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Pakistan renews its commitment to peace in Sudan: Iftikhar

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Pak eyes free Trade pact with Eurasian region

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Philippine envoy opens photo show at PNCA

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Attack on one, attack on all

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye sign defence pact

“Agreement intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression,” says FO

DNA

MAKKAH: Amid rising tensions in the Middle East, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye on Friday signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, under which an armed attack against any one of the three countries would be regarded as an attack against them all. The agreement was signed during the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Summit for Joint Defence, attended by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement. Regional powers are looking to strengthen security ties against the backdrop of the US-Israel war on Iran, which started on February 28, and has had a major impact on the region – drawing in several Gulf countries and paralysing maritime traffic through the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Iran has launched multiple attacks on regional countries housing US bases and has also warned states against allowing their territory or facilities to be used for Washington's attacks on Tehran. Pakistan has been in the spotlight since the war began as it has played the role of a key mediator between the warring US and Iran. In the statement, the Foreign Office said the pact reflects the three countries' shared commitment to strengthening collective security and promoting peace, security and stability in the region and beyond. “The agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and stipulates that any armed attack against any one of the three states shall be regarded as an attack against them all,” it added. The agreement also provides for the enhancement of all aspects of defence cooperation among the three countries, the FO statement added. Turkiye has Nato's second-largest military. Saudi Arabia, the strongest

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It is a ‘Historic day for Pakistan’, says Tarar

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, while talking to a private TV channel, described the signing of the joint defence agreement between the three states as a “historic day” for Pakistan, saying the pact reflected growing recognition of the country's defence capabilities and strengthened ties among the three nations. Speaking about the agreement, Tarar said the defence cooperation framework would take relations between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye to a new level. He credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir with bringing the three countries together, saying they had an “ideal working relationship” and that their teamwork had contributed to recent successes. Tarar said the agreement was aimed at strengthening defence cooperation and served as a form of deterrence rather than aggression. The minister further said Pakistan's capabilities had been demonstrated during last year's conflict with India and claimed that the country had since played a role in promoting regional peace. Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan said that the signing of

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MAKKAH: Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement. Makkah, 7 August 2026. – DNA

UN slams Swat bombing

APP

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council has strongly condemned “in the strongest terms” the recent suicide bombing in Pakistan's Swat district, leaving at least 16 dead and dozens wounded. In a press statement, the 15-member Council denounced the incident as a “heinous and cowardly” act of terrorism, demanding swift accountability for the attackers. The deadly bombing, which targeted a police station in the Kabal area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was claimed by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). “The members of the Security Council express their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and the people of Pakistan, and wish a speedy and full recovery

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Operation clean-up

10 India-backed terrorists killed in KP operations: ISPR

Security forces thwart attack on checkpoints in South Waziristan's Azam Warsak area, says military's media wing

DNA

PESHAWAR: Security forces eliminated at least 10 India-backed Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists in two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday. In the first encounter on Thursday, security forces thwarted an attempted attack on security forces' checkpoints in the Azam Warsak area of South Waziristan district, the military's media wing said in a statement. “During ensuing fire exchange, eight khawarij were sent to hell through effective and precise engagements by own troops,” it added. In another encounter that took place in the Dir district the same day,

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President, PM praise security forces

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid rich tribute to the security forces for killing ten Indian-backed terrorists of Fitna-al-Khawarij during successful operations in South Waziristan and Dir district. The president and prime minister, in their separately issued statements, reaffirmed the

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Heavy rains drench Beijing

DNA

BEIJING: Multiple districts in Beijing issued heavy rainfall warnings on Friday evening, with authorities warning residents of disasters, including floods in the city center and also mudslides and landslides in agricultural and mountainous areas. The extreme rains come as China readies for Typhoon Dolphin, which is expected to make landfall along the country's eastern coast from Sunday to Monday. Beijing's Dongcheng, Xicheng, Haidian, Chaoyang, Tongzhou and Pinggu districts all issued heavy rain warnings, expecting hourly rainfall to exceed 50 millimeters. The highest rainfall occurred in Miyun district in northeast Beijing on Friday afternoon, where precipitation reached 99.5 millimeters.

SCBA backs idea of new provinces

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) – a premier lawyers' body – on Friday voiced support for the controversial proposal recently put forward by Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi regarding the creation of new provinces in the country. Recently, while addressing the Pakistan Economic Summit 2026, the interior minister had urged all political parties to resolve various national issues, including the question of creating new provinces. He termed this the only solution to improving the country's overall condition, which he said had “collapsed”. Speaking at the Full Court Reference held at the Supreme Court (SC) in honour of Justice Musarrat Hilali on the occasion of her laying down her judicial robes.

US to vet social media of foreign journalists applying for visas

The White House and the State Department's official accounts on X shared a link to the article, but the State Department declined to confirm the specifics of the report, citing a policy of not commenting on “purported internal documents”

WASHINGTON: The US State Department will vet the social media accounts of foreign journalists applying for visas to work in the United States, according to a media report on Thursday. The report in the conservative news outlet The Daily Signal cited an internal memo that said an initiative by President Donald Trump's administration that requires applicants for many visa types to make their social media accounts public for screening was being expanded to include foreign media representatives. Applicants for another type of visa for workers from Canada and Mexico also will now be included in the screening, it said. The White House and the State Department's official accounts on X shared a link to the article, but the State Department declined to confirm the specifics of the report, citing a policy of not commenting on “purported internal documents”.

A State Department spokesperson said that what the department calls “online presence vetting” is used to ensure that applicants are eligible for a visa under US law. “The Department of State is screening and vetting to the maximum extent possible every foreign national seeking admission to the United States to ensure they will respect US law including the terms of their admission and do not pose a threat to US security, public safety or national interests,” the spokesperson said. “Officers use a variety of methods to make informed decisions that protect national security, prevent fraud and ensure a thorough review of applicants,” the spokesperson added. It was unclear when the reported new policy would take effect. The Department of Homeland Security tightened rules last month around

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Bilawal says PML-N ‘mistaken’ about AJK govt formation

“A certain section of the PML-N wants Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to fight with his allies,” says PPP leader

DNA

BAGH: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Friday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was mistaken in believing it would form the government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Addressing a public rally in Bagh district of AJK, the PPP leader claimed: “In fact, their [PML-N's] government in Islamabad is also at risk.” Bilawal reiterated that the countdown for the PML-N government has started, adding that “it was started by their own people.” He said: “A certain section of the PML-N wants Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to fight with his allies.” “The real fight is something else,” he added. Referring to alleged rifts within the Sharif family, the PPP leader said: “The real fight is between Islamabad and Lahore. This is the family's own problem.” The PPP leader made the remarks in response to Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah's claim that the PML-N had secured a simple majority to form the government in AJK.

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Schedule for 3rd phase of AJK polls revised

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Election Commission on Friday revised the schedule for the third phase of elections in the region, saying polling in seven of the 11 constituencies of Poonch Division had been postponed due to concerns over the law and order situation in those areas. However, the electoral process will go ahead as planned on August 10 in the division's Bagh and Haveli districts, the Election Commission said in a press release. Amid tensions between protesters and the authorities, elections are being held across the region in three phases, with those in Mirpur and Muzaffarabad divisions held on July 27 and August 2, respectively.

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Sindh govt committed to strengthen PAQJIMS

SUKKUR: The 19th meeting of the Board of Governors of Pir Abdul Qadir Shah Jeelani Institute of Medical Sciences (PAQSJIMS), was held under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Health and Population Welfare and Chairperson of the Board, Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho. According to release issued by PAQJIMS Spokesperson Jameel Hyder on Friday, Director, Dr. Raheem Bux Bhatti, gave a detailed briefing on the overall performance of the institute, provision of advanced medical facilities, administrative, financial and developmental matters, and future strategic plans. The meeting was attended by Khalid Hussain Soomro, Retired Additional Chief Secretary, along with other distinguished members of the Board. On the occasion, it was reaffirmed that strengthening institutions of national importance like PAQJIMS, ensuring effective governance and its continuous development for provision of quality, state of the art and timely healthcare services to the people, remains among the top priorities of the Government of Sindh. —APP

Kundi lauds forces over killing of 10 terrorists

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for eliminating 10 Indian-backed terrorists during successful intelligence-based operations in South Waziristan and Upper Dir. The Governor said the professionalism, bravery and sacrifices of the country's security forces in defending the homeland, maintaining peace and eliminating terrorism were a source of pride for the entire nation. He said the successful operations in South Waziristan and Dir reflected the security forces' strong capability to effectively counter all forms of terrorism. —APP

KP, WB agree to accelerate water, sanitation projects

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government and the World Bank on Friday agreed to expedite the implementation of clean drinking water and sanitation projects in the merged tribal districts (MTDs) while reviewing progress on the KP Rural Investment and Institutional Support Programme (KP-RIISP). The understanding was reached during a meeting between Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering Fazal Shakoor Khan and a World Bank delegation led by Carlo Medici and Robert Wrobel. The discussions focused on ongoing development schemes, effective utilisation of funds and priorities for the programme's next phase. The provincial government also proposed extending KP-RIISP to the settled districts to broaden access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. The minister further sought World Bank support for the construction of flood protection embankments in Charsadda to reduce the impact of seasonal flooding. The World Bank delegation appreciated the progress achieved under the programme. —APP

Maryam replaces minority day with minority week

Addressing the ceremony, Provincial Minister Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif remains steadfast in fulfilling her promise to restore hope and smiles to the people of Punjab

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed to launch Minority Week in August every year, replacing the traditional Minority Day with a weeklong events aimed at promoting interfaith harmony, religious tolerance and national unity. The 'Minority Week' will be observed from August 7 to August 11 across the province through a variety of religious, social and cultural activities. The Minority Week reaffirm PML-N government's commitment to building an inclusive society based on equality, mutual respect, religious freedom and brotherhood, while the Punjab Government will continue taking practical measures to strengthen interfaith harmony and protect rights of all minorities. The inaugural ceremony was held at the Presbyterian Church, Naulakha, Lahore, where Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora led a grand Interfaith Harmony Rally. The event was attended by Parliamentary Secretary Sonia Ashir, Members of the Provincial Assembly Ijaz Alam Augustine, Waseem Anjum Sandhu, Shakeela Ejaz Arthur and Baba Philobus, Chief Executive of Aagahi Mubarak Ali Sarwar, Muhammad Murtaza Khokhar of the Rural Community Development Society, prominent religious leaders

from different faiths, representatives of civil society and members of minority communities. Bishop Dr. Majeed Abel of the Presbyterian Church held a special prayers for Pakistan's peace, prosperity, stability and development on the occasion. Provincial Minister Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora took part in a tree plantation activity within the church premises. The Interfaith Harmony Rally later proceeded from the Presbyterian Church to Krishna Mandir, Gurdwara Dera Sahib and other sacred sites before culminating at the rear lawn of the Badshahi Mosque, where the concluding ceremony was held. Religious leaders belonging to different faiths joined hands with the Provincial Minister in a symbolic human chain, alongside youth, women and citizens, demonstrating Pakistan's collective commitment to unity, religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Addressing the ceremony, Provincial Minister Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif remains steadfast in fulfilling her promise to restore hope and smiles to the people of Punjab. He said that her people-centric initiatives are reaching every segment of society without discrimination, bringing tangible improvements to the lives of ordinary

citizens. The Minister stated that minorities are a valued and integral part of Pakistan's social fabric. Quoting the Chief Minister, he said, "Minorities are the crown of our heads, and it is the State's responsibility to ensure their protection, dignity and equal rights." He added that the observance of an entire Minority Week, instead of a single day, reflects the Punjab Government's unwavering commitment to promoting interfaith harmony, mutual respect, religious freedom and national integration. Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora paid tribute to Pakistan's Armed Forces for their remarkable sacrifices in safeguarding the country's sovereignty, ensuring peace and stability, and strengthening national unity. He said the country's political and military leadership has consistently played a responsible role in promoting regional peace, stability and harmony. He said under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan has earned greater respect and recognition at the international level. "Through responsible diplomacy, a commitment to peace and constructive engagement, Pakistan has projected a positive image of a peaceful and responsible nation. —APP

Pakistan ideal destination for Chinese investments: Tahir

Mr. Li Ang appreciated the warm hospitality extended by ICCI and reaffirmed the Chinese business community's strong confidence in Pakistan's economic future

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has called for taking Pakistan-China economic cooperation beyond its traditional framework by embracing innovation, advanced manufacturing, digital transformation and high-value investments, saying the next chapter of the all-weather strategic partnership must be driven by knowledge, technology and industrial excellence. He expressed these views while talking to a high-powered Chinese business delegation led by Mr. Li Ang, Deputy Secretary General, Commercial Culture Association of China (CCAC), and Deputy Secretary General, China Association for the Promotion of Western Development (CAPWD), at the ICCI Chamber House. The delegation also comprised Ms. Wu Rachel, Deputy Secretary General, Commercial Culture Association of China and CEO of BSFL Culture, Education and Technology Group, along with ten prominent Chinese business leaders representing diverse sectors, including electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, green technologies, industrial modernization, digital economy, smart logistics, modern agriculture and technology-driven joint ventures. Welcoming the delegation, Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that Pakistan and China enjoy an iron-clad friendship that has withstood the test of time and continues to serve as a model of

strategic cooperation. He observed that while the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has laid a strong foundation for bilateral economic collaboration, the future demands greater focus on emerging sectors such as electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, green technologies, industrial modernization, digital economy, smart logistics, modern agriculture and technology-driven joint ventures. He said Pakistan offers a compelling investment destination backed by its strategic geographic location, youthful workforce, expanding consumer market and significant industrial potential. He emphasized that the country's evolving economic landscape presents immense opportunities for Chinese enterprises seeking regional expansion and long-term partnerships. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Li Ang appreciated the warm hospitality extended by ICCI and reaffirmed the Chinese business community's strong confidence in Pakistan's economic future. He noted that the delegation's visit reflects China's continued commitment to expanding commercial cooperation with Pakistan and expressed optimism that direct engagement between entrepreneurs from both countries would lead to new investment opportunities, technology partnerships and mutually beneficial business ventures. Ms. Wu Rachel underlined the importance of people-to-people connectivity, educational collaboration, cultural exchanges and technological cooperation in strengthening long-term economic relations. She said enhanced interaction between

Pakistani and Chinese enterprises would create sustainable opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship and inclusive growth. During the interactive session, business leaders from both countries held detailed discussions on expanding bilateral trade, promoting industrial collaboration, encouraging technology transfer, attracting investment and developing effective mechanisms for facilitating joint ventures. The participants also explored new avenues for cooperation in high-growth sectors capable of generating long-term economic value for both nations. Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub said ICCI remains fully committed to fostering stronger institutional partnerships with leading Chinese organizations and creating an enabling platform for meaningful business collaborations that contribute to sustainable economic development in both Pakistan and China. Earlier, Mr. Waqas Ahmed, senior member of ICCI and coordinator of the Chinese delegation, delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting the vast trade, investment and industrial potential of Pakistan and China while identifying promising areas for future cooperation. The session was also attended by ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, Executive Members Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry and Imran Minhas, former Senior Vice President Fahad Waheed, and a large number of business leaders representing diverse sectors of the economy.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the newly constructed and renovated senate offices at Parliament House.

Petroleum Levy on diesel still below pre-Gulf crisis level

ISLAMABAD: The Petroleum Levy (PL) on diesel remains lower than its level before the Gulf crisis, as the government had temporarily reduced the levy to provide relief to consumers amid a sharp rise in international diesel prices, said Adviser to the Finance Minister, Khurram Schehzad here Friday. Schehzad posted on X that the temporary reduction was aimed at preventing the full impact of higher global oil prices from being passed on to transporters, farmers, and other diesel users. He noted that the revenue estimates for the current fiscal year, approved by the National Assembly, are based on an average Petroleum Levy rate of Rs80 per litre on both diesel and petrol. "Meeting these revenue targets is essential to finance budgeted expenditures and maintain fiscal stability," Schehzad said. The adviser added that as international oil prices ease, a gradual restoration of the levy toward its budgeted level is a prudent and fiscally responsible approach rather than maintaining an emergency reduction indefinitely. He warned that a shortfall in petroleum levy revenues could widen the fiscal deficit, creating greater economic pressures and increasing costs for the public. "Schehzad said the recent adjustments should be viewed as a phased normalization of a temporarily reduced levy and not as an arbitrary or unexpected increase in taxation. —APP

Lifetime tribute paid to Prof. Dr Shaukat at PNCA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), under the National Heritage & Culture Division, organized a solemn tribute ceremony titled "A Lifetime Tribute to Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood (Late)" at the National Art Gallery, PNCA, Islamabad, to celebrate the extraordinary life, work, and legacy of one of Pakistan's most respected artists, educators, researchers, and mentors. The event brought together eminent artists, academicians, architects, researchers, students, family members, and members of the cultural community to honour Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood's lifelong dedication to the advancement of visual arts and art education in Pakistan. Welcoming the participants, Ms. Mariam Ahmed, Director, Visual Arts Division, PNCA, described Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood as an exceptional artist, teacher, and mentor whose contributions have shaped generations of artists

and enriched Pakistan's artistic discourse. She welcomed the family of the late professor, including Ms. Aamna Isani, his daughter, invited the audience to observe a minute of silence and offer prayers for the departed soul. The ceremony was moderated by Dr. Mahmooda Khan, who reflected on Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood's profound influence on his students and colleagues. She remarked that he had been a guiding force throughout their academic and professional journeys, describing him as a mentor whose wisdom, encouragement, and unwavering support would continue to illuminate the path for future generations. Speaking on behalf of Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mahmood's students and colleagues, Dr. Mahmooda Khan remembered him as a self-made, humble, and compassionate individual whose commitment to teaching remained steadfast for more than six decades, from 1964 until 2026. She highlighted his remarkable academic journey, spanning institutions including the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore, the University of Jeddah, the International Islamic University Malaysia, and the University College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab. She emphasized that while the gathering was marked by deep sorrow, it was held not to mourn but to celebrate the inspiring life of a teacher who believed in optimism, generosity, and the transformative power of education. She also expressed gratitude to Director General PNCA Mr. M. Ayoub Jamali, Ms. Mariam Ahmed and the entire PNCA team for organizing the tribute promptly in response to a single request. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

- Aug 01/China Armed Forces Day
- Aug 01/Switzerland National Day
- Aug 01/Lebanon Armed Forces Day
- Aug 01 /Syria Armed Forces Day
- Aug 4/Bukino Faso National Day
- Aug 09 /Singapore
- Aug 15/DPR Korea Independence Day
- Aug 15/India Independence Day
- Aug 15/Poland Armed Forces Day
- Aug 17 /Indonesia Independence Day
- Aug 24/Ukraine Independence Day
- Aug 25/Uruguay Independence Day
- Aug 30 /Turkey Armed Forces Day
- Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic Independence Day
- Aug 31/Malaysia National Day

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- Islamabad Metropolitan
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- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343
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- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Philippines ambassador opens photo exhibition at PNCA

“Culture and heritage of Pakistan our identity our pride” by photojournalists association

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 16th Annual Photo Exhibition of the Rawalpindi Islamabad Photo Journalists Association in collaboration with AL Sadat Group titled “Culture & National Heritage of Pakistan _ Our Identity, Our Pride” was held at Pakistan National Council of Arts. The event was graced by Federal Minister for Culture & National Heritage Aurangzeb Khan Kachhi, Chairman Standing Committee on Defence Senator Talha Mahmood Chairman Sadat Group Syed Sadat Shah and Philippine Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez as chief guests and presided over by RIPJA President Sajjad Haider. 85 photojournalists from the twin cities displayed their artwork. Senior photojournalists and office bearers including Javed Nasir Chaudry Javed,Bashir Shad, Latif Adil ,Ulfat Shah,Mazhar Khan, Tanveer Shahzad, Afzal Chaudhry, Jahangir Chaudhry, Sohail Shahzad, Muhammad Asim, Zulfikar Khan, Raja Mudassar and many others attended the event.Aurangzeb Khan khichi said that Islamabad is home to over 10 officially recognized heritage sites that reflect the rich history and cultural legacy of the region.The Ministry has launched restoration and conservation projects to protect these landmarks for future generations. “These heritage sites are not just monuments but a vital part of Pakistan’s identity and pride.He announced 500k grant for the association and aslo said that Memorandum of Understanding will be sign with Ripja to work together for promotion of cul-



ture and heritage of our country. Senator Talha Mahmood described photojournalists as the “eyes of the nation,” commending their hard work and announcing that he would provide necessary equipment for their media room. Syed Sadaqat Shah also appreciated

the photographers for capturing powerful images and promoting Pakistani culture and announced an annual grant of Rs. 300k along with modern photography courses for RIPJA members.The Philippine Ambassador said he was delighted

to see the love Pakistanis have for their culture and heritage. He added that the Embassy would work with RIPJA to hold a similar exhibition in Islamabad soon and showcase his country heritage and culture in this exhibition .

PML-N holds massive election rally in Haveli

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) staged a major election rally in Azad Jammu and Kashmir’s LA-17 Haveli constituency on Friday, where Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah and Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engr Amir Muqam addressed thousands of supporters in favor of the party’s candidate, Chaudhry Mohsin Aziz saying PML-N had secured a clear majority in the first two phases of the Azad Kashmir elections, required to form the government Chaudhry Mohsin Aziz warmly welcomed the two senior leaders upon their arrival at the venue, which was packed with PML-N workers, party leaders, and a large number of women supporters. Participants enthusiastically chanted slogans in support of Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, Rana Sanaullah, and Engr Amir Muqam. Addressing the gathering, Sanaullah described the rally as a “historic demonstration” of the Kashmiri people’s unwavering commitment to Pakistan. Referring to the chants of “We are Pakistanis, and Pakistan is ours,” he said the slogans reflected the sentiments of the people of Kashmir. He reiterated Pakistan’s longstanding position

on the Kashmir issue, stating that Kashmir is Pakistan’s “jugular vein” and that the country remains incomplete without Kashmir. He paid tribute to the sacrifices of the people of Indian-administered Kashmir, saying that Indian actions had failed to weaken their determination for freedom. Sanaullah also praised Pakistan’s armed forces, saying they had responded effectively to external threats under the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. He added that India had realized that military confrontation against Pakistan would not succeed. Turning to the election campaign, Sanaullah claimed that PML-N had already secured a clear majority in the first two phases of the Azad Kashmir elections, winning 24 seats against the 23 required to form the government. He said the party would not require refugee seats to establish its government and described the election results as a reflection of the public’s confidence in PML-N. He said that after Muzaffarabad and Mirpur, the people of Haveli had also demonstrated strong support for the party. Sanaullah added that if Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz have been encouraged by the public enthusiasm. He said the presence of a PML-N government at the federal level would

accelerate development in Azad Kashmir. Nawaz Sharif would personally oversee development projects in the region, while Maryam Nawaz would introduce Punjab-style development initiatives in Azad Kashmir, he said. Sanaullah further maintained that the elections in Azad Kashmir were among the most transparent in the region’s history. Rejecting allegations of electoral rigging, he alleged that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) resorted to such claims after facing defeat, noting that the party had gradually reduced the number of constituencies in which it raised objections He also conveyed the greetings of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to the audience and announced that she would soon visit Haveli to thank the people for their support. Meanwhile speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engr Amir Muqam described Haveli as his “second home,” saying his relationship with its people was built on trust and affection. He congratulated the people, claiming that PML-N had secured the mandate to form the government in Azad Kashmir. He also conveyed greetings from PML-N Leader Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Maryam Nawaz to the people of Haveli.--APP

Pak gets 258 Chinese advanced farm machines

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has received 258 advanced agricultural machines and irrigation systems from China under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agricultural cooperation to modernise farming practices, improve productivity and promote climate-resilient agriculture across the country According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the machinery was received and assembled by the Agricultural Engineering Institute of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Islamabad. The equipment are subsequently inaugurated and distributed among PARC and provincial governments for technology demonstration and wider adoption. The package comprises nine categories of agricultural machinery and equipment, including 40 tractors, 20 rotary tillers, 30 rotary tillage fertilizer drills, 40 crawler-type rice-wheat combine harvesters, eight corn harvesters, 40 inter-tillage weeder, 40 trimmers, 20 hose-reel irrigation systems and 20 photovoltaic water-pumping systems. Of the 258 units, 75 are allocated to Punjab, 45 to Sindh, 38 to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 36 to

Balochistan and 64 to PARC. The machinery support forms part of the Prime Minister’s Agriculture Modernization Initiative, a flagship government programme aimed at transforming Pakistan’s agriculture into a technology-driven, climate-resilient and export-oriented sector. The initiative seeks to raise agricultural productivity, strengthen food security, promote value addition and enhance the competitiveness of Pakistan’s agri-food system through modern machinery, improved seeds, biotechnology, precision agriculture and climate-smart technologies. It is being supported by the recently approved National Agricultural Biotechnology Policy 2026 and National Seed Policy 2026, which provide a framework for developing and commercialising improved crop varieties, expanding biotechnology and genome-based research, strengthening the national seed system and increasing farmers’ access to high-yielding and climate-resilient varieties. A key element of the programme is strategic cooperation between PARC and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS). The federal government accorded in-principle approval in March 2026 to restructure PARC along the lines of CAAS and constituted a dedicated working group to oversee the transformation. Under the restructuring plan, five Centres of Excellence are envisaged at NARC, Islamabad, focusing on genome-based research in field and horticultural crops; genetic improvement and health management of livestock; climate-smart solutions for land, water and energy; artificial intelligence and technology in agri-food systems; and food processing, value addition and product development.--APP

12 investors show interest in FESCO privatisation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s privatization of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs) reached a key milestone after the deadline for submitting Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for the Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) concluded with strong participation from local and international investors. Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and Chairman of the Privatisation Commission, Muhammad Ali, declared on Friday that 12 investor consortiums, comprising more than 12 individual companies and business groups, formally submitted EOIs for FESCO. The interested parties include three consortiums from Turkey, one investor group from China, and eight major Pakistani business groups participating individually as well as through joint consortiums. Muhammad Ali said the response shows growing investor confidence in Pakistan’s power sector reforms and follows a six-month engagement process led by the Privatisation Commission. Since launching investor outreach in January, the commission held multiple presentations and consultative sessions to build market confidence and encourage participation in the privatization process. He said the privatization initiative aims to establish a post-privatization framework focused on reducing electricity tariffs for domestic, commercial and industrial consumers, fostering competition in the power supply business, modernizing and digitizing grid infrastructure, and ensuring affordable and efficient electricity supply across the country. Following the completion of the FESCO EOI process, the Privatisation Commission and relevant authorities will begin due diligence with the shortlisted investors.--APP

Steps discussed to boost child rights laws in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) and Protection and Help of Children Against Abuse and Neglect (PAHCHAAN), convened a consultation on “Gaps and Opportunities in Pakistan’s Legislative Landscape for Children” and a book launch of the 5th edition of “The Rights of Children in Pakistani Law” here on Friday, said a press release The consultation brought together legal experts, practitioners, researchers and child-rights advocates to examine legislative and policy challenges affecting children in Pakistan. Discussions focused on gaps in existing laws, barriers to the effective implementation of legal protections for children, and opportunities to strengthen the current legal landscape related to children. Opening the consultation and launch, Chairperson of NCRC Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasised the importance of accessible legal resources that can support institutions and professionals responsible for protecting children. “This compilation will serve as a valuable resource for courts, enforcement agencies, civil society, and researchers.” She emphasized that the true measure of child-related laws lies not only in their enactment, but in their effective implementation and their ability to respond to the realities

faced by children. NCRC’s statutory mandate includes reviewing laws, policies and practices, conducting inquiries into child-rights violations, strengthening institutional capacities and advising the government on legislative and policy matters concerning children. In his remarks, “Where the Law Meets the Child,” President and CEO of PAHCHAAN Dr. Naeem Zafar reflected on the difficulties faced by organisations, families and professionals when legal protections are difficult locate, understand or apply. “During our work, we repeatedly reached a point where counselling, compassion and referral were not enough. We needed to know: What right does this child have? Who has the legal responsibility to act? What remedy is available?” He stressed that laws can protect children only when caregivers, professionals and institutions are able to understand and use them. Legal recognition must therefore be supported by awareness, accessible assistance, effective referrals and timely institutional responses. Dr. Mehek Naeem, Miqdad Mehdi and Ahmar Majeed presented key reflections from the fifth edition of The Rights of Children in Pakistani Law, using the publication to guide a structured discussion on Pakistan’s legal landscape for children.--APP

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Briefs

Abbasi lauds security forces

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi Friday paid tribute to the security forces for eliminating 10 Khawarij terrorists during operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a statement, the minister said the sacrifices of the security forces and operations against terrorism would continue until the menace of terrorism was completely eradicated. He said the brave armed forces of Pakistan were working day and night to ensure peace and stability in the country. "The entire nation is proud of the courage, bravery and professional capabilities of its valiant soldiers," he said. Hanif Abbasi reaffirmed that operations against Fitna al-Khawarij and their facilitators would continue until the last terrorist was eliminated. He said the nation stood firmly behind its security forces in their fight against terrorism and appreciated their sacrifices for the protection of the country.—APP

Pakistan to build 16 sports shoe production lines

ISLAMABAD: A China-Pakistan footwear cooperation project signed plans to establish 16 sports shoe production lines in Pakistan, with a targeted annual output of tens of millions of pairs, covering overseas production base development and cross-border trade, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. China Huaxin (Shenzhen) Investment Group and Pakistan's Forward Group signed the cooperation agreement on August 4 in Islamabad. The agreement was signed by Liao Yiquan, chairman of China Huaxin (Shenzhen) Investment Group, and Khawaja Masood Akhtar, chairman of Forward Group. The two companies will focus on developing a footwear and apparel overseas production base and expanding cross-border trade cooperation. The project plans to establish 16 sports shoe production lines in Pakistan, with an annual capacity of tens of millions of pairs. Ahmed Fawad Farooq, secretary-general of the Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association, said Pakistan has long been known for quality leather production and traditional footwear manufacturing. He said the introduction of advanced equipment and technologies from Chinese companies could support the upgrading of Pakistan's sports footwear industry. The cooperation will leverage China Huaxin (Shenzhen) Investment Group's manufacturing and supply chain capabilities from the China-based Chengdu-Chongqing footwear and apparel industrial park to advance footwear industry cooperation between China and Pakistan.—APP

Rich tribute paid to Justice Musarrat Hilali

ISLAMABAD: A Full Court Reference was held at the Supreme Court of Pakistan Friday in honour of Justice Musarrat Hilali on the occasion of her laying down the robes of judicial office, marking the culmination of a distinguished and illustrious judicial career. The Reference was attended by the Judges of the Supreme Court, the Additional Attorney General, representatives of the Supreme Court Bar Association and the Pakistan Bar Council, senior members of the legal fraternity, officers of the Court, media representatives, and other distinguished guests. Addressing the gathering, the Additional Attorney General, the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, and the Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Bar Council paid glowing tributes to Justice Hilali's professional integrity, judicial acumen, and unwavering commitment to the administration of justice. They acknowledged the respect and admiration she earned across the Bench and the Bar through her principled conduct, independence, and distinguished service, and conveyed their heartfelt best wishes for the next chapter of her life. In his address, the Chief Justice of Pakistan paid rich tribute to Justice Hilali.—APP

Pak researcher for boosting Pakistan's agri sector

Rizwan said Pakistan should prioritize China's biological control and agricultural microbial technologies, particularly microbial biofertilizers, biopesticides and advanced microbial fermentation systems, to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers and pesticides while improving soil fertility and crop resilience

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani agricultural researcher working in China believes deeper scientific collaboration can help Pakistan adopt advanced Chinese agricultural technologies to improve crop productivity, strengthen soil health and promote sustainable farming. In an interview with Gwadar Pro, Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Rizwan, a Pakistani postdoctoral researcher at the Sanya Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS), shared his views following the inauguration of the Yazhou Tropical Agricultural Science International Talent Station in Sanya, Hainan Province, where he represented international researchers "As a Pakistani scientist, I see myself as a bridge between the two countries. My aim is to connect

Chinese agricultural expertise with Pakistan's research priorities and farming challenges, particularly in beneficial microorganisms, fruit-crop improvement, plant stress resistance and sustainable agriculture," he said. Having conducted research in China since 2015, Rizwan specializes in beneficial microorganisms and plant-microbe interactions for developing climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural systems. He noted that agricultural cooperation between Pakistan and China has expanded under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the South-South Cooperation (SSC) framework. Recent MoUs between Pakistani and Chinese universities on plant tissue culture technology, online training for Pakistani students on technology transfer, and Chinese experts' participation in mushroom cultivation programs in Pakistan reflect the growing scope of bilateral collaboration.

Rizwan said Pakistan should prioritize China's biological control and agricultural microbial technologies, particularly microbial biofertilizers, biopesticides and advanced microbial fermentation systems, to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers and pesticides while improving soil fertility and crop resilience. However, he stressed that these technologies should not be imported directly. "The objective is not to copy Chinese technologies directly, but to evaluate, adapt and validate them under Pakistan's crops, soils, climate, farming systems and economic conditions," he said. According to Gwadar Pro, he suggested that Chinese and Pakistani researchers jointly identify suitable microbial strains, conduct biosafety assessments and multi-location field trials, transfer fermentation and formulation technologies, and eventually establish local production of biological agricultural inputs in

Pakistan. According to Rizwan, after completing his postdoctoral research, he hopes to help establish joint China-Pakistan research platforms, validate microbial biofertilizers and biological crop-protection technologies under Pakistani conditions, and expand researcher exchanges and technical training programs. He believes such cooperation could enable Pakistan to develop locally adapted biological solutions for major crops while reducing reliance on imported agricultural inputs and strengthening national scientific capacity. Rizwan said effective China-Pakistan collaboration over the next three to five years could help farmers improve crop productivity, adopt sustainable agricultural inputs, reduce postharvest losses, modernize farming practices and improve market access through technology transfer and stronger extension services.

Agricultural chemicals import grew 7.05 %

ISLAMABAD: The imports of agricultural and others chemicals group into the country during the last financial year (2025-26) grew by 7.05 per cent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-June, 2026, agricultural and other chemicals worth \$10.234 billion were imported as compared to the imports of \$2.694 billion of the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. However, the fertilizers imports decreased by 11.31 per cent during the period under review as 902,949 metric tons of fertilizers manufactured valued at \$594.045 million were imported as compared to the imports of 1,067 million metric tons costing \$669.784 million of the same period of the last year. Meanwhile, agricultural machinery and implements worth \$135.267 million were also imported during the financial year 2025-26 as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-June, 2026, the imports of agricultural machinery and implements registered an increase of 23.08 per cent as compared to the imports of the same period of the last year. The other machinery worth \$2.970 billion was also imported during the last financial year, which was recorded at \$2.308 billion in the same period of the last year. The imports of other machinery into the country during the period under review grew by 24.34 per cent as against the imports of the same period of the last year.—APP

Syedaal, Ghulam discuss political situation

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar, accompanied by Senator Hidayatullah Khan, called on senior Awami National Party (ANP) leader and former federal minister for railways Haji Ghulam Ahmad Bilour at his residence in Islamabad. During the meeting, the participants discussed the country's political, economic and social situation in detail. Syedaal Khan Nasar stressed the need for national unity, political harmony and collective efforts to address public issues and promote Pakistan's progress and prosperity. The deputy chairman also paid tribute to the Bilour family's long-standing contributions to democracy, public service and the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He appreciated the family's role in promoting public welfare and creating employment opportunities through its business initiatives.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan Andrei Metelitsa meets with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss bilateral trade, labour cooperation and preparations for the upcoming joint ministerial commission.

Naqvi sets Sep 30 deadline for completion of Safe City expansion

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, accompanied by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, visited the Islamabad Safe City Headquarters on Friday and chaired a special meeting to review progress on the Safe City Expansion Project, directing officials to complete the ambitious initiative by September 30. During the briefing, officials informed the minister that overall work on the expansion project has reached 85 percent completion. Installation of the new surveillance network is also 85 percent complete, while 415 kilometres of optical fibre have been laid to support the upgraded system. Work on the data centre, cyber architecture, and cybersecurity infrastructure has also reached approximately 80 percent completion. Expressing satisfaction over the pace of work, Naqvi stressed that the remaining tasks must be completed within the stipulated timeframe. He said the government's vision is to transform the Islamabad Safe City into a modern, smart, and world-class institution comparable to those in developed countries. The interior minister said the technologically advanced Safe City system would significantly strengthen public safety through enhanced surveillance, effective monitoring, and rapid emergency response capabilities. He noted that the project would play a vital role in improving law enforcement efficiency and ensuring better security for residents of the federal capital. Naqvi also assigned officials the task of completing the state-of-the-art Fusion Centre within the next three months, describing it as a critical component of the upgraded Safe City network. He further directed the relevant authorities to finalise the Safe City Bill at the earliest and present it before the National Assembly without delay to provide the legal framework necessary for the project's long-term operation and expansion. The meeting was attended by the Federal Secretary for Interior, the Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), senior Safe City officials, and other relevant officers, who briefed the minister on the progress and future roadmap of the expansion project.—APP

Holy Family Hospital launches anti-polio drive

RAWALPINDI: A special anti-polio campaign was inaugurated at Holy Family Hospital, Rawalpindi, on Friday, involving an awareness session led by Additional Medical Superintendent (AMS) Dr Rana Sattar for young doctors and paramedical staff to address parental concerns, foster vaccine confidence, and highlight the importance of repeated polio doses for children. Dr. Rana Sattar informed participants that administering repeated doses of the polio vaccine is vital because each additional dose strengthens a child's immunity. She explained that the vaccine builds strong intestinal immunity where the virus multiplies, thereby providing more effective protection. Addressing parental hesitations regarding multiple doses, she reassured that every

dose enhances protection against the highly contagious disease, helping maintain high population-level immunity. Dr. Rana Sattar clarified that anti-polio campaigns complement rather than replace routine immunization services. She urged parents to permit polio teams to vaccinate their under-five children during every drive, even if the children have already received routine polio vaccinations, to ensure no child is missed and strong community immunity is preserved. During the interactive session, young doctors and paramedical staff questioned the AMS regarding polio virus surveillance, the current epidemiological situation, progress in interrupting virus transmission in the country, and measures to protect non-endemic areas from potential viral importation. Participants discussed the pivotal role medical staff play in eradicating polio by dispelling rumours, countering misinformation, counseling parents, encouraging child vaccination and collaborating with mobile polio teams. Although no polio cases have been reported in Punjab during the year, the risk of viral importation remains due to wild poliovirus circulation in other regions of Pakistan and neighbouring territories, making sustained high immunity essential.—APP

FIA busts alleged Rs 2.5m bribery plot

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Corruption Circle Islamabad has arrested a Pakistan Customs superintendent and two inspectors for allegedly demanding Rs2.5 million in bribe from a complainant in return for undue favour in a pending customs criminal case. An FIA official told APP on Friday that the suspects allegedly acted in connivance to harass and threaten the complainant, initially demanding Rs5 million, which was later negotiated down to Rs2.5 million. They allegedly threatened to implicate the complainant's family members and associates in the case if the demand was not met. Following approval from the competent authority and completion of legal formalities, the FIA conducted a trap raid at MYST Café in Sector I-8, Islamabad, under the supervision of a judicial magistrate. During the raid, a Customs inspector was allegedly caught red-handed while receiving Rs500,000 as the first instalment of the demanded bribe in the presence of the judicial magistrate.

The marked currency was recovered from his possession, while his mobile phone was also seized for examination. The official said preliminary forensic examination of the mobile phone revealed voice chats allegedly pointing to a conspiracy to extort money from the complainant and harass his family. A case, FIR No. 39/2026, has been registered against the suspects under Sections 161 and 109 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947. The arrested inspector was produced before a court, which granted the FIA his five-day physical remand. On information provided by him during the investigation, the FIA subsequently arrested the Customs superintendent and another inspector allegedly involved in the case. The official said the FIA maintained a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and would continue taking strict legal action without discrimination against public officials involved in bribery and misuse of authority. Further investigation is underway.—APP

Committee formed to finalize fish export incentive scheme

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry constituted a four-member committee to finalise a performance-based fish export incentive scheme aimed at increasing seafood exports without altering the existing tax regime. Chairing a meeting, the minister said the proposed scheme would reward incremental export growth while retaining the current tax structure, improving the competitiveness of seafood industry and attracting investment. "This is the right time to attract businesses towards Pakistan's fisheries sector," he said, adding that better incentives and closer engagement with exporters would help increase seafood exports and the sector's contribution to the national economy. The committee, headed by Fisheries Development Commissioner Dr Muhammad Hafeez-ur-Rehman, includes Korangi Fish Harbour Authority Director General Dr Shahid, Marine Fisheries Department Director General Dr Mansoor Wasan and Assistant Commissioner Fisheries Muhammad Farhan Khan. The panel has been asked to review the proposed incentive mechanism and submit its recommendations to the minister within a week. It will also prepare proposals for national awards to recognise outstanding fish exporters and consult industry stakeholders before finalising the framework. During the meeting, Marine Fisheries Department Director General Dr Mansoor Wasan said targeted incentives and stronger coordination with exporters could enhance the competitiveness of Pakistan's seafood industry in international markets. The minister said seafood exports reached \$568 million in FY2025-26, describing the fisheries sector as an important source of export earnings and employment. He said the government was pursuing measures to expand seafood exports, improve quality standards and strengthen international competitiveness through targeted incentives and closer collaboration with industry stakeholders. Junaid Chaudhry directed the committee to engage exporters, processors and other stakeholders to develop practical recommendations aimed at increasing exports, promoting value addition and strengthening Pakistan's position in global seafood markets.—APP

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China's growing influence across Africa

DR. MAJID RAFIZADEH

AFRICA is taking a key position in the global economic and geopolitical order, as it has the world's youngest population, substantial reserves of the critical minerals essential for the energy transition and vast areas of arable land. This is partially why the continent is no longer a trivial and peripheral arena but a primary sphere of international competition and partnership. If we examine China's deepening engagement in Africa, particularly when it comes to strategic investment, infrastructure development and trade, we can see the opportunities on offer. China has made Africa a central pillar of its global strategy for several interconnected economic, political and strategic reasons. The first is its own resource security. Africa supplies a significant share of the cobalt, copper, lithium and other minerals required to maintain China's dominance in the electric vehicle, battery, solar panel and advanced manufacturing spheres. Beijing's firms now control substantial stakes in mining operations in countries such as Congo, Zambia and Guinea. Another important factor is access to the market. With bilateral trade reaching a record \$275 billion in 2024, Africa provides an expanding outlet for Chinese manufactured goods, construction services and the "new three" exports — electric vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products.

China has made Africa a central pillar of its global strategy for several interconnected economic, political and strategic reasons Dr. Majid Rafizadeh Infrastructure diplomacy under the Belt and Road Initiative has further strengthened this relationship. For example, Chinese state-owned enterprises and policy banks have financed and constructed roads, railways, ports, power plants and digital networks in Africa. Such projects facilitate resource extraction and enhance China's political image on the continent. This is particularly important when it comes to diplomacy, since Africa's 54 votes in the UN General Assembly and its collective weight in Global South forums can help support Beijing's vision.

The question is whether the principle of noninterference in domestic governance is being adhered to, in contrast with the conditions of the past, which were attached to Western assistance to African nations. The key drivers of Chinese investment are therefore multidimensional and multifaceted. In infrastructure and energy, the availability of state-backed finance and African demand for rapid delivery has produced tangible assets, ranging from hydropower and solar installations to deep-water ports. When it comes to mining, long-term agreements secure supply chains for China's industrial strategy. Technology engagement has expanded through telecommunications infrastructure and digital platforms. Trade has also been underpinned by preferential measures such as zero-tariff treatment for least-developed African countries. Africa is good for sustained

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economic partnership, resource security, market expansion and a more balanced global order. Dr. Majid Rafizadeh For African nations, this engagement presents clear opportunities. Chinese capital has accelerated the construction of infrastructure that is vital to industrialization and regional integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area. In addition, job creation, technology transfers in selected sectors and improved logistics have generated growth in many host countries. At the same time, some challenges remain substantial. One of them is trade imbalances, with Africa exporting largely unprocessed commodities while importing finished goods. Debt sustainability concerns have also arisen in several cases. Some environmental and labor standards have drawn criticism. Africa's rapid economic growth trajectory and resource endowment will likely continue to attract broader international attention. The continent's economy is projected to expand faster than any other region in the coming years, according to International Monetary Fund assessments. This is because the continent combines demographic dynamism with mineral wealth. Critical minerals alone represent a multitrillion-dollar opportunity over the coming decades, while the African Continental Free Trade Area promises a market of more than 1.4 billion people. Thanks to these fundamentals, the continent is drawing diversified interest beyond China. Middle Eastern states, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have also taken notable steps. Gulf capital has flowed into renewable energy, ports and logistics, agriculture, and critical minerals. The benefit for Africa is that these investments have frequently been structured as direct project equity rather than sovereign debt. For example, Gulf firms have emerged as major investors in ports, clean energy and mining assets. Saudi entities have also expanded their commitments into infrastructure, food security and renewables, aligning with the Kingdom's Vision 2030. These engagements complement Chinese activity and offer African countries additional options for partnership, diversification and technology transfer. European and other actors have similarly sought to intensify cooperation through infrastructure and other initiatives related to the green transition. The lessons from China's expanding footprint in Africa can be summarized in two categories. Firstly, Africa's combination of resources, markets and strategic geography renders it indispensable to any serious global economic strategy. Secondly, sustained and large-scale investment can accelerate infrastructure enhancement, industrial capacity and connectivity. Africa is good for sustained economic partnership, resource security, market expansion and a more balanced global order. China's experience in Africa teaches us that long-term commitment and a willingness to finance hard infrastructure in alignment with host-country priorities results in both commercial returns and geopolitical influence. In an era of intensifying geopolitical and economic competition, Africa offers significant opportunities for other countries and private investors. The continent is increasingly becoming a joint architect of the emerging multipolar economy.

Kashmir since August 2019: The View from Global Observers

T.M. Awan

According to the report, unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir has risen well above India's national average, leaving hundreds of thousands of young people searching for opportunities while economic expectations remain largely unmet. Human rights concerns continue to dominate international assessments. United Nations human rights experts have repeatedly expressed concern over restrictions on freedom of expression, prolonged detentions, demolition of homes, property confiscations, and communication restrictions imposed in the territory. Their observations suggest that security measures

SEVEN years have passed since India revoked Articles 370 and 35A on 5 August 2019, ending the special constitutional status of the former State of Jammu and Kashmir. At the time, New Delhi argued that the move would usher in peace, economic development, investment, and full integration with the rest of India. Today, however, a growing body of assessments by international observers, human rights organizations, and global think tanks presents a far more complex and troubling picture.

The central question is no longer whether the constitutional changes altered Kashmir's legal status. Rather, it is whether they achieved the political, economic, and security objectives that were promised. A recent ground report published by The Diplomat describes what it calls an "uneasy calm" in the Valley. The apparent decline in visible violence, the report argues, should not automatically be interpreted as lasting peace. Instead, it portrays a society where political space has narrowed, public dissent has become increasingly difficult, and many residents remain uncertain about their future. According to the report, unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir has risen well above India's national average, leaving hundreds of thousands of young people searching for opportunities while economic expectations remain largely unmet. Human rights concerns continue to dominate international assessments. United Nations human rights experts have repeatedly expressed concern over restrictions on freedom of expression, prolonged detentions, demolition of homes, property confiscations, and communication restrictions imposed in the territory. Their observations suggest that security measures adopted in recent years have raised important questions regarding proportionality, due process, and compliance with international human rights standards. International think tanks have reached similar conclusions. Analysts at the International Crisis Group argue that while constitutional

integration may have strengthened New Delhi's administrative control, it has not resolved the deeper political dimensions of the Kashmir dispute. Instead, they warn that shrinking political space and the absence of meaningful dialogue risk creating long-term instability. One development that has attracted particular attention is the continued demand by local political leaders for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and constitutional status. Even after elections under the new constitutional framework, calls for restoring the region's previous political position have not disappeared. This suggests that constitutional change alone has not settled the political debate within the territory. Another issue frequently highlighted by international observers concerns demographic change. Organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation have expressed concern over policies relating to domicile certificates, land ownership, and administrative restructuring. Critics argue that such measures could alter the demographic composition of the region, while Indian authorities maintain that these reforms are intended to promote development and equal opportunity. The differing interpretations continue to fuel international debate. Economically, the promised transformation has yet to produce the level of results initially projected. Although the Indian government has highlighted increased infrastructure spending and tourism figures, independent observers note that unemployment, limited private investment, and persistent uncertainty continue to affect the local economy. Sustainable economic growth ultimately depends not only on infrastructure but also on political stability, investor confidence, and public trust. Security also remains a complicated issue. While official figures point to improvements in certain security indicators, maintaining extensive security deployments has imposed significant financial and administrative costs. Periodic incidents of violence and renewed tensions along the Line

of Control demonstrate that the broader dispute remains unresolved despite constitutional changes. International attention has also gradually evolved. Parliamentary committees, policy institutes, and human rights organizations in Europe and elsewhere have increasingly raised questions regarding democratic freedoms, civil liberties, and governance in the region. Although many governments continue to balance these concerns against broader strategic and economic interests with India, Kashmir has remained part of international human rights discussions. Perhaps the most important lesson after seven years is that constitutional decisions alone cannot resolve deeply rooted political conflicts. Durable peace requires political inclusion, public confidence, institutional legitimacy, and sustained dialogue. Security measures may reduce immediate violence, but they rarely eliminate the underlying grievances that fuel prolonged disputes. For South Asia, the implications extend well beyond Kashmir itself. The unresolved dispute continues to shape relations between two nuclear-armed neighbours, affecting regional stability, economic integration, and broader geopolitical calculations. Lasting peace will require engagement that addresses both security concerns and the political aspirations of the people most directly affected. The debate over Kashmir has therefore entered a new phase. It is no longer defined solely by constitutional arguments or diplomatic statements but increasingly by measurable outcomes: employment, governance, civil liberties, political participation, and public confidence. Seven years after the events of August 2019, global observers continue to ask whether the promises of peace and prosperity have been fulfilled. Their assessments suggest that while the constitutional landscape has changed, the fundamental political questions surrounding Kashmir remain unresolved.

— The writer is a media and strategic communication professional and an international relations analyst. X: @TMawOfficial

India's BRICS presidency faces serious challenges

Talmiz Ahmad

BRICS members also produce 30 percent of the world's oil. Over the last two decades, BRICS has forcefully represented the interests of the Global South, largely by providing financial support through its New Development Bank, which has approved \$32 billion in funding for 96 projects. BRICS also has a Contingent Reserve Arrangement, with an initial funding of \$100 billion, which provides a safety net to protect against members' short-term balance of payments concerns. From its inception, BRICS has sought reform of the world's political and economic institutions so that they reflect the prowess and interests of developing countries

INDIA assumed the BRICS presidency in January this year, with the annual summit scheduled to take place in New Delhi in September. This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the first meeting of foreign ministers. Starting with five founding members — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — BRICS admitted five new members in 2024: Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia and the UAE. In 2024, BRICS also accepted 13 states from Latin America, Africa, Central Asia and South Asia as "partner countries," reflecting the global representation of BRICS+. The BRICS members' total population is 3.9 billion — about 48 percent of the global total — while its combined gross domestic product in terms of purchasing power parity is \$78 trillion, about 40 percent of global GDP. For comparison, the corresponding figure for the G7 grouping of developed countries is \$61 trillion, about 28 percent of the global total. BRICS members also produce 30 percent of the world's oil. Over the last two decades, BRICS has forcefully represented the interests of the Global South, largely by providing financial support through its New Development Bank, which has approved \$32 billion in funding for 96 projects. BRICS also has a Contingent Reserve Arrangement, with an initial funding of \$100 billion, which provides a safety net to protect against members' short-term balance of payments concerns. From its inception, BRICS has sought reform of the world's political and economic institutions so that they reflect the prowess and interests of developing countries. This will remain the central concern of the Indian presidency. Drawing from the BRICS acronym, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will promote "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," with its approach being "people-centric and humanity-first." The Indian presidency is taking place at a particularly divisive and conflictual period in world affairs. The Indian presidency is taking place at a particularly divisive and conflictual period in world affairs, which is defined by fierce ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and across the Middle East; political and economic competi-

tion between the US and China and consequent crucial supply chain disruptions; the imposition of severe tariffs by the US on several nations that threaten global economic stability; and the systematic devaluation of international organizations concerned with peace, economic stability and progress, and human welfare. US President Donald Trump has declared BRICS "anti-American" and warned it against de-dollarization policies. Nearer home, during the presidency, Indian leaders will have to handle the diverse positions on major regional and global matters of BRICS' own members. In a Carnegie India report, commentator Vrinda Sahai described this challenge as "resolving the underlying tension between expansion and institutional coherency." Thus, the meeting of BRICS foreign ministers in March did not produce a joint statement due to differences among members on the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. These differences are not likely to daunt Indian policymakers. In its approach to BRICS, India does not take a stridently anti-Western position but rather sees itself as a bridge between BRICS and the West on the one hand and among the diverse countries of the Global South on the other by seeking to obtain mutually accommodative positions and projects. As South African observer Aaliyah Vayez has noted, India seeks "institutional reform rather than ideological confrontation." Intra-BRICS cooperation will be at the heart of all the grouping's political, economic and social initiatives India's focus areas are contained in Modi's elaboration of the BRICS acronym. Resilience refers to strengthening members' capacity to handle economic, health and climate challenges through expanding trade interdependence, with a focus on global supply chains for critical minerals and technology. Innovation prioritizes expanding access to technology, particularly through improving public digital infrastructure and pursuing biotechnology and green initiatives. Intra-BRICS cooperation will be at the heart of all the grouping's political, economic and social initiatives, embracing trade, investment and food security. Sustainability

will shape these initiatives. As the Brazilian commentator Lucas Carlos Lima has noted, development and climate challenges must be synergized and viewed not as moral imperatives but as "criterion of political and legal rationality." This will require greater coordination in national policymaking among the BRICS members in the areas of agriculture, industry and logistical infrastructure, particularly connectivity corridors. The last of these now has a central place in the BRICS members' priorities, with smart cities, railways, ports, undersea cables and maritime routes being viewed as playing a significant role in promoting economic growth and strategic outreach. Thus, the New Development Bank and the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have together provided \$71 billion to support such projects. As a BRICS Today report has pointed out, these projects are "fundamentally reshaping the geopolitical landscape of trade, moving it toward a multipolar network of hubs and corridors." While some Western policymakers and commentators predict that BRICS will evolve into a solid anti-Western bloc, most observers note that its members are very diverse and cherish their commitment to strategic autonomy, with none of them seeking to be part of a confrontational group. At the same time, they see considerable value in BRICS membership: broader economic engagement, the ability to obtain development financing on easier terms and often in local currencies, and generally enjoying greater autonomy and influence in a non-Western institution. Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar views BRICS as a "constructive platform for dialogue and development, complementing the broader multilateral system." While many BRICS members find US political and economic policies onerous and irksome, none of them wishes to delink from Washington — what they most fervently want is an international order that gives them dignity and influence. This is what India's BRICS presidency is expected to promote.

—The Writer is Talmiz Ahmad is a former Indian diplomat.

Briefs

Pakistan,
Saudi Arabia,
Turkiye...

FROM PAGE 01
Gulf state, is one of the world's top oil exporters, while Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed Muslim country. This comes a year after Pakistan signed a mutual defence agreement with Saudi Arabia, committing both sides to treat any aggression against either country as an attack on both. In a statement last month after Houthi attacks on the kingdom, the Foreign Office reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for Saudi Arabia's security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity. Yemen's Houthis have added pressure to Gulf energy exporters who are already under strain from Tehran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz by threatening Red Sea shipping — another key route for oil exports. Defence analyst Brig (ret'd) Waqar Hassan termed it a "historic and landmark day", as three major Islamic nations of the region, each with their own unique positions, came together today and "decided to manage security matters themselves".

US to vet
social media
of foreign...

FROM PAGE 01
how long foreign journalists working in the United States, as well as other visa holders including foreign students, could remain in the country. It also builds on a series of steps that Trump's administration has taken since he began his second term in taking office in January 2025 to make online speech a factor in immigration and visa decisions. These steps have raised concerns among civil liberties advocates about freedom of speech. US Citizenship and Immigration Services has said it will screen the social media posts of immigrants and visa applicants, including for what it deems antisemitic content and "anti-Americanism". The administration has canceled the visas of foreign students in the US who engaged in pro-Palestinian activism, in some cases attempting to deport those students.

Bilawal says
PML-N
'mistaken'...

FROM PAGE 01
It is pertinent to mention that the PML-N has emerged as the dominant party in AJK following the first two phases of the region's elections. The PML-N has won 24 seats, while the PPP has secured 10. In the third and last phase of the elections, polling will be held in Poonch Division's Bagh and Haveli districts on August 10. Adding the public rally, the PPP leader said that they would hunt the lion — the electoral symbol of the PML-N — on August 10 in Poonch. "They are thinking that their government will be formed in Kashmir. There are still 11 seats left," Bilawal added. He vowed to form a government in Kashmir. Reacting to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's remarks on the system's collapse, the PPP leader said: "The system has not failed; it has been made to fail."

Schedule for
3rd phase...

FROM PAGE 01
The third phase in Poonch division is set for August 10. Poonch Division comprises 11 constituencies — three in Bagh, one in Haveli, five in Poonch and two in Sudhnoti district. In its press release, the AJK Election Commission said polling will be held in the three constituencies of Bagh and one of Haveli on August 10 as per the previous schedule. However, the electoral process in the constituencies of Poonch district and Sudhnoti's Pallandri will not be held on August 10, it said. The Election Commission said it reviewed the "current situation" regarding the scheduled elections in Poonch. It noted that according to a report it received from the AJK home secretary, there were "concerns over the law and order situation in some areas of Poonch district and Pallandri district".

Embassies of Belgium and the Netherlands welcome Pakistan Hockey Team

The reception was hosted by Hajo Provo Kluit, Chargé d'Affaires of the Netherlands, alongside Idesbald van der Gracht Ambassador from the Embassy of Belgium. During the event, guests celebrated Pakistan's rich hockey tradition and wished the national team success as they prepare for the tournament



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Belgium and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Islamabad hosted a reception to celebrate the upcoming FIH Hockey World Cup 2026, co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands, and to welcome the Pakistan National Field

Hockey Team. The event brought together representatives from the diplomatic community, sports stakeholders, and guests to celebrate the shared passion for hockey and the strong connections between Pakistan, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The reception was hosted by Hajo Provo Kluit, Chargé d'Affaires of the Netherlands, alongside Idesbald van der Gracht Ambass-



dor from the Embassy of Belgium. During the event, guests celebrated Pakistan's rich hockey tradition and wished the national team success as they prepare for the tournament. A special highlight of the evening was the handover of hockey sticks by members of the Pakistan National Team to young hockey players, symbolising the importance of inspiring the next generation and promoting the spirit

of sport. The event also featured speeches, a penalty shoot-out activity, and an opportunity for guests to engage with the players ahead of the team's journey to the Netherlands. The FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 will be co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands, bringing together the world's top hockey teams for an international celebration of one of the world's most popular sports

It is a 'Historic day for Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01
the joint defence agreement by the crown prince, the president of Türkiye and the prime minister of Pakistan underscored the depth of the fraternal and strategic relations between the three countries.

UN slams Swat bombing

FROM PAGE 01
to those who were injured," the statement said. "The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice," it said. They urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the Government of Pakistan in this regard. "The members of the Security Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed." They reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

President, PM praise security...

FROM PAGE 01
entire nation's unwavering support and pride in the sacrifices of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies, reiterating the resolve that the nefarious designs of Indian-sponsored terrorist elements would be foiled at all costs President Zardari praised the professional expertise of the security forces for successfully thwarting the terrorist attack in the Azam Warsak area of South Waziristan. He said that the entire nation stood firmly behind its brave security forces and law enforcement agencies, holding their sacrifices against terrorism in high esteem. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who is currently in Saudi Arabia on a three-day visit, praised the security personnel for the successful operation, and said that the entire nation took immense pride in the professional capability, courage, and sacrifices of the armed forces. He said that the anti-terror actions under the Operation Azm-e-Istehkam would continue with full resolve until the complete elimination of terrorism from the country. The prime minister reaffirmed that the government and the nation stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the security forces in the ongoing war against terrorism.

10 India- backed terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01
the security forces successfully neutralised two more terrorists. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed India-sponsored terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terror activities in the area. Sanitisation operations were conducted to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area following the engagements, the ISPR said. The military vowed to continue the counterterrorism campaign under the vision of Azm-e-Istehkam to wipe out foreign-sponsored terrorism from the country. Pakistan witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its KP and Balochistan provinces, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban came into power. Islamabad has consistently maintained that India supports militant groups operating from Afghan territory to carry out attacks inside Pakistan. It has also repeatedly called on Afghan Taliban-led administration to take effective action against terrorist organisations using Afghan soil to launch cross-border attacks. According to a report by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), KP and Balochistan remained the country's main hotspots for violence during the second quarter of 2026, with KP emerging as the worst-affected region.

Al-Ittihad announce departure of 'brave leader' Fabinho

Another fan, x_jk_r, wrote: "Thank you Fabinho. Your passion, commitment, and hard work will never be forgotten. Thank you for everything you gave Al-Ittihad"

JEDDAH: Al-Ittihad announced on Thursday the departure of Brazilian Fabinho after three seasons with the team, during which he won the league and King Cup championships. The club took to social media to pen an emotional goodbye. "Farewell to a brave leader ... He arrived as a star with utmost humility, led his team with great competence, and departed as a lover, after leaving an unforgettable mark." The club thanked him and stated that he was a "role model for everyone around him both on and off the field" and as captain led the team to "exceptional glory." There has been an outpouring of gratitude by Al-Ittihad fans across X under the hashtag #ونيفاف ارفش. A user, Libra, wrote: "We will never forget how you stood by the club during the hardest times when others chose to walk away ... you were a true leader. Thank you for everything Fabinho." Sultan said: "Thank you Fabinho, for everything you gave to the team and for your sacrifices. You were a great leader for the team and you will always be in our hearts." Another fan, x_jk_r, wrote: "Thank you Fabinho. Your passion, commitment, and hard work will never be forgotten. Thank you for everything you gave Al-Ittihad." — APP

Mexico, Argentina back Infantino as Fifa fight rages on

Mexican Football Federation breaks ranks with its regional confederation by backing Infantino

MEXICO and Argentina's football associations have thrown their support behind Fifa President Gianni Infantino, as the world soccer chief faces a fierce backlash over a now-abandoned proposal to sell off some of the commercial rights to the World Cup. The Mexican Football Federation (FMF), co-hosts of the recently concluded World Cup, has broken ranks with its own regional confederation by backing Infantino after Concacaf called for a "comprehensive reckoning" with his presidency. On Thursday, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) unanimously backed Infantino's leadership, but European soccer's governing body Uefa said it remained committed to boycotting the World Cup and other Fifa competitions. Asia's confederation said it "stood in solidarity" with Uefa and Concacaf, which runs football in North and Central America as well as the Caribbean. However, South America's Conmebol issued a statement on Thursday rejecting any attempt to oust Infantino that did not involve a vote of all 211 members. Mexico's federation echoed those sentiments. "The

FMF will neither recognise nor approve any process convened outside of that institutional framework, and it joins the call made ... by President Infantino to collectively continue developing football for the benefit of the 211 member associations," it said in a statement. "The FMF supports President Infantino's leadership in continuing to promote the development of football through institutional strengthening." Following a meeting in Rabat this week, Fifa said it had apologised to its members for mistakes around the proposal to sell a slice of the World Cup's commercial future. It also pledged to review the processes that led to the controversy. AFA acknowledges Fifa errors The fallout from the proposal has cast a shadow over Infantino's bid for reelection for a fourth term at the Fifa Congress in Morocco in March, which had looked like a foregone conclusion two months ago. No clear candidate to stand against Infantino in March's election has yet emerged, however, and the Swiss administrator still enjoys considerable support, including on Thursday from 2022 world champions Argentina. In a letter to Infantino, Argentina's football association (AFA) expressed its support for Fifa's work over the last 10 years, saying it had "centred on the development of soccer worldwide and institutional strength based on a clear, stable, and transparent governance model". — APP

Friends United Shine in Manchester Cricket League

AFZAL JAVED

MANCHESTER: Friends United Cricket Club Manchester produced another impressive performance to defeat Ashton Ladysmith Cricket Club by five wickets in the Manchester Division Four Cricket League, climbing to second place in the standings. Batting first, Ashton Ladysmith were bowled out for 138 in 41.5 overs. Sajid Saleemi top-scored with 49, while Basil George chipped in with 28. Friends United's bowling attack was led by Mohammad Abid Sohail, who produced a match-winning spell of 6 for 23. Sahil Mukhtar claimed two wickets, while Tanveer Mahmood and Saqib Butt took one wicket each. In reply, Friends United comfortably chased down the target, reaching 139-5 in the 36th over. Rameez Alam anchored the innings with 43, while Qazi Waqas (29), Aijaz Shah (25) and Saqib Butt (22) made valuable contributions to seal a convincing victory. Speaking to the media, Friends United captain Muhammad Faraz praised his team's outstanding performances throughout the season and expressed confidence that the club can secure the top spot in the Manchester Division Four Cricket League by maintaining its winning momentum in the remaining matches. "I am delighted with the way our players have performed this

season. We are playing our best cricket, and our goal is very clear—to finish at the top of

the league table," Faraz said. The win moved Friends United up to second place in the

Manchester Division Four Cricket League, which will continue until next month.



Briefs

SBP injects
over Rs 3,276b
in the market

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs 3,276.6 billion through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) on Friday to maintain liquidity in the market. The central bank conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 10 and 14-day tenors on August 07, 2026, and injected Rs 2,656.6 billion against 23 bids while other Rs 620 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO. The central bank, for the Reverse Repo Purchase of 14-day tenor, received 17 bids cumulatively offering Rs 2,965.65 billion at the rate of return ranging between 11.51 to 11.56%. The SBP accepted Rs 2,500 billion against 17 quotes at 11.51% rate of return. The total amount offered at 11.51% was Rs 1,577 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 1,111.35 billion on a pro-rata basis. Moreover, the SBP also received 6 bids for the 10-day tenor, cumulatively offering Rs 156.6 billion at the rate of return ranging between 11.54% to 11.56%. The SBP accepted all the 5 quotes with the entire amount at 11.54% rate of return.—APP

Gold price
surges by
Rs 5,100 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices witnessed a significant increase in the local market on Friday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs5,100 to settle at Rs454,336, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs4,372 to reach Rs389,519, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs4,008 to Rs357,072. In the international market, the price of gold climbed by \$51 to \$4,319 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, silver prices also recorded an upward trend in the local market. The price of silver per tola increased by Rs280 to Rs6,939, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs240 to Rs5,949. The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$2.80 to \$64.60 per ounce, the association added.—APP

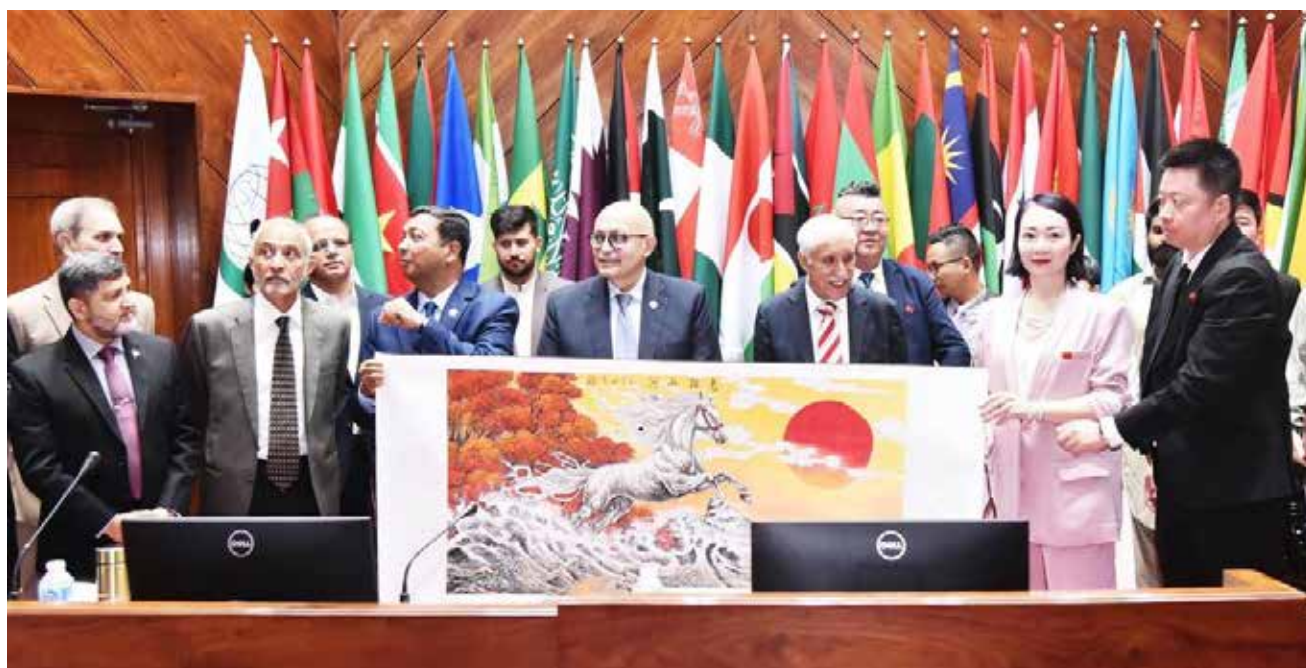
Kyrgyzstan-
Russia trade
ties expanded

BISHKEK: The head of the National Investment Agency, Ravshanbek Sabirov participated in the official opening ceremony of the VIII Kyrgyz-Russian Economic Forum, Bosteri village, Issyk-Kul region. As reported by the agency, the forum was organized within the framework of the XII Kyrgyz-Russian Interregional Conference. The opening ceremony of the forum began with video addresses by the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Zhaparov, and the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. The Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, Adylbek Kasymaliev, also addressed the participants of the forum with a congratulatory speech. The Kyrgyz-Russian Economic Forum is one of the important platforms for discussing the development of trade.—APP

Qaiser for boosting Pak,
China economic ties

He further reiterated the critical role of overseas Pakistanis, stating that their investment potential can be unlocked by ensuring a transparent, business-friendly environment. “Investment in most countries is largely driven by domestic and overseas investors. We must build their confidence through facilitation and policy consistency,” he added. Reflecting on his own background as a businessman, the Minister emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between the public and private sectors

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for the Board of Investment (BOI), Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Friday, highlighted the immense potential of Pakistan-China economic co-operation, emphasizing the importance of learning from China's remarkable development journey. Speaking as the chief guest at the Global South Innovation and Investment Summit 2026 hosted by OIC-COMSTEC, the minister observed that China's success lies in its strategic planning, emphasis on consensus-building, and effective implementation of decisions. The summit brought together a distinguished gathering of policymakers, diplomats, investors, entrepreneurs, and academicians to deliberate on innovation, investment, and economic cooperation across the Global South, said a press release issued here. Reflecting on his extensive engagement with China over several decades, he noted that the country's transformation was driven by consistent policies, collective decision-making, technological advancement, and a strong commitment to mutually beneficial “win-win” partnerships. “Their approach to business is focused on solutions rather than prolonging differences, which has been a key driver of their sustained economic growth,” Sheikh remarked. He underscored the importance of technology transfer and innovation, stating that Pakistan must leverage its young population—over 60 percent of which comprises youth—by equipping them with modern skills in technology, artificial intelligence, and digital industries. He highlighted



the need to transition towards value-added production and export-led growth, drawing lessons from regional economies such as China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and India. The minister also spoke about the ongoing efforts of the Board of Investment to facilitate investors through regulatory reforms and improved ease of doing business. He

noted that the government is actively working to reduce unnecessary regulations, streamline procedures, and promote a one-window facilitation mechanism to encourage both local and foreign investment. Highlighting Pakistan's trade imbalance with China, he stressed the need to enhance exports through value addition and industrial development based on local raw

materials. He emphasized that sustainable economic growth requires strengthening domestic industries, promoting innovation, and improving competitiveness in international markets. He further reiterated the critical role of overseas Pakistanis, stating that their investment potential can be unlocked by ensuring a transparent, business-friendly environment.—DNA

Govt to facilitate
adoption of modern
eco models: Cheema

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema chaired a meeting here Friday to review the roadmap of the Ministry of Industries and Production, with a special focus on strengthening the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector to accelerate industrial growth and enhance Pakistan's export potential. The meeting was attended by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan, Secretary Industries Saif Anjum, Chief Executive Officer of SMEIDA, and senior officials. The participants were briefed on the Ministry's strategic roadmap, ongoing initiatives, and proposed policy measures aimed at improving the competitiveness of Pakistan's industrial sector. It primarily focused on facilitating SMEs to enable them to access export markets more efficiently and enhance their contribution to the national economy. During the meeting, Minister Ahad Cheema emphasized that the adoption of modern economic models and policies was essential instead of relying on outdated protectionist approaches. He said the government's focus was on pursuing a home-grown economic agenda that reflects Pakistan's national priorities while ensuring macroeconomic stability. He stressed that both the government and industry need to adopt a disciplined approach in economic planning to ensure policy continuity, efficient resource allocation, and sustainable long-term growth. He noted that both SMEs and large-scale industries were steadily adopting modern economic models to enhance efficiency and competitiveness, and reaffirmed that the government will facilitate this transition by providing an enabling regulatory framework, improving access to financial channels, and extending other forms of institutional support whenever required. Referring to Pakistan's commitments under the IMF programme, Minister

Ahad Cheema stated that the government would prioritize cost-based incentives for industry instead of profit-based benefits. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting SMEs through coordinated measures involving the State Bank of Pakistan and other relevant institutions to strengthen their productive and export capacities. The Minister stated that the government was focusing on extending cost-based support to SMEs rather than expanding Specialized Economic Zones (SEZs). He emphasized that reducing the cost of doing business through regulatory facilitation and targeted incentives would enable SMEs to grow, become more competitive, and contribute more effectively to exports and economic development. The meeting was informed that taxation on exports has been reduced, while sector-specific industrial policies are being finalized to further enhance industrial productivity, improve competitiveness, and create a more enabling business environment. SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan informed the meeting that Chinese and other international companies were showing increasing interest in collaborating with Pakistan's SMEs as well as large-scale industries. Minister Ahad Cheema highlighted that the government, through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and other institutional platforms, is actively facilitating foreign investment and will continue to strengthen these efforts to attract greater international partnerships. The meeting also reviewed the development of key performance indicators to monitor the performance of the industrial sector and assess the impact of foreign investment. Minister Ahad Cheema observed that strengthening the capacity of SMEs remains one of the most effective means of improving Pakistan's GDP and generating sustainable economic growth.—APP

Algeria
buys around
540,000 to
720,000 tons
wheat

HAMBURG: Algeria's state grains agency OAIC has bought around 540,000 to 720,000 metric tons of milling wheat in an international tender which closed on Wednesday,

European traders said. The size of the initial purchase in tonnage terms was not immediately certain, as is usual in Algerian tenders. Most estimates on Wednesday evening were about 720,000 tons but some later trader estimates were around 540,000 tons. Purchases were reported at around \$289 to \$290 a ton cost and freight (c&f) included, they said. Some estimates put the highest price at \$289.50 a ton c&f. The wheat can be sourced from optional origins, but traders expected Romania and Bulgaria to be major suppliers. Russian wheat was offered but not favored despite cheap prices, apparently because of concern about the impact of recent attacks on Russian shipping and ports. The wheat is sought for shipment in three periods from the main supply regions including Europe: September 15 to September 30, October 1 to October 15 and October 16 to October 31. If sourced from South America, India or Australia, shipment is one month earlier. Reports reflect assessments from traders and further estimates of prices and volumes are still possible later. In its last soft wheat tender on June 17, Algeria bought over 800,000 tons at around \$264 to \$265 a ton c&f.—APP

Heavy rains
drench
Beijing

BEIJING: Multiple districts in Beijing issued heavy rainfall warnings on Friday evening, with authorities warning residents of disasters, including floods in the city center and also mudslides and landslides in agricultural and mountainous areas. The extreme rains come as China readies for Typhoon Dolphin, which is expected to make landfall along the country's eastern coast from Sunday to Monday. Beijing's Dongcheng, Xicheng, Haidian, Chaoyang, Tongzhou and Pinggu districts all issued heavy rain warnings, expecting hourly rainfall to exceed 50 millimeters. The highest rainfall occurred in Miyun district in northeast Beijing on Friday afternoon, where precipitation reached 99.5 millimeters. Authorities said they have deployed more than 2,000 staff to help with the flooding around Beijing. Typhoon Dolphin is expected to bring heavy to torrential rains to multiple regions, authorities said. Heavy rains and floods in China's northwestern province of Shaanxi collapsed roads, damaged bridges, and power and communications infrastructure on Thursday, prompting the evacuation of thousands of people. China's eastern and southern provinces have been preparing for Dolphin, suspending ferry routes, halting construction and evacuating fishing boats.—APP

Greek mayor
among 3
charged over
wildfire

ATHENS: Greek authorities placed a town mayor who owns an electrical company and two others in pre-trial detention Friday after charging them with arson over a wildfire that ravaged large areas near Athens last week. Investigators believe the blaze started on July 31 with a spark from power cables at a wind farm near Agios Vasileios, a seaside village at the foot of a mountain 85 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Athens. Giannis Apostolou, mayor of the small town of Styliada around 140 kilometers northwest of the capital, owns an electrical installation company linked to the wind farm. Investigators are accusing him, a contractor for his company and the owner of the wind farm itself of arson and damaging public utilities, Greek media reported. All three could face more than 10 years in jail if convicted. Greece's ANA news agency reported Friday that the authorities had decided to suspend operations at the wind farm, which is on the border between the regions of Boeotia and Attica. Fanned by wind gusts of up to 130 kilometers per hour.—APP

Crowds flock
to sea but can't
escape the heat in
northeast China

DALIAN, China: Thousands of holidaymakers flocked to the sea in northeast China to cool down, only to find it was even hotter than back home as a heatwave bakes the region. Along the pebble beach of Fujiazhuang Park in Dalian, a city famed for its fresh seafood and Yellow Sea coastal sights, beachgoers young and old in bright-colored floats dotted the water on Friday. China has seen more frequent heatwaves in recent years due to the impact of climate change. The latest heatwave has swept through northeastern China and broken records in the nearby Korean Peninsula, with South Korea declaring an emergency. On Friday, the first day of autumn according to the Chinese agricultural calendar, Dalian recorded a high of 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 Fahrenheit). That is nearly 10 degrees Celsius above the average August peak, according to the national forecaster's data from 1981 to 2010. “Originally, we thought Dalian would be cooler, because it's in the northeast. But it turned out to be hotter than in Shanxi where we are from,” said a 44-year-old mother of two, who gave her surname as Miao, referring to her native inland province west of Beijing. She was wearing a sun-protection jacket, face mask and a wide-brimmed hat, and said she had brought medicine for heatstroke. Cao, a 62-year-old retiree who brought his grandson to the beach, said summer in Dalian was not as he remembered it. “This year feels much hotter than usual. It was very comfortable in previous years, and the sea breeze was cool. This year, the sun feels a bit scorching, especially hot.” The State Grid Corporation of China said this week that high temperatures had driven up power demand to record levels in the northern, northeastern and eastern parts of China, with residents cranking up their air conditioning.—APP

UN experts urge Iran to end
‘targeting’ of minorities

UN special rapporteurs are independent experts mandated by the Human Rights Council to report their findings. They do not, therefore, speak on behalf of the United Nations itself

GENEVA: UN rights experts on Thursday urged Iran to end what they called the escalating arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and arbitrary executions of ethnic minorities. The Kurdish and Baluch minorities are particularly affected, they said in a statement. “Iran's ethnic minorities must be able to live in safety and dignity, free from discrimination,” the experts said. In late December, a protest movement initially sparked by the high cost of living rapidly evolved into widespread anti-government demonstrations. The UN experts said that since the protests began, the Iranian authorities had reportedly detained thousands of individuals. “Reports point to a significant increase in arbitrary arrests, and what appears to be politically motivated sentences, including against individuals

from ethnic minorities, who are often arrested under broadly defined national security charges,” the experts said. Iranian authorities have attributed the violence to “terrorist acts” orchestrated by the United States and Israel. The United States and Israel launched a joint attack on the country on February 28, triggering the Middle East war. Since then, arrests and executions have multiplied in the country, linked to both the conflict and the protests. Last year, Iran put to death over 2,150 people, according to Amnesty International, making it again by a huge margin the world's most prolific executioner after China. The UN experts said that this year, at least 24 members of the Baluch minority and 22 members of the Kurdish minority have been executed, with many

more at imminent risk of being put to death. Minorities “continue to be targeted during periods of political and social unrest through narratives that portray them as threats to national security,” they said. “The targeting of Kurdish and Baluch minorities extends beyond the country's borders and includes campaigns of threats and surveillance against individuals living abroad,” they added. The experts included Mai Sato, the special rapporteur on the rights situation in Iran, and the special rapporteurs on freedom of religion, arbitrary executions, minority issues, judicial independence and freedom of assembly. UN special rapporteurs are independent experts mandated by the Human Rights Council to report their findings. They do not, therefore, speak on behalf of the United Nations itself.—APP

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Briefs

China rebukes US over Huawei dispute

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina: China and the United States are clashing diplomatically in Argentina as President Javier Milei seeks to preserve his close alliance with Washington while pursuing deeper economic ties with Beijing. China's embassy in Buenos Aires accused the United States of hypocrisy on Thursday after an electricity cooperative in Argentina's Neuquen province said the US Embassy threatened to revoke its executives' visas over an agreement with Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei. "These actions fully reflect the arrogance and prejudice of the United States. They constitute a serious lack of respect for the sovereignty of other countries and a serious infringement of the principles of the free market," the embassy said in a statement. It added that the United States should "correct its perception of China and put an end to its hegemonic practices and political maneuvering." The diplomatic clash comes as Milei walks a careful diplomatic line, remaining one of US President Donald Trump's closest allies in the region while deepening commercial ties with China, one of Argentina's top trading partners. On Wednesday, Argentina renewed its bilateral currency swap agreement with China for another five years, reinforcing financial cooperation between the two countries. Foreign Minister Pablo Quirno is also expected to visit China in the coming months to strengthen economic and commercial ties. Quirno's office declined to comment. — APP

PHC rejects fmr Afghan military officers asylum pleas

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has dismissed petitions filed by two former Afghan military officers seeking asylum in Pakistan, ruling that they had failed to prove any violation of their constitutional fundamental rights. The petitioners, Abdul Mueeb Ghairat and Baryalai Sharifi, had sought permission for temporary stay in Pakistan, extension of their visas and protection against arrest and deportation, citing serious threats to their lives if returned to Afghanistan. The court held that such speculative fears do not provide sufficient grounds for invoking the constitutional jurisdiction of the High Court under Article 199 of the Constitution. According to the judgement, Abdul Mueeb Ghairat had served as a special agent in the protective service of the former Afghan president, while Baryalai Sharifi had served as a general in the former Afghan National Army. Both argued that they would face grave threats to their lives if forced to return to Afghanistan. — APP

Pakistan urges commitment to South Sudan peace process

Elections remain an important element in bringing the transition to a legitimate conclusion," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the UN Security Council

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UNITED NATIONS: Amid an escalating political and security crisis in South Sudan, Pakistan has called for recommitment to the Revitalized Peace Agreement, stressing that successfully completing the country's democratic transition hinges on holding fair elections. "Elections remain an important element in bringing the transition to a legitimate conclusion," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the UN Security Council on Thursday, noting that the political, legal, security and financial requirements necessary to hold them remain outstanding. "These gaps need to be filled," he stressed. At the same time, the Pakistani envoy voiced serious concerns regarding the deteriorating political tensions, intercommunal violence, and ongoing hos-

tilities in regions like Jonglei and the Upper Nile. "We call on all parties to implement an immediate and sustained cessation of hostilities, refrain from inflammatory rhetoric and return to dialogue," Ambassador Asim Ahmad added. "Spill over effects of the conflict in Sudan are also a matter of concern." The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), he said, plays an indispensable role in the stability of the country. Despite serious operational constraints, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said, the Mission continues to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance, support local dialogue and strengthen both early warning and prevention mechanisms. In this regard, he pointed out that UNMISS is operating with 9,176 military personnel against an authorized ceiling of 12,500. "Given the deteriorating security situation and the mission's extensive protection responsibilities, the authorized troop ceiling should be fully utilized for deployment," the Pakistani envoy argued.

Pakistan eyes free trade pact with Eurasian Economic Union

Highlighting the economic potential of the arrangement, Tirmizi said Pakistan could source a range of products from Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan while offering its own goods to the bloc

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is moving forward with efforts to establish a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) while simultaneously broadening its strategic partnership with Russia in trade, connectivity, education, artificial intelligence, culture and tourism, Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, said in an interview with Russia's TASS News Agency. Ambassador Tirmizi said Pakistan had already launched the process of establishing a free trade area with the EAEU, describing Pakistan as a "natural partner" in the North-South Transport Corridor. He expressed confidence that in the near future people from cities such as Murmansk, Minsk and Moscow would be able to travel overland to Islamabad, Karachi and Gwadar through countries connected by the corridor. He said Pakistan believes it belongs to the broader Eurasian economic region and should have stronger trade, business and people-to-people links with all EAEU member states. He said discussions have already taken place between Pakistan's Minister of Commerce and the leadership of the Eurasian Economic Union, and while negotiations could take several months or up to two years. Highlighting the economic potential of the arrangement, Tirmizi said Pakistan could source a range of products from Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan while offering its own goods to the bloc. Such cooperation, he said, would strengthen economic and food security for all participating countries while promoting regional peace and connectivity through closer commercial and cultural relations. As regards bilateral diplomacy, the ambassador said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's planned visit to Russia, originally scheduled for March, had been postponed because of developments in the Middle East. He said both sides are now working to finalize new dates, with the visit expected to take place during the last quarter of the year, most likely in autumn. Faisal Tirmizi said the visit would be significant



as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Russian President Vladimir Putin have already met several times in recent years and are also expected to interact on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Leaders' Summit in Bishkek. During the Moscow visit, he said, the two countries are expected to sign between eight and ten agreements, including an Economic Roadmap through 2030. Additional cooperation initiatives covering economic, social and media sectors are also planned, while accompanying events will further strengthen bilateral engagement. On regional security, Ambassador Tirmizi reiterated Pakistan's longstanding commitment to diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of disputes. He said Pakistan has consistently supported dialogue since its independence and

continues to play a constructive role in reducing tensions in the region. Referring to recent developments involving Iran and the United States, he said Pakistan remains engaged with both sides and believes any escalation would have serious consequences not only for regional stability but also for global energy and fertilizer markets. Pakistan, he said, continues to maintain communication with both countries while also coordinating with regional partners, including Qatar, in pursuit of lasting peace. The ambassador also identified artificial intelligence as one of the most promising areas for bilateral cooperation. He said both Pakistan and Russia possess highly skilled information technology professionals and are placing increasing emphasis on AI development. Pakistan is already cooperating with Russia's RUSSOFT Association in the information technology sector, he said, expressing confidence that experts from both countries could jointly contribute to global technological innovation while benefiting from Pakistan's young workforce and Russia's scientific expertise. As regards tourism and connectivity, Ambassador Tirmizi said, these remain among his top priorities. Stressing that affordable logistics and direct air links are essential for expanding business and travel, he described Pakistan as a country rich in natural beauty, history and cultural diversity. The ambassador also emphasized the importance of cultural diplomacy. Pakistan will celebrate its Independence Day in Russia with performances by renowned violinist Ustad Rais Khan and the folk fusion group Khumariyaan, showcasing Pakistani music and culture. At the same time, he said Pakistan is working to increase awareness of Russian culture among Pakistanis through educational and cultural exchanges. Reflecting on his own appreciation of Russian literature, music and art, Tirmizi said both countries possess rich cultural traditions that can bring their peoples closer together. Ambassadors, he concluded, serve as bridges connecting societies through culture, education, tourism and business, laying the foundations for stronger and more enduring bilateral relations.

Sri Lanka deploys troops to control prison unrest

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka deployed troops to its main maximum-security prison in Colombo and two other jails on Friday, following unsuccessful breakout attempts in which three inmates were killed and 23 wounded, a government minister said. Public Security Minister Ananda Wijepala said an inmate was killed and 10 others wounded after guards thwarted an attempt by about 40 convicts to escape from Colombo's maximum-security Welikada Prison on Thursday night. Sri Lankan jails have been hit by a spate of unrest in recent weeks, with 10 guards and 23 inmates killed in two separate riots at two other prisons outside Colombo since last month. Officials have attributed the growing unrest to acute overcrowding. Sri Lanka's prisons hold about four times their intended capacity. Wijepala told parliament that the situation at the Welikada jail had been brought under control, but similar unrest was reported at another prison in Kuruwita, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) southeast of Colombo. Two inmates were killed and another 13 wounded at Kuruwita, he said. "Security forces have been deployed at that prison too and order has been restored," Wijepala said. Unrest was also reported at a prison in Pallansena, north of Colombo, where 30 inmates climbed onto the roof and refused to return to their cells after breakfast on Friday. "We see a pattern in these incidents and suspect a conspiracy," Wijepala told parliament, without giving further details. Authorities announced plans last month to convert disused state buildings into prisons, but new facilities have yet to be added. — DNA

Eight dead, including in Thailand shooting

DNA

BANGKOK: A teenage suspect killed his grandparents before shooting dead at least six more people at a school near Bangkok Friday, police said. First he shot dead his grandparents, using his grandfather's handgun, then went to a secondary school north of Bangkok and killed three teachers and three students, national police said in a statement. Dozens of police and emergency responders gathered outside the Debsirin Nonthaburi School in Nonthaburi province on Friday, while parents raced to pick up their children and fearful students and staff comforted each other outside. "I was afraid that I would die, and I was scared that I wouldn't be able to pursue my dreams," said Pawarisa Maylissa, a grade 12 student who hopes to attend medical school. "I heard many gunshots very loudly because it seemed the suspect was on the floor directly above us. I could even hear bullets hitting the floor." Fifteen injured students were not struck by gunfire but hurt as they were trying to flee, deputy interior minister Polapee Suwunchuee told local broadcaster Thai PBS.

Organ trade: foreigners move court for bail

ISLAMABAD: Three foreign nationals arrested in a case pertaining to alleged illegal buying and selling of human organs have approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking post-arrest bail. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard separate petitions filed by Li Gang Sai, Ping Fei Guo and Wang Bao. Barrister Yawar Gardezi appeared on behalf of the petitioners. The counsel submitted that similar bail petitions were already pending before another bench of the High Court. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir observed that the concerned judge was currently on summer vacation and the matter could take around a month. The counsel requested that the petitions also be transferred to the bench of Justice Muhammad Azam Khan. — APP

Donald Trump issues fresh birthright citizenship orders

White House says birth tourism is now banned under Trump's newly signed executive orders on citizenship

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump signed two executive orders on Thursday in a new but narrower attempt to curtail birthright citizenship, once again challenging a provision of the US Constitution even though the Supreme Court rejected his previous effort. Limiting birthright citizenship has been one of the top priorities in the Republican president's crackdown on immigration, with the White House taking particular aim at what it calls "birth tourism", in which pregnant foreigners travel to the US to give birth. After his June 30 setback in the Supreme Court, Trump called on Congress to act, but on Thursday he opted for executive orders, which set policy but do not carry the same weight as

laws passed by Congress. The Supreme Court had struck down as unconstitutional Trump's earlier executive order, which targeted a wide swath of immigrants in the country illegally or temporarily. The administration argues the new directive falls outside the purview of the Supreme Court ruling, as it seeks to reinterpret the narrow, historical exceptions to citizenship at birth and expand who is ineligible. "That practice of birth tourism is, as of the signing of this order, hereby banned," White House aide Stephen Miller said at the Thursday signing ceremony in the Oval Office. The Centre for Immigration Studies, which supports lower levels of immigration, estimated in an analysis in 2020 that between 20,000 and 25,000 mothers came to the US for birth tourism in a year-long period between 2016 and 2017.



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