on Friday called for the safe evacuation and repatriation of some 6,000 sailors stuck in a "dire humanitarian and human rights crisis" in the Strait of Hormuz. UN human rights chief Volker Turk called for urgent action to remedy the plight of thousands of seafarers caught up in

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Trump to impose 'forced labour' duties on 60 nations

The US imposed a 10% duty on goods of Argentina, Bangladesh, Britain, Cambodia, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration on Friday imposed new tariffs of 10% and 12.5% on goods from 60 trading partners, including Europe and China, over allegations of lax enforcement of forced labour laws, just as a temporary 10% global tariff expired. The move is the White House's latest effort to restore President Donald Trump's vision of a non-global tariff after the US Supreme Court in February struck down his "reciprocity" duties of 10% to 50% imposed under a national emergency law to try to shunt the US trade deficit. New tariffs had been expected, but trade partners around the world joined in strongly disputing the justification for them. Some, however, noted they would make little difference to current levies. There was little early reaction on financial markets more focused on the Middle East conflict. The new tariffs, announced in a Federal Register notice, cover 99.4% of US imports, but include numerous product exceptions, such as oil and gas, fertiliser and certain food items. "The United States has had a forced labour import ban for

over a century, and rigorously enforces it. It's well past time for our trading partners to do the same," US Trade Representative James G. Green said in a statement. "Today's action will begin to correct what is both a human rights abuse and distortive trade practice to improve the well-being of workers everywhere." Imposed under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, the new duties allow the administration to maintain a tariff floor on virtually all US imports despite the Supreme Court setback. The tariffs are also likely to face legal challenges in Section 301 cases against Argentina, Bangladesh, Britain, Cambodia, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago. The European Union, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and

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Member APNS



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PSX remains
bearish, loses
over 718 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained in the red on Friday, shedding 718.25 points, a negative change of 0.62 percent, to close at 117,021.20 points against 117,739.45 points recorded on the previous trading day. During the session, the stock market recorded a trading volume of \$759.45 million shares with a traded value of Rs23,989 billion, compared to \$25,122 million shares selling Rs23,428 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization stood at Rs19,278 trillion, down from Rs19,351 trillion a day earlier. Out of 492 active companies in the stock market, 186 advanced, 270 declined, and 36 remained unchanged. Davangree PK led the volume chart with 59,228 million shares, followed by Trust Bank with 26,076 million shares and Kishore Spinning with 22,527 million shares. The top gainers included IJA Holding Company Limited, which surged by Rs7.70 to close at Rs17,695.00, and Sirona (Pakistan) Engineering, which gained Rs6.22 to settle at Rs1,534.77. On the loss side, Calvee Pakistan Fertilizer Limited declined by Rs237.00 to close at Rs25,011.00, while Khairpur Sagar Mills Limited fell by Rs12.28 to settle at Rs1,156.69. In the turn of (DOW) market, turnover increased to 191,680 million shares with a traded value of Rs7,511 billion, compared to 159,599 million shares worth Rs5,327 billion in the previous session.

Out of 352 international companies, 85 advanced, 214 declined, and 53 remained unchanged.—APP

Mandokhel for
family planning
awareness

QUETTA: Governor Rs. Ishtiaq Jaffer Khan Mandokhel on Friday urged the concerned authorities to expand the awareness campaign regarding family planning to the district and union council levels and take more steps to control the excessive population growth for transforming the population of Pakistan and Balochistan into a powerful engine of rising peace, prosperity and economic development. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of an event organized here as a local host to mark World Population Day. Provincial Minister, Mir Asim Kundi, Parliamentary Secretary, Prince Adnan Ali Akhtar, Member Provincial Assembly, Dr. Nazeem Khan, Provincial Secretary, Zahir Rashedi, Head of the Zulfikar Durrani, former Senator, Roshan Khattak Baroz, HEC Chairman, Waif Amour Saeed Kasi, Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Zahid Rashedi and Director Governor Secretariat, Abbas-Elham Khali were also present on the occasion, along with people from different walks of life. Addressing the participants, the Governor said that the population of any country was fundamentally linked to the people, their standard of living, employment opportunities and their economic wellbeing. He said that Pakistan's population would reach 260 million by the end of this year, which presented Pakistan with two major challenges, the first was to manage the rapidly growing population, the second and perhaps more important was to transform this large population into a skilled, productive, healthy and self-reliant workforce. Governor Balochistan Jaffer Khan Mandokhel said that Pakistan was the country with the youngest population in the entire region, while Balochistan was the youngest province of Pakistan in terms of population.—APP

Senate committee wants Info Ministry
to settle journalists' plots in one month

The Committee also recommended increasing the quota for journalists and media workers in future housing schemes and suggested introducing a dedicated housing loan scheme or according journalists priority under existing Federal Government housing finance initiatives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting was held at the PTV Headquarters, Islamabad, under the Acting Chairmanship of Senator Sarmad Ali to deliberate on a wide range of issues, including the reported misrepresentation of Hazrat Baba Bulleh Shah's name and teachings in the film Bulleh, notes issued by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), transfer of PECA cases to NCCIA, allotment of plots to journalists, advertisement quota for regional newspapers and the grievances of Radio Pakistan pensioners. The meeting was attended by Senator Sarmad Ali, Senator Saeed Wajid, Senator Pervez Rashid and Senator Javed Mahmood. The Committee was briefed by NCCIA regarding social media statistics and the removal of objectionable content by Meta. NCCIA clarified that the figures previously shared with the Committee were based on Meta's publicly available data. The Committee accepted the clarification and stressed the need for responsible reporting based on verified facts. The Committee also reviewed the transfer of PECA cases from provincial authorities to NCCIA. On a query by Senator Wajid, NCCIA officials informed the Committee that only nine cases from Sindh had so far been transferred, while the remaining cases in other provinces were yet to be transferred. After detailed deliberations, Senator Sarmad Ali directed that letters be sent to all relevant provincial authorities, urging them to expedite the transfer of pending cases along with the recommendations and report of the Senate Sub-Committee on Information and Broadcasting for implementation. The Committee also commended the issuance of a notice to a newspaper columnist over alleged controversial remarks regarding the bureaucracy. NCCIA informed the Committee that the notice had been issued solely to restrain the columnist's version following complaints lodged by the President of the PHS Officers Association. It was further informed that no FIR had been registered under PECA, the columnist had not yet responded to the notice, and the article had been removed from the newspaper's e-paper, although it remained available on the columnist's Facebook page. During the discussion, members noted the government's assurance given in Parliament that PECA would not be used against websites or digital platforms of newspapers and televisions as their content were regulated by the Press Council of Pakistan and Pann respectively. Senator Pervez Rashid emphasized that the columnist should be asked to respond to the notice in order to establish the facts. The Committee unanimously observed that the dignity and sanctity of every individual must be respected. After consultation, the Acting Chair directed NCCIA to refer both the complaint and the complainant to the Press Council of Pakistan, being the appropriate forum to examine the published column and decide the matter. The Committee also took notice of the alleged misrepresentation of Hazrat Baba Bulleh Shah's

message of peace in the film Bulleh, observing that the film distorted the peaceful teachings of the renowned Sufi saint by associating it with violence and guns by the lead role of film. Members questioned the basis on which the Central Board of Film Censors had approved the film. Although the Chairman of the Board informed the Committee that the film had also been cleared by the censor boards of Punjab and Sindh, the Committee rejected this justification. Members further questioned the criteria for appointing members of the Board and urged the Federal Government to develop a transparent and merit-based mechanism for such appointments. Following detailed deliberations, the Committee recommended that the producers of the Bulleh be asked to change its name and remove an objectionable dialogue in which the lead character compared himself with Baba Bulleh Shah failing which the film should be blocked from release including possible removal from YouTube. The Committee was also briefed on the allotment of plots by the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) for journalists and media workers. Officials informed the Committee that the allotment under the quota for media workers had been completed while issues concerning the journalists' quota remained unresolved. Expressing dissatisfaction over the prolonged delay, the Committee decided to constitute a monitoring sub-committee comprising Senators Pervez Rashid, Wajid and Abdul Sattar to oversee implementation of its recommendations and facilitate resolution of the issue. Senator Sarmad Ali directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to notify a committee comprising representatives of journalists in one week to review the matter, revise the existing policy and decide the allotment within one month. The Committee also recommended increasing the quota for journalists and media workers in future housing schemes and suggested introducing a dedicated housing loan scheme or according journalists priority under existing Federal Government housing finance initiatives. The Press Information Department (PID) also briefed the Committee on the advertisement quota for regional newspapers. Officials informed the Committee that the existing policy reserves 25 percent of government advertisements for regional newspapers. However, members noted complaints regarding non-implementation of the policy, particularly from Sindh and Balochistan. The Acting Chairman directed PID to ensure strict implementation of the 25 percent quota, including language newspapers in recognition of their vital role in disseminating information to the public. The Committee further discussed the issues faced by Radio Pakistan pensioners. It was informed that 353 pensioners cases remained pending and that Radio Pakistan continued to operate through a Federal Government grant-in-aid. Officials also informed the Committee that the Prime Minister had already constituted a committee to resolve outstanding issues relating to Radio Pakistan, PTV and APP. The Acting Chairman directed that the grievances of Radio Pakistan pensioners also be placed before the Prime Minister's committee and called for an early resolution of the matter. Informing the Committee that only Sindh had transferred nine cases so far while the remaining cases in other

provinces were under process. After detailed deliberations, Senator Sarmad Ali directed that letters be sent to all relevant provincial authorities, urging them to expedite the transfer of pending cases along with the recommendations and report of the Senate Sub-Committee on Information and Broadcasting for implementation. The Committee also commended the issuance of a notice to a newspaper columnist over alleged controversial remarks regarding the bureaucracy. NCCIA informed the Committee that the notice had been issued solely to obtain the columnist's version following complaints lodged by the President of the PHS Officers Association. It was further informed that no FIR had been registered under PECA, the columnist had not yet responded to the notice, and the article had been removed from the newspaper's e-paper, although it remained available on the columnist's Facebook page.

During the discussion, members reiterated the government's assurance given in Parliament that PECA would not be used against websites or digital platforms of newspapers and television as their content were regulated by the Press Council of Pakistan and Pann respectively. Senator Pervez Rashid emphasized that the columnist should be asked to respond to the notice in order to establish the facts. The Committee unanimously observed that the dignity and sanctity of every individual must be respected. After consultation, the Acting Chairman directed NCCIA to refer both the complaint and the complainant to the Press Council of Pakistan, being the appropriate forum to examine the published column and decide the matter. The Committee also took notice of the alleged misrepresentation of Hazrat Baba Bulleh Shah's message of peace in the film Bulleh, observing that the film distorted the peaceful teachings of the renowned Sufi saint by associating it with violence and guns by the lead role of film. Members questioned the basis on which the Central Board of Film Censors had approved the film. Although the Chairman of the Board informed the Committee that the film had also been cleared by the censor boards of Punjab and Sindh, the Committee rejected this justification. Members further questioned the criteria for appointing members of the Board and urged the Federal Government to develop a transparent and merit-based mechanism for such appointments. Following detailed deliberations, the Committee recommended that the producers of the Bulleh be asked to change its name and remove an objectionable dialogue in which the lead character compared himself with Baba Bulleh Shah failing which the film should be blocked from release including possible removal from YouTube. The Committee was also briefed on the allotment of plots by the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) for journalists and media workers. Officials informed the Committee that the allotment under the quota for media workers had been completed while issues concerning the journalists' quota remained unresolved. Expressing dissatisfaction over the prolonged delay, the Committee decided to constitute a monitoring sub-committee comprising Senators Pervez Rashid, Wajid and Abdul Sattar to oversee implementation of its recommendations and facilitate resolution of the issue.



Rawalpindi: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Sky47, Pakistan's first purpose-built, AI-ready Tier III/IV data center and sovereign cloud platform.

Consultation urges
timely LG polls

LAHORE: Members of the Punjab Assembly (MPAs), governance experts and civil society representatives urged the provincial government to implement constitutional provisions and hold local government elections without delay. MPA Rakhsana Kasur emphasized the need for inclusive representation of women, youth, persons with disabilities, workers, farmers, minorities and transgender persons in local governments. She also stressed that elected councilors should be vested with greater authority, noting that they were often the first public representatives approached by citizens for resolving local issues.

MPA Samia Usman said empowered local governments were better positioned to address public needs, adding that improved coordination between provincial and local institutions would enhance transparency, accountability and service delivery. MPA Anam Khan said local governments worked as an important platform for women's political participation and leadership, adding that stronger local institutions would promote inclusive governance and broader public participation in democratic processes. The participating women legislators appreciated the leadership of Punjab High Court Justice Mian Muhammad Shah and observed that a robust local government system would complement the provincial government's development agenda.—APP

Private sector's role in promoting
eco diplomacy lauded

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhbar Khan has expressed the government's full support for the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (ICCI) initiative to organize the Pakistan-Turkey Business Opportunity Conference (BoC) in Istanbul on August 13, 2026, describing it as a landmark step towards strengthening bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries. He made these remarks during a meeting with an ICCI delegation led by its President Sarfar Azhar Mahmood, and a press release issued here on Friday. Haroon Akhbar Khan highly appreciated ICCI's initiative to hold the Business Opportunity Conference in Istanbul on August 13, 2026, saying it reflects the private sector's proactive role in promoting economic diplomacy and building stronger commercial ties with Turkey. He confirmed his participation in the conference and announced that the Government would extend full facilitation to ensure the success of the initiative. The SAPM stated that the government is committed to creating a business-friendly environment and gradually reducing the corporate tax rate to 25 percent, as part of broader economic reforms aimed at attracting investments, enhancing industrial competitiveness and accelerating sustainable economic growth. He noted that the Prime Minister's vision is focused on reducing the cost of doing business, encouraging private sector investment and strengthening Pakistan's industrial base. Haroon Akhbar Khan added that enhanced rail and transport links with Central Asia would further strengthen Pakistan's role as a regional trade hub by providing that ICCI should also organize future business delegations to explore other international markets, including the United Kingdom, assuring full Government support for such initiatives. Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Sarfar Azhar Mahmood thanked the SAPM for his encouragement and support for the Pakistan-Turkey Business Opportunity Conference. He said that the conference would provide an effective platform for business leaders, investors and policymakers from both countries to establish partnerships, promote joint ventures and expand bilateral trade. Sarfar Azhar Mahmood also highlighted the challenges facing Pakistan's real estate and construction sector, noting that it supports around 50 allied industries and plays a vital role in economic growth.—APP

Sindh CM vows continued
investment for police uplift

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday reaffirmed his government's commitment to strengthening law enforcement institutions, declaring that a modern, professionally trained and people-centric police force was essential for maintaining peace, combating terrorism and ensuring sustainable development across the province. Addressing the 132nd Pakistan Air Force of Recruit Training Course (RTC) Batch-5/2025 at the Shahid Hayat Police Training College, Saeedabad, the Chief Minister congratulated 9/4 newly trained recruits, including 31 women, and described them as a fresh and capable addition to the strength of Sindh Police. The ceremony was attended by Inspector General of Police Sindh Javed Alan Odho, Additional IG Karachi and Khan, Additional IG CTDP Zulfikar Lari, DGT Training Fuzailah Koriejo, Principal Shahid Hayat Police Training College, SSP Aded Chaudhry, senior police officers, members of civil society and the families of the graduating recruits. A police contingent sounded the bugle to announce the Chief Minister's arrival. He was received by senior police officers and later inspected the parade in a traditional open jeep. Assembly turnout-

continent presented a ceremonial salute, while the event commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran. The recruits took an oath pledging loyalty to the Constitution, service to the nation and adherence to the rule of law. They also presented impressive tactical and professional demonstrations reflecting the skills acquired during their training. The Chief Minister distributed garlands and honorary shields among outstanding recruits and later received a commemorative shield from the college administration. Addressing the ceremony, Syed Murad Ali Shah congratulated the graduating recruits and commended the training staff for maintaining high professional standards. "I congratulate all 9/4 recruits who have completed their training. I am particularly pleased to see more than 300 women joining the force, which reflects the growing inclusivity and strength of Sindh Police," he said. The Chief Minister said the quality of training was evident from the discipline, confidence and precision displayed during the parade. "The excellent performance of the recruits demonstrates the high standards of training being imparted at Shahid Hayat Police Training College. Modern police

ing requires modern skills, and I am pleased to see that our young officers are being equipped to meet contemporary challenges." Addressing the newly graduated personnel, the CM reminded them of their responsibilities as guardians of public safety. "You are the protectors of the lives and property of our people. The citizens of Sindh rely on you, and the government has high expectations from you. Every citizen desires a peaceful life, and helping to ensure that peace is a responsibility that rests heavily on your shoulders." The Chief Minister urged recruits to uphold professionalism, integrity and public service throughout their careers. "Professional competence, honesty and dedication to public service must become the defining characteristics of Sindh Police. Public trust can only be earned through performance, fairness and commitment to duty," he said. Emphasizing that bringing criminals and lawbreakers before the courts remained one of the police force's fundamental responsibilities, "Crime prevention and effective law enforcement require commitment, courage and professionalism. You must never compromise on your duty to uphold the rule of law.—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

July 26/Cuba
National Day

July 26/Liberia
National Day

July 30/Morocco
National Day

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/

Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.....1122

& Rescue Services.....4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

EdiAmbulance.....115

PIA FlightInfo.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange 9270821-5

WASA Rawalpindi 5555489

CAA.....9281892

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

ML.....501111

Cent Hospital.....9270907-61

DHO.....5556311-4

BGI.....9299301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

FIMS.....9281170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-39

Shifa International 4903695

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9268301-64

Met Office.....9250906-6

RDA.....5555894

TMA.....5770886

Government Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9299224

Petrol Town.....9299224

Rural Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....03215744480

Cuban embassy holds photographic exhibition "Fidel Forever" in Capital

Ramzan Mughal, president of the Pakistan-Cuba Social Forum and main architect of the exhibition, expressed that through the photo gallery of Fidel, the commitment to preserve shared history and to continue strengthening the bonds of friendship between Cuba and Pakistan is also reaffirmed

SAIFULLAH ANSARI/DNA

ISLAMABAD: In commemoration of the centenary of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in Pakistan, together with the Pakistan-Cuba Social Forum, inaugurated the photographic exhibition titled "Fidel For Ever" (Fidel Forever) and a display of books about the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution. The inauguration, held at Cuban embassy, was attended by political figures, members of the accredited diplomatic corps, intellectuals and solidarity friends. Among the guests of honor was the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, as well as Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, who delivered a brilliant speech highlighting the historical stature of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro and his legacy. Fidel's humanist philosophy continues to guide Cuba's diplomatic work and solidarity. From the Cuban medical brigades that provided assistance to the Pakistani people after the tragic 2005 earthquake, to the young doctors from this country graduated from Cuban institutions, bilateral relations possess a genuine human solidarity that bears Fidel's stamp, the Pakistani politician stressed in his speech. The Ambassador of Cuba, Damian Cordero, recalled that, alongside the celebration of the Commander in Chief's centenary, National Revolution Day will also be celebrated in Cuba on July 26—the date when Fidel and a group of young people assaulted the Guillermo Moncada and Carlos Manuel Céspedes barracks in the eastern part of the country to change the life of the Cuban nation. "The photographic and book exhibition is not simply a look at the past through images and texts, but the celebration of a living legacy, defined by courage, social justice, and unwavering internationalism. It is an encounter with a century of dignity, sovereignty, and solidarity," the Cuban ambassador emphasized. Ramzan Mughal, president of the Pakistan-Cuba Social Forum and main architect of the exhibition, expressed that through the photo gallery of Fidel, the commitment to preserve shared history and to continue strengthening the bonds of friendship between Cuba and Pakistan is also reaffirmed.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed witnessing photo exhibition "Fidel Forever" and the book exhibition on commander-in-chief, organized by the Ambassador of Cuba to Pakistan Mr. Damian Cordero Torres, at the Cuban embassy. The celebrations will culminate on August 12 with the award ceremony. DNA

Gilani talks to youth from Balochistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Friday underscored the need for national unity, inclusive development, and sustained security efforts to ensure lasting peace and prosperity in Balochistan. Addressing participants of the National Workshop Balochistan at Awaaz-e-Sadr, the chairman senate welcomed the participants on behalf of the President Asif Ali Zardari and said the workshop had, since 2015, served as an important platform bringing together parliamentarians, businessmen, civil society members, academics, youth, and media representatives from across the country. Gilani urged national unity, youth empowerment to ensure lasting peace, prosperity in Balochistan.

He described the initiative as a bridge connecting provinces, perspectives, and ideas to collectively address national challenges. Emphasizing Balochistan's importance, the senate chairman said the province was central to Pakistan's economic future and national security owing to its vast coastline along the Arabian Sea, rich mineral resources, and geographic location linking South Asia with Central Asia and the Middle East. Gilani urged national unity, youth empowerment to ensure lasting peace, prosperity in Balochistan. He said Gilani condemned recent terrorist attacks by the India-backed process and militant groups for attempting to destabilize Pakistan. He said terrorists had shifted their focus from military targets to civilians in an act of desperation. Paying tribute to

the armed forces, Frontier Corps, police, and other law enforcement agencies, Mr. Gilani praised their professionalism and sacrifices in combating terrorism. He reiterated that the entire nation stood firmly behind the country's security institutions and honoured those who had laid down their lives in the line of duty. However, he stressed that military action alone could not guarantee sustainable peace. "The people of Balochistan, particularly its youth, must remain at the centre of the province's future. Their participation, ownership, and trust are essential for lasting peace and meaningful development," he said. Gilani urged national unity, youth empowerment to ensure lasting peace, prosperity in Balochistan. He said Gilani condemned recent terrorist attacks by the India-backed process and militant groups for attempting to destabilize Pakistan. He said terrorists had shifted their focus from military targets to civilians in an act of desperation. Paying tribute to

Petroleum Minister holds meetings with Intl Energy Companies

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik held separate meetings with representatives of leading international energy companies to discuss investment opportunities in Pakistan's energy and critical minerals sectors. In the first meeting, the Minister met with Mr. Gregory Bloom, President of Morgan Hughes Energy, a U.S.-based energy company, and Mr. Ahmad Waleed, CEO of Tejara Capital. The discussions focused on expanding U.S. investment in Pakistan's energy and critical minerals sectors. Mr. Bloom highlighted the potential of Balochistan for critical minerals development and said that Morgan Hughes Energy and Tejara Capital are partnering to pursue mineral projects while also exploring opportunities in Pakistan's oil and gas sector, particularly in field optimization to enhance production from existing assets. Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik welcomed their interest, reaffirming the Government's commitment to increasing indigenous energy production and facilitating responsible international investment through close collaboration with relevant stakeholders. In a separate meeting, the Minister met with Mr. Kieran Gallagher, CEO of Vital Asia, and his team to discuss ongoing cooperation in Pakistan's petroleum sector. He congratulated Vital on the successful commencement of bunkering operations at Gwadar and welcomed the company's proposal to convert High Sulphur Fuel Oil (HSFO) into Very Light Sulphur Fuel Oil (VLSFO), assuring full Government support for the project. The meeting also reviewed opportunities under Pakistan's newly introduced bonded storage policy. The Minister noted that discussions on bonded storage infrastructure are underway with leading global energy companies, including Vital, as part of the Government's efforts to strengthen energy logistics, expand strategic storage capacity, and attract greater international investment. Both meetings reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening global energy partnerships, attracting foreign investment, and advancing long-term energy security and economic growth. —DNA

6-13, 6-14 commercial plots auction

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has accelerated preparations for the auction of commercial plots in Sectors G-13 and G-14, with arrangements entering the final planning stage. Talking to APP, an FGEHA spokesperson said the Authority's Auction Committee recently met under the chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Sectors), Ministry of Housing and Works, Fayyaz-ul-Haq, to review proposals for the proposed auction. The spokesperson said the committee discussed the auction of commercial plots located in the Class III Shopping Centres of Sectors G-13 and G-14, as well as commercial plots in Markaz G-14. The meeting reviewed key arrangements, including the preparation of the auction brochure, advertising and publicity strategy, the proposed auction schedule, and other administrative and operational matters to ensure the process is conducted in a transparent, fair and competitive manner, providing equal opportunities to all prospective investors. However, the spokesperson clarified that the auction date has not yet been finalized. "The auction date, brochure and other relevant details will be announced shortly through the official channels of the Federal Government Employees' APP



Industrial automation essential: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima on Friday said Pakistan's future economic competitiveness depends on the adoption of robotics, automation and other emerging technologies, stressing that industrial automation is no longer a choice but a necessity. Speaking at the closing ceremony of the two-day Indus RAS (Robotics and Automation Systems) Expo 2020, she said the event, which attracted more than 20,000 visitors, including children, students, researchers, policymakers, industry leaders and technology professionals, she said the large and diverse turnout reflected growing national interest in robotics and automation technologies and demonstrated Pakistan's expanding technological capabilities. Shaza Fatima credited the successful organization of the expo to the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Sharif, saying his support for the

technology sector and recognition of digital technologies as an enabler of the nation's economic growth had helped accelerate progress in the country's digital transformation agenda. She thanked the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, the National Technology Fund (Ignite), the National Centre for Robotics and Automation, industry partners and young innovators for making the event a success. The minister said the global economy was rapidly transitioning to a knowledge-based economy driven by artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, quantum computing, blockchain and robotics. —APP

"SAY NO TO CORRUPTION"
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
(PUNJAB WEST REGION, MIANWALI)

INVITATION TO e-BIDS
01x SPECIAL MAINTENANCE WORK ON N-130

1. National Highway Authority (NHA) invites e-bids from the contractor registered with Income Tax Department and who are an Active Taxpayer List of the Federal Board of Revenue having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in Category mentioned in the table with Specialization codes for the work mentioned below:

Sr.	CONTRACT NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	ESTIMATED COST (PKR)	MS Security 2% of Engineer Estimated Cost (PKR)	PKC CATEGORY/ SPECIALIZATION
1.	SN-01-130/2020-20-01	SPECIAL MAINTENANCE WORK	NHA 20+60 to KM 29+00	16,594,875/-	331,322/-	C-4 or Above having Specialization in CE-41 & CE-10

2. Bidding documents, containing tender and document (Single Stage - Two Envelopes), detailed terms & conditions, will be available on the NHA website mentioned below for downloading free of cost. Prospective Bidders are also advised to follow the said NHA website for updates of schedule and amendments, if any.

3. The e-bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions provided in the bidding documents, must reach at the address mentioned below, on or before August 12, 2020 (Wednesday) before 1030 Hours. Technical e-bids will be opened on the same day at 1100 Hours. Late bids sent through courier will not be accepted.

4. All firms are advised to get (PKSIS - PPPVA) Registration at www.oprocure.gov.pk immediately, as Manual Bids (Hard Copy) will be eliminated in upcoming procurements.

5. This Advertisement is also available on PPA website at www.ppa.gov.pk.

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Why social media age bans are not the answer

KELLY STONELAKE

WHEN I joined Facebook in 2009, I believed in the mission that founder Mark Zuckerberg espoused: to connect and empower people around the world. We all know how that turned out. Meta, now the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, is focused on generating as much engagement as possible, which has left it platform for child sexual abuse, misinformation and polarize users. I worked at Facebook for 15 years before becoming a whistleblower. I was in the rooms where smart people built and marketed the features that encourage compulsive use — such as infinite scroll, autoplay and algorithmic feeds. These design choices were made deliberately, with the goal of maximizing profit above all else. Fortunately, the world is waking up to the harm caused by social media, especially to young people. In early July, an independent panel presented its final report on how the EU can keep children safe online to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, with a legislative proposal expected after the summer. While several EU countries plan to adopt a blanket age ban, the report advocates banning the toxic design features directly — a strategy that both scientific consensus and public opinion support. If governments really want to keep kids safe, they must require social media platforms to prove their safety — as is already required of food companies and car manufacturers — to gain access to the teenage market. Banning toxic design features directly is supported by both scientific consensus and public opinion.

The blanket ban approach treats addictive social media as inevitable. It isn't. It is the product of years of corporate lobbying and governments' reluctance to regulate. Equally important, such an approach is ineffective. Australia pioneered the world's first social media ban for minors when it barred users under 16 from holding accounts last December. In March, the eSafety Commissioner's compliance report found major enforcement gaps and no reduction in cyberbullying or image-based abuse reports. In April, more than half of 12- to 15-year-olds still had active accounts. As a result, Australia has also begun to target the toxic features proven to erode kids' health and well-being. Similarly, Canada, Spain, Brazil and Germany are waking up to the importance of putting the onus on tech companies to ensure their platforms are designed safely. More governments must turn their attention to banning the design features that harm children and then holding tech firms to strict, third-party-verified safety standards. More than 170 organizations have signed a petition calling for this safety-by-design approach and UK charities have released guidance on what these standards could look like. Moreover, this position has gained broad

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public support. In a recent poll of five European countries, three-quarters of adults surveyed said that they wanted a "safety-by-design" approach to social media, making platforms inaccessible to children until their safety is proven. The debate has also entered the courtroom. In February, the European Commission warned TikTok to change its addictive design or face fines of up to 6 percent of turnover. More recently, a preliminary decision by the commission found that Meta failed to assess the addiction risks from its scrolling and attention capture, putting the firm in breach of the Digital Services Act. In the US, four states are seeking \$1.4 billion in penalties from Meta for designing Facebook and Instagram to addict young users. Interoperability is another reform worth fighting for. If social media platforms share data, users can switch to safer alternatives without losing their network. That way, they won't be trapped when a platform is say, bought out by a fascist billionaire who turns it into a cesspit of extremism. Ultimately, all reforms depend on strong enforcement mechanisms. Governments have tried to regulate social media platforms using voluntary commitments and laws like Australia's, with fines for violations. But the world's most profitable companies might simply absorb those penalties as a cost of doing business. The consequences must be significant enough that they cannot be priced in. A safety-by-design approach is the only way to tackle platforms built without regard for the harm they cause Europe, which has a track record of shaping the global regulatory environment, now has the opportunity to lead the world in creating effective, meaningful guardrails for children's online safety. It is promising that Van der Leyen, who, despite experts' warnings, had committed to a blanket age ban for much of the past year, has now changed course. The independent panel's final report. And while that report recommends age restrictions, it frames them as temporary pending the redesign of addictive and harmful features. It also puts the burden of proving social media's safety on tech firms rather than regulators. The EU already has a health and safety-by-design approach: the Digital Services Act provides a legal basis and proof of concept. The special panel cited recent enforcement action under this law against TikTok for its addictive features, as well as ongoing proceedings against Snapchat, X/Grok and Meta. With this shift in the political will, the EU must ensure in law a safety-by-design approach, requiring it to be the only viable solution to social media platforms that were built without regard for the harm they cause. That means expanding this framework in the forthcoming Digital Fairness Act, expected later this year, rather than tinkering around the edges of the rules. If a social media platform is stripped of infinite scroll, engagement-optimized defaults and constant push notifications, it is likely much safer for young people. By contrast, an age ban leaves the platform itself unchanged, only delaying its harmful effects. A safety-by-design solution would reduce exposure to a product proven harmful to children and teenagers and reshape market incentives, creating space for safer platforms to compete. The EU requires most products entering the bloc to be safe by law. Social media should be no different.

Why Is China Emerging As A Superpower? Part-1

Qamar Bashir



Today, Russia remains one of the world's foremost military powers. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Russia ranked as the world's third-largest military spender in 2025, allocating approximately US\$190 billion, equivalent to 7.5 percent of GDP, while the United States remained first at US\$954 billion and China second at US\$336 billion.

FOR nearly half a century following the Second World War, the Soviet Union stood as the United States' principal strategic adversary. The Cold War divided the international system into two competing ideological, political and military blocs. Washington championed liberal democracy and market capitalism, while Moscow promoted centralized communist governance. Their rivalry extended far beyond military confrontation; it encompassed economics, science, technology, diplomacy, intelligence, space exploration and global influence. The Soviet Union possessed virtually every attribute of a superpower. It maintained one of the world's largest industrial bases, commanded an immense conventional military, developed strategic nuclear parity with the United States and became the first nation to launch both an artificial satellite (Sputnik) and a human (Yuri Gagarin) into space. Through the Warsaw Pact and extensive political relationships across Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, Moscow projected global influence that challenged American leadership for decades. However, sustaining competition with the United States imposed enormous economic burdens. Central planning increasingly failed to generate innovation and productivity. Industrial inefficiency, declining economic growth, fiscal strain from the arms race, and political rigidity gradually weakened the Soviet system. The decade-long Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979-1989) further strained national resources and damaged international prestige. While Afghanistan contributed to Soviet exhaustion, historians generally agree that the collapse of the USSR resulted from multiple structural causes rather than any single conflict. In December 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved into fifteen independent republics. Bashir, a former Soviet Union's permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, most of its nuclear arsenal and much of its military-industrial infrastructure. Yet it did not inherit the Soviet Union's comprehensive economic power. Today, Russia remains one of the world's foremost military powers. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Russia ranked as the world's third-largest military spender in 2025, allocating approximately US\$190 billion, equivalent to 7.5 percent of GDP, while the United States remained first at US\$954 billion and China second at US\$336 billion. Together, these three

countries accounted for more than half of global military expenditure. Russia also retains one of the world's two largest nuclear arsenals. Alongside the United States, it possesses the overwhelming majority of global nuclear warheads, ensuring that Moscow remains a decisive military and strategic actor in international security. Nevertheless, military strength alone no longer defines comprehensive global leadership. Unlike the Soviet Union, contemporary Russia does not compete with the United States across the full spectrum of national power. Russia's economy, while resilient under difficult geopolitical conditions, remains relatively modest in global terms. According to the World Bank, Russia's nominal GDP in 2025 stood at approximately US\$2.56 trillion, compared with an American economy exceeding US\$23 trillion and a Chinese economy exceeding US\$20 trillion. Russia continues to be an important exporter of oil, natural gas, wheat, fertilizers, metals and military equipment. These sectors provide strategic influence and significant export revenues. However, Russia is not a dominant global supplier of consumer electronics, advanced semiconductors, electric vehicles, telecommunications equipment, commercial aircraft, digital platforms, advanced medical products or large-scale civilian infrastructure systems. This distinction is crucial. Russia can threaten the United States through military deterrence, nuclear capabilities, cyber operations and geopolitical disruption. It remains capable of altering regional security dynamics and challenging NATO in Europe. Yet Russia does not possess the broad-based industrial, technological and commercial economy necessary to reshape the global economy. China does. Over the past four decades, China has transformed itself from a relatively poor developing nation into one of the world's largest economic powers. Unlike the Soviet Union, whose influence depended heavily on military and ideological competition, China's rise has been driven primarily by industrialization, mass education, infrastructure development, international trade, education, technological innovation and longer-term economic planning. The scale of China's transformation is unprecedented in modern economic history. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China remains the world's second-largest economy in annual GDP and the largest economy when measured by purchasing power parity (PPP),

reflecting the enormous scale of its domestic productive capacity. The IMF projects China's economy to continue expanding in 2026 despite global economic headwinds. Unlike Russia, China has embedded itself deeply within global production networks. Its factories manufacture everything from smartphones and consumer electronics to high-speed trains, renewable-energy equipment, industrial machinery and advanced electric vehicles. Chinese companies participate in supply chains that reach virtually every continent. Trade has become one of China's greatest strategic assets. The World Trade Organization's latest trade data continue to rank China among the world's largest trading nations, with merchandise imports exceeding US\$82.47 trillion in 2024 alone and exports reaching US\$100.16 trillion, the highest globally. China has become the principal trading partner for dozens of countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. This economic integration fundamentally distinguishes China from the Soviet Union. The USSR largely operated outside the capitalist global economy. China, by contrast, operates at its very center. Businesses, governments and consumers around the world rely on Chinese manufacturing, logistics, industrial inputs and consumer products. Even countries that maintain strategic disagreements with Beijing often remain economically interwoven with China through trade and investment. This level of economic integration gives China forms of influence that military power alone cannot achieve. It is therefore increasingly evident why numerous international administrations—Republican and Democratic alike—have identified China, rather than Russia, as the United States' principal long-term strategic competitor. Russia remains a formidable military power. China is a comprehensive and sustained power that oblation defines the strategic landscape of the twenty-first century. (Part II will examine how China's manufacturing strength, Belt and Road Initiative, technological innovation, economic leadership and continuing expansion of supply chains have transformed it into America's foremost comprehensive strategic challenger.)

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)

Former Press Minister,

Embassy of Pakistan, Washington

Former Press Attaché to Malaysia

Former MD, SREC | Michigan, USA

Where the Mountains Stole Hearts

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Our journey continued towards Malam Jabba, one of Pakistan's best-known hill resorts. On the way we stopped at Jahanabad, where the giant rock carving of the Buddha stands as silent testimony to the region's Buddhist heritage. The sculpture reminds visitors that Swat has, for centuries, been a meeting point of different civilisations and faiths. Preserving such archaeological treasures is not merely an academic exercise; it strengthens our understanding of the country's plural historical legacy. Malam Jabba itself offered magnificent views

THE roads that lead to Pakistan's northern mountains have a curious way of changing their character before the valleys appear, the crowded roads begin to give way to open plains, the air grows lighter and the mind gradually sheds the weight of routine. It was with this intuition that five friends—Abdul Rehman Chishti, Ehsan Shahzad Ahmad, Muhiy-ud-Din Barakat Chishti and I—set out on the morning of July 10, 2026, on a journey that would take us through some of the country's most celebrated landscapes. What began as a recreational trip eventually became an opportunity to reflect on Pakistan's immense natural wealth, its rich traditions of hospitality and the persistent challenges confronting domestic tourism. Our first destination was the Khwera Salt Mine. Hidden beneath the Salt Range, the mine remains one of Pakistan's remarkable natural and industrial treasures. Descending into its vast chambers, where walls shimmer under carefully placed lights, one is reminded that nature often conceals extraordinary beauty beneath ordinary ground. The underground tunnels, the cool air and the centuries-old history of salt extraction offered a fascinating introduction to our journey. The mine has long been recognised as both an economic asset and a tourist attraction and its careful preservation demonstrates how heritage and tourism can complement one another. From Khwera, we travelled towards Attock; where we spent the night. Few places in Pakistan carry the historical symbolism of Attock. Standing near the mighty Indus, one cannot help but think of the countless armies, traders and travellers who crossed this region over the centuries. The meeting of geography and history gives the city a character unlike any other. Our brief stay provided a welcome pause before we began the longer drive towards Swat the following morning. The road to Mingora unfolded like a changing landscape painting. Wheat fields gradually disappeared behind rolling hills, streams accompanied the highways and forests began to dominate the horizon. Every turn seemed to reveal another picture worthy of admiration. Such journeys remind us that Pakistan's natural diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Within a single day's drive, one can travel from the plains of Punjab to the cool valleys of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By evening we reached Mingora, where we were warmly received by Ehsan Raza Ahmad Khan. Hospitality is often described as a defining feature of Pakistan culture, but descriptions rarely capture its genuine warmth. Our host welcomed us not as visitors but as members of his extended family. Traditional tribal custom was served with remarkable generosity and every conversation reflected a sense of respect and formality. The experience reminded us that while scenic beauty attracts travellers, it is often the kindness of local people that leaves the deepest impression. The following day Ehsan Raza Ahmad Khan accompanied us to Shanghu Top. The winding mountain road tested both patience and driving skills, yet every kilometre rewarded us with breathtaking scenery. Dense forests covered the slopes while clouds drifted lazily across the peaks. At Shanghu Top we were welcomed by Mr Sultan Ahmad Khan, whose gracious

reception reflected the same generous spirit we had experienced in the past. A traditional hospitality, intertwined with great care, transformed an already memorable visit into an unforgettable one. Standing at Shanghu Top, surrounded by mountains stretching endlessly into the distance, it was impossible not to feel a profound sense of pride. Nature has blessed Pakistan with landscapes capable of competing with any tourist destination in the world. Yet these blessings also impose responsibility. Such places deserve careful preservation, thoughtful planning and responsible tourism if future generations are to experience the same beauty. Our journey continued towards Malam Jabba, one of Pakistan's best-known hill resorts. On the way we stopped at Jahanabad, where the giant rock carving of the Buddha stands as silent testimony to the region's Buddhist heritage. The sculpture reminds visitors that Swat has, for centuries, been a meeting point of different civilisations and faiths. Preserving such archaeological treasures is not merely an academic exercise; it strengthens our understanding of the country's plural historical legacy. Malam Jabba itself offered magnificent views of the region's natural and industrial treasures. Descending into its vast chambers, where walls shimmer under carefully placed lights, one is reminded that nature often conceals extraordinary beauty beneath ordinary ground. The underground tunnels, the cool air and the centuries-old history of salt extraction offered a fascinating introduction to our journey. The mine has long been recognised as both an economic asset and a tourist attraction and its careful preservation demonstrates how heritage and tourism can complement one another. From Khwera, we travelled towards Attock; where we spent the night. Few places in Pakistan carry the historical symbolism of Attock. Standing near the mighty Indus, one cannot help but think of the countless armies, traders and travellers who crossed this region over the centuries. The meeting of geography and history gives the city a character unlike any other. Our brief stay provided a welcome pause before we began the longer drive towards Swat the following morning. The road to Mingora unfolded like a changing landscape painting. Wheat fields gradually disappeared behind rolling hills, streams accompanied the highways and forests began to dominate the horizon. Every turn seemed to reveal another picture worthy of admiration. Such journeys remind us that Pakistan's natural diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Within a single day's drive, one can travel from the plains of Punjab to the cool valleys of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By evening we reached Mingora, where we were warmly received by Ehsan Raza Ahmad Khan. Hospitality is often described as a defining feature of Pakistan culture, but descriptions rarely capture its genuine warmth. Our host welcomed us not as visitors but as members of his extended family. Traditional tribal custom was served with remarkable generosity and every conversation reflected a sense of respect and formality. The experience reminded us that while scenic beauty attracts travellers, it is often the kindness of local people that leaves the deepest impression. The following day Ehsan Raza Ahmad Khan accompanied us to Shanghu Top. The winding mountain road tested both patience and driving skills, yet every kilometre rewarded us with breathtaking scenery. Dense forests covered the slopes while clouds drifted lazily across the peaks. At Shanghu Top we were welcomed by Mr Sultan Ahmad Khan, whose gracious

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Briefs

15, including
14 security
personnel..

FROM PAGE 01
the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country".
"These sacrifices of our brave soldiers further reinforce our unwavering commitment to safeguarding our nation at all costs," ISPR said. Last week, security forces killed 24 terrorists in KP's Bannu district and its adjoining areas in the last 24 hours, the military's media affairs wing said in a statement. The statement by ISPR said that there had been a recent "surge" in terrorist activities against police and suicide bombings in Bannu. In these incidents, the statement said, "Indian group Finsal-Khawar targeted law enforcement agencies and innocent civilians".

4 terrorists
neutralized
in Mastung

FROM PAGE 01
according to Radio Pakistan. On Thursday, security sources said that six terrorists were killed in a security operation in the Khud Koda during an operation launched on the basis of credible intelligence. The sources added that several individuals, including women suicide bombers and their facilitators, were arrested during the action while several terrorist hideouts were also destroyed. Security officials said the Baluchistan Home Department had imposed a curfew in the Khud Koda area on Wednesday night to facilitate the operation.

Those
helping
US in war...

FROM PAGE 01
claims are aimed at neutralizing threats from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Araghchi also accused the U.S. of violating the Islamabad memorandum ceasefire, citing attacks on civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and water facilities. He recalled the February 28 strike that killed Iran's Supreme Leader and family members, as well as a deadly attack on a school in Minjah that left 108 students and staff dead. The warning carries significant global implications. Brent Crude oil has surged past \$100 per barrel following Monday attacks on Saudi tankers in the Red Sea, raising fears of a broader regional conflict. Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that damages from Hezbi strikes would be compensated using frozen Iranian funds.

UN calls for
evacuation...

FROM PAGE 01
the Middle East war, his spokeswoman Shabana Manto said. The International of Maritime Organization has said there are at least 6,000 seafarers on hundreds of vessels who are stranded in the strait, unable to evacuate during the ceasefire. Many others are unaccounted for. Turkey is urging states, ship owners and all other relevant actors to "urgently ensure the protection of stranded seafarers," including through consular assistance and providing essential supplies "and by facilitating evacuations and repatriations." Manto told a press conference in Geneva.

Peace,
stability...

FROM PAGE 01
found to be involved in these terrorist incidents," the minister said. He urged the SCO to demand the Afghan Taliban regime to "honour its counter-terrorism commitments to the international community and fulfil its responsibilities towards global peace and security". During his remarks, Dr. Sarfraz said that since its establishment, the SCO has become "an anchor for regional cooperation, driving vital progress in peace, security, stability and economic connectivity while also simultaneously fostering deep cultural exchanges among member states".

British HC celebrates start of
Glasgow 2026 C'wealth Games

A bit of Glasgow came to Islamabad last night at a special reception of guests from sport, government, civil society, media and Commonwealth alumni

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Glasgow will host the Games from 23 July to 2 August 2026. Around 3,000 athletes from 74 Commonwealth nations and territories will compete across 10 sports, including six Para sports. The event also highlighted the UK's support for education across the Commonwealth through Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, which have helped students and future leaders for more than 60 years. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CBE, said: "The Commonwealth Games are about more than medals. They bring people together, celebrate talent and show the power of sport to unite communities. Pakistan has a proud sporting history, and athletes who continue to inspire young people across the country. As Glasgow welcomes the Commonwealth Games, we are proud to celebrate the strong links between the UK, Pakistan and our Commonwealth family."



the start of Glasgow 2026 in Islamabad. Before the reception, the British High Commissioner held a short award presentation for Pakistani recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II Commonwealth Trust 100 Young Leaders Awards. The following young leaders were awarded for their work in education, inclusion, youth empowerment, technology and gender equality.

- Farah Gul Rehman, Co-Founder of Pa-KGPT, uses inclusive AI to support education, health and climate resilience in underserved communities.
- Hassan Ashraf, Founder and CEO of Unleash Foundation, expands free education for child labourers and underserved children across Pakistan.
- Hafiza Rashid, Founder and Executive Director of Girls United for Human Rights, works to end child marriage, tackle gender-based violence and promote girls' education.
- Joshua Dhwani, Founder and Executive Director of ISYD, advances youth inclusion, health equity and gender equality, including training deaf young people as peer educators.

New Birmingham Phoenix captain
Ferreira upbeat despite losing key
players ahead of opening game

BIRMINGHAM: New Birmingham Phoenix captain Daan Ferreira is full of praise for Pakistan's mystery spinner Usman Tariq and remains upbeat about his team's chances in The Hundred despite losing key players ahead of the opening game. The South African all-rounder, who was signed by Birmingham Phoenix for this season of The Hundred, received a surprise gift on his 28th birthday as he joined the Phoenix squad. On July 21, as he turned 28, he got the news that Jacob Bethell, who was supposed to lead Birmingham Phoenix this season, had been ruled out of the tournament due to an injury, after the team management decided that the best person to lead the squad would be Ferreira, who also led the Proteas squad last year in the T20 series against Pakistan in Pakistan.

It is something that we have to deal with, as these unexpected things do happen from time to time, but with the tournament coming so quickly, we had to acknowledge that and send our regards to Bethell. I think it was important for us to move on as quickly as we can and focus on what the challenges ahead is and get things ready. So, I'm grateful to be the leader of this team, and I'll do it to the best of my ability and I'll give 100% to everything I do, he performed further. Despite losing two important members of the squad, first Bethell and then Bangladesh pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman due to injury, Ferreira is fully confident of the skill set and abilities of the remaining squad members as well as the replacement players signed by the management and hopes that everyone in the squad will give their 100%, including himself. The coaches have done really well, we've signed a really good squad as a whole, but to replace him wasn't easy. -APP

Barcelona
signs forward
Karim
Adeyemi

BARCELONA: Spanish champion Barcelona signed forward Karim Adeyemi from Borussia Dortmund on a five-year contract on Thursday, as they rebuild the attack following the departure of veteran striker Robert Lewandowski. For the latest updates, follow us @AnkNews-Sport. Barcelona announced the signing on their website and said Adeyemi was being "rewarded" with coach Hansi Flick, who handled him in his Germany debut. The speedy Adeyemi can operate as a striker or winger. He played four seasons in the Bundesliga with Dortmund and has made 11 appearances for Germany. -APP

Heroes Super
Hockey announces
its inaugural edition

Pakistan's Women's Field Hockey League
STRAWBERRY Sports Management, Pakistan's first professionally run sports management organisation, today announced the launch of the inaugural edition of Heroes Super Hockey, Pakistan's Women's Field Hockey League. The League will take place in November 2026 in Gojra, a city long regarded as the true home of the nation's field hockey talent. "The League will bring together city based franchise teams built from talent drawn from every corner of the country. Coverage will span every media platform, including live broadcast, on ground activities, and city based events, offering families and sports enthusiasts alike a memorable experience grounded in the real stories of extraordinary people. We welcome sponsors and event owners to join us on this journey," observed Asad Gillani, President, Heroes Super Hockey. "The people of Gojra take great pride in having Gojra International Hockey Stadium chosen as the venue for this inaugural edition. -APP

Gen Aamer
promoted as
4 star gen.

FROM PAGE 01
Army Staff—also a four-star general—is mandatory, and further senior appointments are expected in the coming weeks. This reshaping of the command structure is seen as part of broader efforts to align military leadership with constitutional requirements and ending strategic needs. General Aamer's elevation to Commander National Strategic Command places him at the helm of Pakistan's most critical defence institution, responsible for overseeing strategic assets and ensuring national security preparations. Analysts note that his promotion underscores the government's intent to strengthen the chain of command and reinforce stability at a time of regional and global uncertainty. Previously the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee was the discharge with the affairs of national strategic command, but after the constitutional amendment the CJSC posts was abolished. The developments are expected to shape both Pakistan's internal military framework and its overall strategic posture. With pending appointments and political reactions unfolding, the coming weeks will be crucial in defining the balance between civilian leadership and military authority. It may be mentioned here that JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman, in an unusual move, openly criticised this establishment, a rare departure from his traditionally cooperative stance. His remarks had added no dimension to the political discourse surrounding civil-military relations, highlighting the sensitivity of these appointments in Pakistan's power dynamics.

Asad
Gillani new
Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01
strengthened defence cooperation and coordinate closely on regional and global issues amid a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. Gillani is a seasoned diplomat with nearly 30 years of service. He joined Foreign Service in 90s and has built an extensive diplomatic career across Asia, Europe and the Middle East. His connection with China dates back more than two decades when he served as Third Secretary at the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing. Most recently, he has been serving in senior leadership roles at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including as Additional Secretary, where he has overseen key bilateral diplomatic affairs, while simultaneously heading the Foreign Service Academy as its Director General.

Pakistan,
Iran FM's
discuss...

FROM PAGE 01
US, and other relevant authorities to ensure that safe transit through Pakistan and return to Iran. The two sides agreed to maintain close coordination and regular consultations on issues of mutual interest and reinforced their commitment to working together for regional peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

Trump to
impose
'forced ...

FROM PAGE 01
Switzerland were assigned roles that, combined with pre-existing month-long trade tensions, resulted in the other 28 countries were assigned a 12.5% rate. Those included Vietnam, which issued a new decree this week that sets out more detailed rules banning imports of goods made with forced labour, and China. Greer previously alleged that for countries with trade deals with Washington carrying US tariff rates, the new forced labour duties would not push them over those caps—a point which the EU noted in its response. "The EU notes positively the fact that this concern is in line with the US tariff commitments agreed under the EU-US Joint Statement," a European Commission spokesperson said, adding it provided "positive momentum" to continue the work on exploring further tariff exemptions and deepening cooperation.

CAIRO: Ghizlane
Chebbak does not
remember a time
without a ball at her feet

DNA

CAIRO: Her late father, Lathi Chebbak, who helped guide Morocco to the Africa Cup of Nations title back in 1975, gave her a football when she was a little girl—and it was love at first sight. She would play in the streets of her neighbourhood in Casablanca with her brothers and other boys and has memories of herself as an eight-year-old already playing football at a club. "In my neighbourhood, I was the only girl playing football," Chebbak told Arab News. "My family helped me continue in the sport. My father loved football. My brothers love football. My mother encouraged me to play football. I didn't have a problem with my family. Girls who stop playing usually have problems with their families. 'Alhamdulillah, I had a lot of support from my family. They were happy when they saw me playing football. The media me happy and made me more comfortable playing the game. I always say, to this day, I am lucky that I have a family who loves sports and loves football in particular.'"

Boasted by that support, Chebbak has gone on to become an arguably the greatest and most influential player in the history of Moroccan women's football. Now 35, she is ready to lead the Atlas Lionesses in a third consecutive Women's AFCON. Winner of the Golden Boot in the previous two WAFCON competitions, setting five goals last year and three in the one before that, Chebbak is determined to secure the title with Morocco—starting with a match against Kenya at Moulay El Hassan Stadium in Rabat on Sunday. Morocco finished runners-up in the last two WAFCONs and are fished to emulate their male counterparts by triumphing on home soil.

Babar Azam,
Shaheen and
Salman tick
up in ICC ODI
rankings

Haris Rauf climbs two places while Mohammad Wasim Jr improves one spot

PAKISTAN: Babar Azam climbed in the latest International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's ODI Player Rankings, while several other national players also improved their standings following strong performances in the West Indies-New Zealand series. In the ODI batters' rankings, Babar climbed one place to sixth with 689 rating points, up from seventh. Salman Ali Agha also made progress, rising two places from 18th to 16th with 630 points. Former captain and wicketkeeper Mohammad Iftikhar retained his 31st position with 240 rating points. Left-handed opener Faheem Zaman slipped one place from 36th to 37th with 544 points. Sinu Agarwal remained unchanged in 4th place. New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell continued to lead the ODI batting rankings with 802 rating points. India captain Shubman Gill held second place, while debutant Virat Kohli remained third. In the ODI bowlers' rankings, Pakistan pace bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi climbed two places from ninth to seventh with 241 rating points. Haris Rauf also gained two spots to move up to 26th with 555 points. Nuseem Shah



dropped two places to 14th with 477 points, while Mohammad Wasim Jr improved one place from 71st to 70th with 432 points. Spinner Mohammad Nawaz retained 80th position with 407 points. Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan continued to top the ODI bowling rankings, while Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed remained second, keeping the pressure on the Afghan star. England fast bowler Josh Archer climbed to third, replacing South Africa spinner Keshav Maharu in the top three. -APP

UN Recognition Boosts Pakistan's Football Diplomacy

The recognition has also reinforced the Pakistan Football Federation's (PFF) belief in the unity of the global football family, demonstrating that football continues to transcend geographical, cultural and political boundaries by bringing together nations in pursuit of common humanitarian goals

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The international recognition earned by Pakistan's "Football for Mental Health Programme" at the United Nations has been hailed as a major milestone for Pakistan's sporting diplomacy, reinforcing the country's positive image while strengthening its standing within the global football community. Officials associated with the initiative believe the acknowledgment has gone beyond celebrating a successful social programme, instead highlighting Pakistan's growing ability to contribute meaningfully to international discussions on youth development, mental well-being and community engagement through sport. The recognition has also reinforced the Pakistan Football Federation's (PFF) belief in the unity of the global football family, demonstrating that football continues to transcend geographical, cultural and political boundaries by bringing together nations in pursuit of common humanitarian goals. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gillani described the achievement as a significant endorsement of Pakistan's potential to transform football into an instrument of social progress. "It proves that Pakistani people have the will and ability to serve society, while the Pakistan Football Federation possesses the professional capacity to implement globally conceived ideas focusing on building a better society by using football as a vehicle," he said. Gillani added that the international accolade had projected Pakistan's soft image before the world by showcasing the country's commitment to innovation, social responsibility and community development through

sport. He said that one of the most significant outcomes of the initiative was its emphasis on mental health, an issue receiving increasing attention across the global sporting landscape. "Football has the power to improve the emotional and psychological well-being of players, coaches, volunteers, supporters and families, while creating healthier and more connected communities," PFF Chief Operating Officer Muhammad Shahid Nazir

Khokhar said that the United Nations platform enabled Pakistan to engage with a diverse range of international stakeholders, including football administrators, policy makers, development organisations, athletes and youth leaders. "These interactions created valuable opportunities to exchange ideas, explore future collaborations and strengthen partnerships aimed at using sport to address global social challenges," he remarked.



Briefs

ETP systems to
make Buriganga
River pollution-free

DHAKA: To make the Buriganga River pollution-free, the government has taken the initiative to bring the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) systems of industries that discharge liquid waste under strict monitoring system, alongside conducting regular enforcement activities to ensure that these treatment plants remain operational at all times. The Director General of the Department of Environment, Dr. Md. Latif Rahman, told the starline news agency BSS that efforts are being made to ensure the river's natural flow by increasing the water flow in the Buriganga.

Besides, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is carrying out regular dredging operations to increase the river's navigability by removing polluted sediment.

To prevent water pollution, the government plans to monitor ETP systems online, he added. As part of this initiative, IP cameras will be installed in pollution-prone areas to monitor the discharge of hazardous waste, he added.

An ETP is a wastewater treatment system that treats contaminated liquid waste generated by industries before it is released into the environment. In other words, the primary purpose of an ETP is to reduce industrial wastewater to safe levels through chemical, biological, and mechanical treatment processes before it is discharged into rivers, canals, or other water bodies. He said wastewater discharged from industries contains various toxic chemicals, dyes, oil, heavy metals and other hazardous substances—APP

Women in
Sudan face
drone attacks,
rape

GENEVA: Women and girls in Sudan's Al-Bayda face a dire choice between the threat of drone attacks during the day and sexual violence at night when they go out to fetch water in the besieged city. UN Women said on Friday. Access to food and health care is severely limited in Al-Bayda, the capital of North Kordofan, where the UN's human rights chief warned this month that a human rights catastrophe was unfolding and intensifying fighting between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The war, now in its fourth year, has pushed one of the world's worst humanitarian crises — with rampant reports of sexual violence and other abuses. "These women and girls have been harassed. They've been raped, and they've been subjected to other forms of sexual violence, all while trying to access water, one of life's most fundamental necessities in human rights," Anna Mutsaers, UN Women Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, told reporters in Geneva via video link from Nairobi. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said civilians in Al-Bayda had faced siege-like conditions for 18 months, with critical shortages of clean water and relentless drone strikes — warning of a repeat of the atrocities that took place in Al-Fashir in northern Darfur last year—APP



Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar along with the heads of delegation of the SCO Member States, participated in the joint painting ceremony on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting.

Chinese, Pakistani meteorologists jointly develop forecasting tools

The platform itself is also becoming more demand-driven. A newly launched "menu-based" service platform allows meteorological agencies, disaster management authorities and international organizations to select observation equipment, satellite products, AI forecasting models and other services according to their operational needs, with more than 100 international cooperation projects already available

DNA

BEIJING: Beijing is increasingly promoting AI as a tool for tackling one of climate change's most urgent challenges, that is, helping vulnerable communities prepare for extreme weather before disaster strikes. Chinese and Pakistani meteorologists jointly developed specialized forecasting tools while integrating Pakistan's own radar and satellite observations into the platform, in Pakistan, where deadly lake outburst floods, monsoon rainfall and severe storms pose recurring risks, says a report carried by China Economic Net on Friday. For China, the next challenge is no longer whether AI can generate weather forecasts, but whether those forecasts are reliable enough to support operational decision-making during increasingly frequent extreme weather events. "Artificial intelligence has become an important engine for improving forecasts and early warnings for hazardous weather," Pan Jiqin, chief engineer of the CMA, told media. He noted that AI models have already demonstrated strong capabilities in forecasting typhoons and other hazardous weather, but challenges remain, including the limited availability of extreme weather samples and the need to improve model reliability before AI systems can be fully trusted in operational services. China is pairing technology with long-term capacity building. According to the CMA, nearly 1,000 meteorological professionals from more than 100 developing countries and regions have participated in China's early warning training programs in recent years. In June, the agency also

launched the MAZU Scholarship to support meteorological professionals from Belt and Road partner countries working on early warning systems and the local application of MAZU. The platform itself is also becoming more demand-driven. A newly launched "menu-based" service platform allows meteorological agencies, disaster management authorities and international organizations to select observation equipment, satellite products, AI forecasting models and other services according to their operational needs, with more than 100 international cooperation projects already available. The announcement that MAZU will expand to 50 countries over the next five years marks the next stage of that effort. As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather, countries are searching not only for better

forecasts, but also for faster warnings and stronger resilience. The global race in artificial intelligence may continue to be defined by increasingly powerful foundation models. But for communities facing floods, storms and droughts, another frontier is quickly emerging — using AI to ensure that the most warning arrives before the next disaster does. As Tropical Cyclone Mula approached Papua New Guinea in April, meteorologists were not relying on conventional forecasting tools alone. On China's cloud-based early warning platform, images from Fengyun meteorological satellites tracked the evolution of the storm, while forecasts from the China Meteorological Administration's CMA-GPS numerical weather prediction system and its Advanced Fengming model provided projections of the cyclone's path, winds and rainfall.

At least 17 killed in Russian, Ukrainian long-range strikes

KIV: At least 17 people were killed Friday in Russian and Ukrainian long-range strikes — including just outside Kyiv and hundreds of miles east of Moscow — as both sides intensify strikes with diplomacy in a deadlock. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a Russian missile strike outside the Ukrainian capital killed six people, with a rescue operation ongoing and "dozens of people reported to be injured." Zelenskyy also said that Russian aerial bombing killed five people in the frontline city of Sloviansk. On the same day, Kyiv launched a wave of long-range drone and missile attacks on Russia—APP

Autonomous fighter jets target Europe market

FARNBOROUGH, UK: As Europe ramps up its rearmament drive, US aerospace giant Boeing is seeking a foothold in the emerging market for autonomous fighter aircraft, showcasing its capabilities at the Farnborough Airshow this week. Boeing's MQ-28 Ghost is an unmanned aircraft, developed with the Royal Australian Air Force, to fly alongside crewed fighter jets carrying out electronic warfare and surveillance and to help multiply forces. It belongs to a category of AI-enabled Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) which have risen to prominence as a new type of drone, as unmanned systems dominate the battlefield in Ukraine. Boeing hopes to win over the European market by partnering with local defense companies — which takes time — or you partner with someone who already has a mature platform, even if that company is not European," he added. The trade-off lies at the heart of Europe's rearmament push, driven by growing security concerns and unease over relying on an increasingly unpredictable ally in US President Donald Trump. "The defense industry is global, and European industry remains embedded in global networks with allies," said Emil Archambault, an associate fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations. "European-based CCAs will still require integration with these American systems and therefore do not offer a fully European solution," he told AFP. "The risks" Boeing began work on the drone-type nearly a decade ago and it has already participated in exercises, including with the US military. "The thing we have going for us is that no one else does, that no one can ever match, is we started nine years ago," Glen Ferguson, director of the MQ-28 Global Program, told AFP on the sidelines of Farnborough—DNA

Panda bonds becoming a new channel seeking alternatives to dollar financing

BEIJING: China Economic Net (July 24) — This week, Indonesia moved from speculation to execution. The government issued a \$1 billion panda bond (around US\$1.03 billion) in panda-denominated Panda Bonds, marking its first entry into China's offshore bond market. The offering received total orders of around 17 billion yuan, resulting in an oversubscription 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 560 million yuan and a five-year tranche worth 1.4 billion yuan. Finance Minister Purbaya Yudha Sadewa said Jakarta could consider a larger follow-up issuance if the debut transaction performs well. Indonesia has also secured a top offshore rating of AAA with a stable outlook from China's 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 includes how much weight Chinese banks are placing on dollar bonds. 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. Systems and Kazakhstan (via, through both its treasury and its sovereignty wealth fund) made their debuts, joining repeat issuers like Hungary. Pakistan priced its own debut in May, and Brazil is to join the queue in June, hoping to become the first Latin American sovereign to issue. The roll-out 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-2020, 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 incident, 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 US dollars can borrow far more cheaply in yuan, even after swapping proceeds back into dollars or local currency. Coupons on sovereign 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 flood of sovereign issuers are staged so short for so long. The deeper change is institutional. A rule change at the end of 2022 let issuers freely reset proceeds abroad, removing sovereign issuers' biggest practical objection to a bond whose proceeds had previously been held to get out of China. A second overhaul, in January 2024, created 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. Now, the economic, academic research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), describes the shift as one from a "niche plot" to a "normalized financing channel"—DNA



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Briefs

Spain
declares
national
emergency
over wildfires

MADRID: The Spanish government on Thursday declared a national emergency over a series of wildfires threatening communities near Madrid and in the neighbouring province of Avila, forcing more than 10,000 people to evacuate as firefighters struggled to contain the blazes.

The Interior Minister said the decision was taken because of the simultaneous outbreak of several fires, adverse weather conditions and the need to mobilise extensive resources from different public administrations, increasing the complexity of firefighting and civil protection efforts.

Spain and much of southern Europe face increasingly severe wildfire seasons that scientists have linked to climate change. Experts say abundant vegetation growth following unusually heavy spring rainfall has dried out in extreme summer heat, creating fuel for rapidly spreading fires. The regional government of Madrid requested assistance, describing the situation as one of "extreme gravity". It said active fires in Villa del Prado, San Martin de Valdeiglesias and Almorox, in neighbouring Castile-La Mancha, had the potential to advance beyond current extinguishing capacity. It also warned that the wildfire in Barro Colorado, Avila, could reach the Madrid region in the coming hours due to weather conditions. More than 10,000 people have been evacuated from Villa del Prado, San Martin de Valdeiglesias, Peñaloya de la Pies and Aldea del Fresno, according to the regional government. — AFP

Indian
activist
ends fast

News Desk

NEW DELHI: Indian activist Sohan Wangechuk ended a 26-day hunger strike on Friday over leaked medical school entrance exam papers that protesters say enabled cheating, but demonstrators demanding the education minister's resignation were set to continue in the biggest youth-led coalition in the country. Youth protesters, led by the self-named Cuckoo's Nest Party (CNP) movement, demanded Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resign over the leaks that affected some 2 million students in May and are linked to several student suicides. Wangechuk said on X that he broke his fast in the presence of two federal ministers at the urging of scores of members of parliament and following "a long negotiation on various conditions and in view of possible violence in the country". He did not elaborate on the talks but promised to put out details in a video soon. CNP founder Abhishek Dabhekar, 56, for his "courage and sacrifice" and said the protests would continue until Pradhan resigns.

FMs of eight Arab-Islamic states
condemn Israeli escalation

The foreign ministers, who issued a joint statement, included those of Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye, Indonesia, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The foreign ministers of the eight Arab-Islamic states on Friday strongly condemned the Israeli escalation at Al-Aqsa Mosque, particularly the continued mass settlers' incursions led by extremist Israeli ministers, into the holy place under the protection of the Israeli forces. The foreign ministers, in a statement, also condemned the raising of the Israeli flag within courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the erection by Israeli police of two tents, and all other inflammatory acts. The foreign ministers, who issued a joint statement, included those of Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye, Indonesia, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They stressed that these provocative and unacceptable actions constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, and the historical and legal status quo at the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem.

The ministers deplored and strongly condemned the illegal and extremist acts of incitement, incursions, mobilisation calls and violence by Israeli extremist ministers and groups, besides warning that these provocative actions fuelled hatred and extremism, and obstructed efforts to advance a just and lasting peace on the basis of the two-state solution. They said that the restrictions on access to the Old City of Jerusalem and its places of worship coupled with discrimination and arbitrary access restrictions to the other places of worship in the Old City constituted a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and an unlawful attempt to

alter the historical and legal status quo. They stressed that Israel has no sovereignty over occupied Jerusalem or its Islamic and Christian holy sites. The foreign ministers further condemned the continued and systematic violations and measures carried out by Israel, the occupying power, aimed at altering the historical, legal, and demographic character of occupied East Jerusalem and undermining the sanctity and status of its Islamic and Christian holy sites. They reaffirmed their categorical rejection of any attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites, and stress on its preservation while recognising the special role of the historical Hashemite custodianship in this regard. The ministers reiterated that the entire area of Al-Aqsa Mosque / Al Haram Shari

raf, which amounted to 144 hectares, is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims, and that the Jerusalem Endowments and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, affiliated with the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, was the legal entity with exclusive jurisdiction to administer the affairs of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque / Al Haram Al-Sharif and to regulate entry thereto. They called on Israel, as the occupying power, to immediately remove access restrictions to the Old City of Jerusalem, and refrain from obstructing Muslim worshippers' access to the Mosque. They also called on the international community to adopt a firm position that compels Israel to halt its ongoing violations and illegal practices against Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as its violations of the sanctity of these holy places.

Iraqi PM
takes de-
escalation
initiative
to Tehran

BAGHDAD: Iraq's government spokesman said Prime Minister Mohammed al-Sudani carried an initiative to Tehran aimed at easing regional tensions, while Baghdad said it would not allow Iraqi territory to be used to threaten Iran. The remarks came during an official visit by al-Sudani to Tehran, a week after he met US President Donald Trump in Washington. Al-Sudani arrived in Tehran on Thursday afternoon at the head of a high-level delegation and was welcomed by Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ali Mojtahedi, representing President Masoud Pezeshkian, according to the Iranian government's official media website.

Pezeshkian received al-Sudani at an official ceremony at Tehran's Saadabad Palace, where the national anthems of both countries were played and the two leaders reviewed a guard of honor. Al-Sudani said he had discussed several issues of mutual interest with Pezeshkian, including establishing a mechanism for the work of the Iraq-Iran Joint Economic Committee. — AFP

Lebanon,
US mull
direct flights

BEIRUT: Lebanon failed US President Donald Trump's announcement that he ordered all American airlines to resume direct flights to Lebanon. He made the announcement earlier this week following a meeting with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun at the White House. The move carries political, economic and security significance, reflecting a shift in the way the US views Lebanon and paving the way for a new chapter in relations. All US flights were suspended in 1985 after the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 from Athens, Greece, en route to Rome, Italy. The flight was forced to land in Beirut. During the 17-day ordeal, a US Navy diver was killed. The US held Hezbollah responsible for the operation. Prime Minister Nawaf Salam expressed his gratitude to the US for resuming flights, saying his government was prepared to follow up on all the necessary executive and technical procedures required to implement it as soon as possible. — AFP

SC rules all NAB cases
to be heard by FCCP
after legal amendments

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday ruled that all cases relating to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) would henceforth be heard by the Federal Constitutional Court following amendments to the NAB law. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar announced the short order in open court. The judgment stated that after the amendments to the National Accountability Ordinance, the Supreme Court no longer had jurisdiction over NAB cases and all such matters should be transferred to the Federal Constitutional Court. The court held that under Article 175 of the Constitution and Sections 32 and 32A of the National Accountability Ordinance, the Federal Constitutional Court was the competent forum to hear all NAB-related cases. The Supreme Court upheld the stance of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the federal government, declaring that the petitioners fell within the jurisdiction of the Federal Constitutional Court. The court had reserved its verdict on July 16 after hearing detailed arguments from all parties and announced the decision on Friday. — DNA

Ukraine drone attack hits
'Russia's Amazon' warehouse

SAINT PETERSBURG: Ukrainian drones hit a warehouse for a Russian e-commerce giant near Saint Petersburg on Friday, triggering a fire that sent smoke pouring over the historic city, according to local officials and an AFP reporter. Kyiv has targeted Saint Petersburg and the federal government, declaring that the petitioners fell within the jurisdiction of the Federal Constitutional Court. The court had reserved its verdict on July 16 after hearing detailed arguments from all parties and announced the decision on Friday. — DNA

ground. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alleged after the first attack that the facilities were used in "supply sanctioned components for drone production and navigation equipment." Kyiv calls its campaign "long-range sanctions," saying the attacks are justified in retaliation for Russia's military and missile barrages of its cities since the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. The campaign has triggered nationwide fuel shortages and, Kyiv says, denied Russia's financial war chest. Saint Petersburg's Pulkovo airport suspended flights during the attack, resuming operations around 06:00 (08:00 GMT), with around 50 departures disrupted. Wildberries said two of its warehouses in the city had temporarily halted operations, without giving more details. Both Russia and Ukraine have escalated their long-range strikes in recent months. — AFP



BISHKEK: Pakistan's DPM and Foreign Minister Bilal Ishaq meets Chinese FM Wang Yi in Chongqing. Wang Yi conveyed best wishes to Pakistan for its upcoming Chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS) and hosting of the SCO Summit in 2027. — DNA

Oil prices surge nearly 40%
this month as Gulf conflict
fuels inflation fearsBrent crude rises to
\$100.3 after hitting
\$102 two-month high

SYDNEY: Oil prices surged nearly 40% this month amid escalating conflict in the Gulf, reviving inflation fears, rattling bond markets and stoking rate hike expectations globally as Asian shares sank on Friday. European bonuses, however, are headed for a steady open after less than a day earlier. Nasdaq futures slipped 0.3% as bumper results from Intel offered little support in the face of broader worries about oil and rates, while investors grew increasingly uneasy about how much cash the AI boom is burning. Brent crude slipped 0.4% to \$100.3 a barrel, after surging 7% overnight to a two-month high of \$102. Attacks by Israeli on Saudi tankers in the Red Sea risk choking

off a second crucial Middle East artery for global oil supplies, alongside Iran's near closure of the Strait of Hormuz. President Donald Trump threatened "major military punishment" for Iran and its Israeli allies, with the US military striking Iran last Thursday and early Friday in the 12th consecutive night of attacks. "Two of the world's busiest shipping corridors are under threat in the same month, and markets are only just beginning to work out what that means," said Nigel Green, CEO of deVere Group, a financial advisory firm. "With that ceasefire now collapsed and oil back above \$100, the drop which gave the Fed room to relax may already be reversing. This looks less like a short-lived spike and more like a genuine reopening of the inflation question." News that the US administration will impose higher tariffs on goods from 13 trading partners also did not help the inflation picture, with 30-year Treasury yields marching towards their highest levels since 2007 and benchmark European borrowing costs climbing to highs not seen in 2011. Markets bet central banks will have to turn more hawkish, with a one-in-three chance of a rate hike from the Federal Reserve as soon as next week — a sea change from merely a week ago — while a move in September is more than fully priced in. — AFP

Türkiye's Ozel quits opposition
CHP to found new party

Ozel's move comes two months after a court ruling removed him as CHP leader and brought back his defeated predecessor Kemal Kilicdaroglu, sparking widespread anger within Türkiye's oldest political party

ANKARA: Ousted as leader of Türkiye's main opposition, Ozel on Friday resigned from the CHP alongside 50 other lawmakers, setting up his own party to lead the fight against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In a video broadcast by Turkish media and posted on X, Ozel could be seen sitting at his desk, flanked by a large Turkish flag, signing both his resignation papers and the founding documents for "Yeni Parti," or "New Party." "May it be beneficial to our country, our nation, our party, and all of us," he said. The paperwork to set up Yeni Parti will be presented at the interior ministry around noon, officials said. With 91 lawmakers, it will be the second largest party in Türkiye's 600-seat parliament after Erdogan's ruling AKP, which holds 277 seats. Until now, the CHP had been the second largest with 135 lawmakers. But with the resignations, that number drops to 64, leaving it in fourth place after the pro-Kurdish opposition DEM party, which has 56 seats. Ozel's move comes two months after a court ruling removed him as CHP leader and brought back his defeated

predecessor Kemal Kilicdaroglu, sparking widespread anger within Türkiye's oldest political party. Although Ozel appealed against the ruling, proformal delays mean the paperwork did not reach the Supreme Court until just hours before it broke for the summer recess, triggering his move to set up a new party. "A short of fire," the Ankara court ruling annulled the CHP's 2023 leadership election over allegations of vote-buying in a move widely seen as a political maneuver to quell Erdogan's opponents, raising concerns about democracy and the rule of law in Türkiye. In his last speech to lawmakers at the CHP's weekly parliamentary group meeting on Tuesday, Ozel said Türkiye stood at "a historic crossroads." "The new party we are about to establish will become the main opposition force in the Grand National Assembly (parliament) by a wide margin," he told lawmakers, who gave him a standing ovation. "In 10 days, we do not give up on our beliefs; instead, we all take on a difficult and risky burden for the country's sake," he said, using a Turkish idiom about "putting on a shirt of fire." — AFP

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