



Monday, August 10, 2026

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Detailed News On Page-04



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Pakistan dismisses Afghan Taliban claim of weapons smuggling

Afghanistan already holds weapons and equipment worth \$7.2bn abandoned by US, says information ministry

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad has rejected the Afghan Taliban regime's claim that weapons are being smuggled from Pakistan into Afghanistan for so-called "subversive activities", calling the allegation "frivolous, baseless and contrary to established facts". In a statement, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said that Afghanistan is already awash with enormous quantities of sophisticated weapons and military equipment abandoned following the withdrawal of US and coalition forces. It added that the weapons and equipment left behind are estimated to be worth \$7.2 billion, while Afghanistan also possesses large stocks of Soviet-era weaponry accumulated over decades of conflict. The statement came hours after the Afghan Defence Ministry claimed to have discovered and seized "dozens of tons of light and heavy weapons" allegedly "smuggled from Pakistan". Pakistan said attempts to establish a Pakistani connection to the weapons appeared designed to divert international attention from a more serious and documented concern. It said terrorist groups continued to find space, facilitation and operational freedom on Afghan soil to plan, support and carry out attacks inside Pakistan. The statement added that rather than resorting to implausible accusations and blame-shifting, the Afghan Taliban authorities must address the presence of terrorist sanctuaries on their territory. It also called on the Afghan Taliban to honour their repeated commitments that Afghan soil would not be used for terrorism against Pakistan or any other country. It is to be noted here that Pakistan has seen a sharp increase in cross-border terrorist incidents, particularly in the bordering provinces of KP and Balochistan, since the Taliban grabbed power in Afghanistan in 2021. Islamabad had repeatedly urged Kabul to prevent its soil from being used by terrorist organisations to carry out attacks inside its territory. However, the Afghan Taliban regime refused to act against terror groups involved in countless attacks on Pakistani security forces and civilians. Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil-Haq in February this year, months after the two countries agreed to a

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Pak says Makkah defence pact open to other countries also

DPM Ishaq Dar says Makkah Accord remains defensive in nature and targets no country

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar said on Sunday that the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement remains open to countries willing to uphold its core principles, stressing that the pact is defensive in nature and aimed at promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the wider region. His statement came after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye signed the joint defence pact on Friday, establishing a collective security framework that considers an armed attack against any member state as an attack against all three countries. In a statement posted on X, DPM Dar said the agreement, the Makkah Accord, reflected the deep-rooted brotherly ties among the three countries and was the result of years of discussions and coordination to strengthen strategic cooperation in addressing shared peace and security challenges. Dar clarified that the accord neither abrogates nor replaces any existing bilateral or multilateral agreements involving the three countries. He added that, in line with Article 51 of the United Nations (UN) Charter, an armed attack on any one of the signatories would be regarded as an attack on all, consistent with the right to individual and collective self-defence. Emphasising that the agreement is not directed against any country, he said its sole purpose is to reinforce ongoing efforts to promote regional peace, stability and prosperity.

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JI protests against fuel price hike on Agu 16

DNA

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Sunday announced simultaneous sit-ins across all four provinces on August 16 in protest against higher fuel prices and the petroleum levy, accusing the government of using the levy to conceal corruption. Addressing a press conference in Peshawar, he argued that petrol should cost around Rs225 per litre and criticised the government for failing to reduce fuel prices despite the end of the recent conflict in the region. Global oil prices had surged during the US-Iran conflict and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant share of

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Indian pilot undergoes drug test after flight plunge

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India's aviation ministry said on Sunday that an Air India pilot whose flight plunged dramatically in turbulence, injuring 17 passengers and crew, is undergoing a "confirmatory" psychoactive drug test. The Airbus A320, carrying 137 passengers and eight crew, lost around 300 feet (91 metres) on August 4 while flying from Phuket in Thailand to New Delhi, before stabilising and landing safely, the civil aviation ministry said. Eight passengers and four cabin crew members were admitted to hospitals after landing in the Indian

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Pak hostage seeks help for release

NEWS DESK

LONDON: More than 100 days after being taken hostage by Somali pirates, crew members on board MT Honour 25 have released another distress message in which they appealed directly to the Pakistani government for their release, it emerged on Sunday. The Honour 25 — a Palau-flagged oil tanker carrying 17 to 19 crew members, including 10 Pakistanis — was hijacked by armed pirates off the coast of Puntland, Somalia on April 21. Despite over three months passing, there has been no progress either in negotiations or the payment of

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LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari being seen off at Lahore Airport by Acting Governor Punjab Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan and Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi. — DNA

US-Iran tensions

Tehran says won't reopen Hormuz until US accepts conditions

Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi also said there had been no talks with the US, "only an exchange of messages through mediators".

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Sunday said they would not reopen the Strait of Hormuz until the United States accepts all of Tehran's demands. "Our current strategy is to maintain this strait until the enemy accepts all our conditions," said Guards spokesman Hossein Mohebi, as quoted by state TV, adding that "the strait is now actually a theater of war for us and not just a waterway." Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi also said there had been no talks with the US, "only an exchange of messages through mediators". Earlier, Iran set preconditions on Saturday for a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, including compensation for war damages, complicating a potential deal to open the waterway essential to the world economy.

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US to continue applying pressure, says Vance

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Vice President J.D. Vance has declared that the United States will continue "applying pressure" on Iran after renewed attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that Washington cannot allow Tehran to dictate global energy flows. The Trump administration has already ordered consecutive strikes on Iranian missile sites, drone facilities, and maritime forces, while deploying more than 50,000

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Türkiye to soon begin drilling operations in Pak

Petroleum minister stresses accelerated indigenous oil and gas exploration to reduce reliance on imports

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik on Sunday confirmed that Türkiye's Turkish Petroleum would soon commence offshore drilling operations in Pakistan's territorial waters. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, the minister said that the drilling operations would pave the way for significant foreign investment in the energy sector. Highlighting Pakistan's energy challenges, Malik said that the country imported

around 90% of its energy requirements, while domestic oil production stood at approximately 70,000 barrels per day against a daily demand of around 500,000 barrels. He stressed the need to accelerate indigenous oil and gas exploration to reduce reliance on imports. The petroleum minister said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir had tasked a leading international company with

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Briefs

Israeli PM rejects Trump Gaza plan

DNA

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday rejected a Gaza plan hailed by US President Donald Trump, vowing no military pullout until Hamas is "genuinely" disarmed. After more than a week of gradually escalating criticism of the plan, Netanyahu explicitly opposed it as he faced pushback from his right-wing base ahead of elections. "Israel rejects the 15-point document," Netanyahu said, referring to a plan endorsed in late July by Hamas. The Israeli military "will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed and will continue to thwart threats against our forces and our citizens", Netanyahu said at a cabinet meeting. The document, the latest stage in a US-led ceasefire announced in October that has reduced but not ended Israeli operations in Gaza.

‘North Korea troops to be deployed in Russia’

SEOUL: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said up to 50,000 North Korean soldiers will be deployed in Russia to fight for Pyongyang's ally, while calling on South Korea to provide support for its air defense. Zelenskyy said on X on Saturday that "a decision has been made for 30,000 to 50,000 North Koreans to be deployed on the territory of Russia," a higher figure than his estimate of 30,000 in July. He did not elaborate on how he obtained the information. He said Kyiv had found some North Korean missiles in Ukraine's territory, without disclosing their locations. "It is absolutely clear that North Korea will continue to build its experience in modern warfare, receive licenses from Russia, and receive all kinds of military tools from them," he said.

Fitna-al-Hindustan Security forces kill 15 terrorists in Balochistan IBOs

Meanwhile, A constable was martyred and another sustained bullet wounds while on duty in an attack in the Saeedkhel area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district on Sunday

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Security forces have killed 15 terrorists in multiple intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in several areas of Balochistan, state media reported on Sunday. State-run Pakistan TV reported citing sources that the IBOs were carried out in Mastung, Bolan, Washuk, Awaran, Sibi, Khuzdar, Harnai, and Nushki under Operation Raddul Fitna 3. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the slain terrorists, it reported. "The operations severely damaged the khawarij network and restricted their movement," Pakistan TV said. The latest operations by the security forces in Balochistan take place as the province continues to face security challenges. According to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies' (PICSS) monthly security assessment released on July 31, the security situation deteriorated most significantly in Balochistan in the country last month. The overall death toll increased by 241pc in Balochistan, from

109 in June to 372 in July, the report said. Security personnel deaths in Balochistan increased from six in June to 62 in July, representing a rise of 933pc. Terrorist deaths rose from 75 to 238, while civilian deaths increased by 93pc, from 28 to 54. Eighteen members of peace committees were also killed in the province. Last month, security forces and law enforcement personnel jointly launched Operation Shaban in Balochistan in retaliation for a deadly attack on a police post at the Mangi Dam pumping station in Ziarat on July 6. During that assault, armed attackers kidnapped and killed 27 police officers. On July 9, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the country's civil and military leadership had taken a "mutual and singular decision" to end terrorism after multiple major terrorist incidents in Balochistan. He made the remarks at a meeting in Quetta of the Provincial Apex Committee on the National Action Plan, with Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the

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Pak-Saudi-Türkiye Pact: A new strategic triangle

The risks are real: if perceived as anti-Iran or divisive, it could deepen regional fractures. But with safeguards, the pact offers a historic opportunity to transform symbolism into practical cooperation and lay the foundation for a new Muslim security order



OPINION

ANSAR M. BHATTY

THE landmark defence pact between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, with Türkiye as a key partner, comes at a critical moment of turbulence in the Muslim world. As regional alliances shift and traditional security arrangements weaken, closer cooperation among major Muslim countries could reshape collective defence and diplomacy. This pact should not be seen through the lens of a single conflict. Instead, it reflects recognition that Muslim states need indigenous mechanisms for security, consultation, and defence collaboration. The timing is significant: Pakistan recently facilitated the Islamabad MoU between Iran and the U.S., while the R-4 diplomatic mechanism (Pakistan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Egypt) has created another platform for Muslim coordination. Against this backdrop, the pact acquires immense weight. It could become one of the most important Pan-Islamic military initiatives independent of Western structures. Pakistan contributes battle-tested armed forces and nuclear deterrence; Saudi Arabia offers pivotal geography and economic clout; Türkiye brings military power and

a sophisticated defence industry. Together, they form a formidable strategic combination. The pact affects the regional balance of power, especially amid Israeli military expansionism. While some may interpret it as a move against Iran, this is simplistic. Saudi Arabia faces growing security challenges from Israel's actions, making cooperation with Pakistan and Türkiye strategically valuable. Traditionally reliant on Western powers, Riyadh gains depth and alternative security pillars through this arrangement. The pact signals that aggression against one Muslim country will not be treated as isolated. It strengthens deterrence against external threats while underscoring collective responsibility. Historically, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had agreements to treat aggression against either as serious, but ambiguity remained when Muslim countries clashed with each other. A new framework could address this by establishing mechanisms for conflict prevention, consultation, and de-escalation. The pact should not target Muslim countries but instead promote sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-aggression, and peaceful dispute resolution. Other states Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Egypt, Indonesia could join or associate, broadening the platform. Azerbaijan offers military experience and strategic geography; Egypt is a major Arab power; Indonesia adds political weight as the largest

Muslim-majority country; Malaysia contributes diplomatic and economic strength. Cooperation could include intelligence sharing, joint exercises, defence production, cybersecurity, counterterrorism, maritime security, and training more practical than attempting a NATO-style alliance overnight. For Pakistan, the pact is vital given the India-Israel strategic relationship and South Asia's complex environment. Stronger ties with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye provide Islamabad with strategic space and reinforce national security. Yet Pakistan must balance this with relations with Iran, its neighbour and crucial partner for peace, trade, and connectivity. By engaging both Riyadh and Ankara while maintaining ties with Tehran, Pakistan could serve as a bridge between competing interests. Diplomatic initiatives are key. If Pakistan combines military partnerships with diplomacy, it could become central to a new regional security architecture rather than another bloc confrontation. The pact should therefore be accompanied by a Muslim security dialogue mechanism aimed at preventing conflicts, not just responding to them. The Abraham Accords created new ties between Israel and Arab states, but Israeli military actions have raised doubts about their sustainability. A stronger Pakistan-Saudi-Türkiye partnership could act as a counterweight, showing that Muslim countries can craft their own strategic responses. How-

ever, credibility depends on restraint, transparency, and clarity. The pact must avoid becoming an instrument of confrontation and instead focus on collective defence against external aggression while managing disputes among Muslim states. The principle of "attack on one is an attack on all" needs clear definition whether it implies military intervention, diplomatic support, intelligence sharing, or weapons supply. Without clarity, expectations may become difficult to meet in crises. Handled wisely, the pact could evolve into a collective Muslim security architecture based on mutual defence, equality, non-aggression, and diplomacy. At a time of turbulence, such an initiative is timely and welcome. Its success depends on political vision, institutional discipline, and courage to build a system where the security of one Muslim country is inseparable from the stability of the wider Muslim world. Above all, it must function through institutions rather than personal ties of leaders. The risks are real: if perceived as anti-Iran or divisive, it could deepen regional fractures. But with safeguards, the pact offers a historic opportunity to transform symbolism into practical cooperation and lay the foundation for a new Muslim security order.

— The writer is the newspaper editor. Detailed article to be published in the coming issue of CENTRELINE magazine.

PDP introduces culture of balanced uplift: Punjab CM

The MPAs thanked Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for transforming the single, dilapidated Vehari-Multan Road, which had remained in poor condition for five decades, into a modern two-lane expressway

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif says Punjab Development Program(PDP) has introduced a culture of balanced development across the province Talking to the Members of the Punjab Assembly from Vehari, who called on her in Lahore today, the Chief Minister said farmers in South Punjab are benefiting from initiatives including the Kissan Card, laptops and merit scholarships. She further said the new drainage schemes across the province have significantly improved the situation during the current monsoon. The delegation thanked the Chief Minister for converting the long-neglected Vehari-Multan Road into a dual carriageway and for launching the electro bus service in the area. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on political affairs, ongoing development projects and public welfare initiatives. The MPAs thanked Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for transforming the single, dilapidated Vehari-Multan Road, which had remained in poor condition for

five decades, into a modern two-lane expressway. They described the construction of the Vehari-Multan Road as a game-changing project and said millions of people from four districts were benefiting from the facility every day. The lawmakers also apprised the chief minister of the positive public response to the rehabilitation of the Multan-Vehari Road, saying the project would prove a milestone in the development and prosperity of the region. They also thanked Maryam Nawaz for launching the electrobus service in Vehari, saying the service connecting Vehari with Burewala and Tibba Sultanpur had provided an excellent travel facility to the public. They termed free travel for students, women and senior citizens an unprecedented initiative. The MPAs said mega development projects worth around Rs21 billion had been launched for the first time in the history of the district in the tehsils of Burewala, Mailsi and Vehari. They added that the beautification of Vehari Rail Bazaar had ushered

in a new era of urban development in the city. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said the spirit of serving the people of Punjab had been inherited from her leader, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. She said the immediate construction of the Vehari-Multan Road was the right of the people of the area and Allah Almighty had enabled her government to fulfil it. Maryam Nawaz said a culture of balanced development had been introduced across the province for the first time through the Punjab Development Programme. Referring to the drainage situation during the monsoon, the chief minister said the situation had improved significantly this year due to new drainage projects. She said rainwater that previously remained stagnant for days, weeks or even months was now being drained within hours. She said farmers in South Punjab were benefiting from the Kissan Card, while students were receiving support through the Laptop Scheme and DNA



KARACHI: The Governor of Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi waving flag of Pakistan along with the participants of a Mushaira in connection with the Independence Day at Governor House.

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Position	Eligibility Criteria
Finance & Administration Manager	Age Limit: 55 Years (Max.) Qualification: Essential: Bachelor's degree in Finance, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration, or a relevant discipline, or a full or part recognized professional accounting qualification such as CA, ACCA, CFA, or ICMA. Preferred: Master's degree in Finance, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration or relevant discipline or a full professional accounting qualification as above. Degree(s) must be from a HEC-recognized national or international university/institution. Role Overview: The Finance & Administration Manager will be responsible for University's financial, budgeting, procurement and administrative systems. Experience: - Minimum 6 years' experience in Finance. - Proficiency in accounting software (e.g., QuickBooks, Oracle, SAP, or similar ERP/accounting systems) and Microsoft Excel. - Understanding of applicable Pakistani tax laws, procurement regulations, and audit requirements. - Experience in Public sector or large development projects/infrastructure and/or construction project finance or Donor-funded/government-financed projects or related projects is preferred - Knowledge of PPRA rules, Government of Pakistan financial regulations, and audit procedures is highly preferred - Experience in project costing, cash flow management, and contract finance - High integrity, analytical thinking, and attention to detail
IT Systems Specialist	Age Limit: 55 Years (Max.) Qualification: Essential: Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, Software Engineering, or Computer Engineering, or relevant degree. Preferred: - Master's degree in IT, Computer Science, MIS, or Technology Management - Professional certifications such as CISCO, Microsoft, AWS, or related certifications will be an added advantage. Degree(s) must be from a HEC-recognized national or international university/institution. Role Overview: The IT Systems Specialist manages the university's IT infrastructure, networks and digital systems to support academic and administrative functions. Experience: - Minimum 4 years of progressive IT Management experience. - Experience with one or more of the following is preferred: Large-scale or university projects. - ERP, PMIS, or other digital governance systems would be considered an advantage - Experience in Public sector or donor-funded projects is preferred - Knowledge of public-sector procurement, governance, or related practices would be an asset - Experience in Strategic IT planning and digital transformation would be an asset - Expertise in Project management and systems integration would be preferred - Prior experience in Cybersecurity and risk management would be an asset
Procurement Specialist	Age Limit: 55 Years (Max.) Qualification: Essential: Bachelor's degree in Supply Chain Management, Business Administration, Finance, Engineering, Public Administration or a relevant field. Preferred: - Master's degree in Supply Chain Management, Business Administration, or a relevant field. - Certifications in public procurement (e.g., CIPS, PMP, PPRA training) will be an asset. Degree(s) must be from a HEC-recognized national or international university/institution. Role Overview: Establish and manage university's procurement function with transparent policies and compliance with regulations and best practices. Experience: - Minimum 4 years of procurement experience. - Experience with procurement under PPRA rules and/or public sector financial systems is preferred. - Proficiency in procurement and ERP systems such as SAP, Oracle, or similar platforms. - Excellent negotiation and contract management skills. - High ethical standards, attention to detail, and a proactive approach to problem-solving.
Procurement Assistant	Age Limit: 55 Years (Max.) Qualification: Essential: Bachelor's degree in Supply Chain Management, Business Administration, Finance, Engineering, Public Administration or a relevant field. Degree(s) must be from a HEC-recognized national or international university/institution. Role Overview: Assist in procurement planning, preparation of bidding documents, tendering, bid evaluation, contract administration, and vendor management. Maintain procurement records and ensure compliance with PPRA Rules, procurement policies, and contractual requirements. Coordinate with end users for timely procurement of goods, works, and services. Experience: - Minimum 2 years of procurement experience - Basic knowledge of contract management - Familiarity with PPRA Rules and public sector procurement procedures would be an asset - Strong documentation, record-keeping, and filing skills - Proficiency in MS Word and Excel - High integrity, transparency, and attention to detail - Ability to work under deadlines in a project environment
Finance Assistant	Age Limit: 55 Years (Max.) Qualification: Essential: Bachelor's degree in Finance, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration, or a relevant discipline, or a full or part recognized professional qualification such as CA, ACCA, CFA, or ICMA. Degree(s) must be from a HEC-recognized national or international university/institution Role Overview: Assist in budgeting, financial planning, payment processing, preparation of financial statements, maintenance of accounting records, reconciliation of accounts, and financial reporting. Ensure compliance with applicable financial rules, audit requirements, and government financial procedures. Experience: - Minimum 2 years of relevant finance/accounting experience - Proficiency in accounting software (e.g., QuickBooks, Oracle, SAP, or similar ERP/accounting systems) and Microsoft Excel is preferred. - Strong analytical and numerical skills - High attention to detail and accuracy - Integrity and commitment to transparency

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Makkah accord opens path to eco progress: Ali

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik said that the government was committed to strengthening energy security, attracting investment, and ensuring transparency in the petroleum sector. Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, he said Pakistan's next major destination after achieving strategic and diplomatic successes was sustainable economic progress. He also congratulated the nation on Pakistan's 79th Independence Day and prayed that Allah Almighty grant every citizen the strength to contribute to the country's progress and prosperity. He said the Makkah agreement, reached through the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, was a matter of national pride. He added that Pakistan had emerged as a net security provider in the region, while the combined strengths of Saudi Arabia's economy, Turkiye's technological advancement and Pakistan's defence capabilities would contribute to regional stability. Ali Pervaiz Malik said the government had taken difficult economic decisions that helped stabilize the country's economy. He added that instead of discussions about default, the focus had now shifted to accelerating Pakistan's economic growth. Referring to international developments, he said the Iran-US conflict had created significant challenges for global energy markets, leading to unprecedented increases in crude oil and petroleum product prices. Despite these pressures, he said, the government ensured uninterrupted fuel supplies across the country and made every effort to protect consumers from the full impact of rising international prices. The minister said the government remained committed to providing maximum relief to the public despite limited financial resources. He added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had introduced a transparent petroleum pricing mechanism, with all pricing calculations available on the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) website. Highlighting Pakistan's energy challenges, Ali Pervaiz Malik said the country imported around 90 per cent of its energy requirements, while domestic oil production stood at approximately 70,000 barrels per day against a daily demand of around 500,000 barrels. He stressed the need to accelerate indigenous oil and gas exploration to reduce reliance on imports. He said the prime minister and the field marshal had tasked a leading international company with preparing a comprehensive roadmap for the country's energy sector, which would be presented to the national leadership in the coming months. The minister said the federal cabinet had approved the refinery policy and the government was resolving long-standing financial issues facing the petroleum sector. He added that the flow of circular debt had been halted and efforts were underway to clear outstanding liabilities inherited from previous administrations. Ali Pervaiz Malik said Turkiye's Turkish Petroleum would soon commence offshore drilling operations in Pakistan's territorial waters, paving the way for significant foreign investment in the energy sector. He also announced that LPG tenders would open on Monday and said the government had made arrangements to issue new gas connections to facilitate consumers.—APP

RBC seeks coop to promote voluntary blood donation

DERA ISMAIL KHAN : The Regional Blood Centre (RBC) Dera Ismail Khan has intensified efforts to strengthen institutional coordination, promote component-based transfusion, facilitate timely blood availability for patients and encourage voluntary blood donation through a series of meetings and visits involving members of the Board of Governors of Medical Teaching Institute (MTI), Defence Security Forces (DSF) and senior medical professionals. As part of these activities, members of the Board of Governors (BoG), MTI Dera Ismail Khan, Dr. Ashfaq Khan and Engineer Zubair Khan, visited the Regional Blood Centre. Emergency Specialist Dr. Muhammad Asad and Director HR Dr. Ubaidullah accompanied them. The visiting BoG members met Manager Regional Blood Centre Dr. Muhammad Rizwan Rajput at his office and were subsequently taken on a detailed tour of different sections of the centre. They were briefed about blood collection, screening, processing, component preparation, storage and transfusion-related services being provided to patients. The meeting focused particularly on the proposed Thalassemia Unit at DHQ Teaching Hospital MTI Dera Ismail Khan and the possibility of establishing a structured mechanism for provision of blood and blood components to patients who would be treated at the proposed unit. Dr. Muhammad Rizwan Rajput assured the visiting BoG members that the Regional Blood Centre would extend maximum possible cooperation for the timely provision of safe blood and blood components to thalassemia patients.—APP

Call for tech-driven Sialkot industry modernization

SIALKOT: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal, called for modernization of Sialkot's industries through technology and increased exports. Addressing the German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GPCCI) Business Networking Reception here on Saturday late night, he said Pakistan and Germany were enjoying longstanding diplomatic relations and would soon celebrate 75 years of bilateral relations. Ahsan Iqbal stressed that Pakistani industries must adopt modern technology to remain competitive, adding that Pakistan had potential to significantly increase its exports and there was a need to introduce new products and brands in international markets. Highlighting the importance of stronger economic cooperation with Germany, Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan had a natural opportunity to build a complementary partnership with Germany, particularly in engineering, technology, manufacturing and technical education. He said Germany was a global leader in engineering and that cooperation with German companies and institutions could help Pakistan strengthen its technological and manufacturing capabilities.

Ahsan Iqbal also praised Germany's technical and vocational training system, describing it as one of the strongest technical education models in the world. He said Pakistan could benefit from German expertise in developing technical and vocational education and training programs aimed at equipping young people with skills relevant to future industries. He added, strengthening technical education would help Pakistan turn its young population into a productive demographic dividend and create a stronger foundation for sustainable economic growth. He stressed the need for rapidly expand Pakistan's industrial clusters, which were already providing the country with a distinct identity in international exports. "We are now on a path of recovery and stabilization," he said and emphasized that Pakistan must maintain continuity in its economic policies and ensure peace and stability to sustain the recovery", he added. Ahsan Iqbal called for incentives for Pakistani companies that achieve the milestone of becoming the country's first billion-dollar export company, saying exporters who earn foreign exchange for Pakistan should be recognized as national heroes.—APP

Murad lauds GU Tech's innovation-driven education

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday evening praised GU Tech and Al Ghazali University for promoting innovation, applied learning and technological advancement, urging students to harness emerging technologies to address real-world challenges and contribute to Pakistan's socio-economic development. Addressing students, faculty members and the university leadership during a visit to GU Tech, the chief minister described education as the cornerstone of nation-building and said institutions of higher learning must move beyond conventional teaching to produce innovators, entrepreneurs and problem-solvers capable of meeting the needs of a rapidly changing world. "Pakistan's future depends on

a generation that combines knowledge with character, innovation with responsibility and ambition with public service," he said. Murad Ali Shah commended the university's focus on creativity, research, entrepreneurship and practical learning, saying such an environment was essential for preparing young people to compete in the global economy. He added that the modern campus, student-led projects and innovation-oriented academic culture reflected Al Ghazali University's commitment to quality education and community development. Highlighting the transformative role of technology, the chief minister said artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, data science and digital connectivity were reshaping

economies and societies across the world. However, he stressed that technology should be used to improve lives, strengthen communities and promote inclusive growth. "The true value of technology lies in its ability to address human needs, solve societal problems and contribute to sustainable development," he said, encouraging students to develop solutions that benefit society and create opportunities for future generations. Shah also appreciated the university's diverse academic offerings, including programmes in computer science, data science and artificial intelligence, engineering and technology, law, education, business and management, Islamic banking and finance, and Islamic studies.—APP

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

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi...5555489

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Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Youth urged to play role to make Pakistan a strong country

Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar said that Masnavi Peer Changi represents the essence of Hassan Akhtar Gardezi’s lifelong experience, intellectual insight and literary excellence

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan’s former Ambassador to the United States and China, Sardar Masood Khan, has urged the younger generation to avoid despair and play an active role in making Pakistan stronger, more prosperous and developed through hard work, determination and a spirit of national service. He expressed these views while addressing the launch ceremony of Masnavi Peer Changi, the final literary work of the late renowned journalist, scholar and diplomat Hassan Akhtar Gardezi. The ceremony, presided over by Sardar Masood Khan, was hosted by Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman of the Pakistan Cultural Forum and Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG). Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Director General of Idara Farogh-e-Qaumi Zaban, attended as the Chief Guest. Muhammad Afzal Butt, President of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ); Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani; Syed Javed Hasan Gardezi; Musa Hasan Gardezi; and other distinguished guests also attended the ceremony. In his presidential address, Sardar Masood Khan said that Masnavi Peer Changi reflects Hassan Akhtar Gardezi’s spiritual thought, deep attachment to Islam and Pakistan, and unwavering commitment to national values. He said the book portrays the late author’s life, struggle and intellectual journey, while highlighting his strong devotion to Islam, Pakistan and national ideals. He added that the book’s unique narrative style makes it a distinguished literary work and conveys an important message of hope, perseverance and nation-building. Chief Guest Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar said that Masnavi Peer Changi represents the essence of Hassan Akhtar Gardezi’s lifelong experience, intellectual insight and literary excellence. He said the book would serve as a valuable literary asset and source of inspiration for future generations. He also appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Cultural Forum for the promotion of literature, culture and the arts. Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Pakistan Cultural Forum aims to preserve Pakistan’s national heritage, language, literature, history and cultural identity; highlight the contributions of writers and national personalities to the younger generation; and promote reading, dialogue, tolerance and intellectual awareness in society. Paying tribute to Hassan Akhtar Gardezi, Zafar Bakhtawari said that he was a courageous, principled and honest journalist who always stood for truth, gave priority to national dignity and upheld the highest standards of journalism. He urged young journalists to follow Hassan Akhtar Gardezi’s example of integrity, professionalism and commitment to principles. He added that unity, harmony and collective efforts are essential for Pakistan’s progress and prosperity. Muhammad Afzal Butt appreciated the efforts of Syed Javed Hasan Gardezi in making the publication of his late brother’s final literary work possible. He said Hassan Akhtar Gardezi’s writings would remain a valuable source of guidance for future generations, particularly in the areas of leadership, patriotism and public service. Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani said that Hassan Akhtar Gardezi’s personality was a practical reflection of his love for Pakistan and Kashmir. He said the late author drew intellectual and spiritual guidance from the philosophies of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Allama Muhammad Iqbal and always remained optimistic about Pakistan’s bright future. Syed Javed Hasan Gardezi paid tribute to his late brother and described him as an honest, dignified and patriotic person who demonstrated unwavering loyalty to Pakistan throughout his life. Musa Hasan Gardezi, grandson of the late author, thanked the participants and paid tribute to his grandfather’s academic and literary contributions. On the occasion, he also recited a patriotic poem and prayed for the fulfilment of Allama Muhammad Iqbal’s vision of a strong, prosperous and developed Pakistan. At the conclusion of the ceremony, prayers were offered for the departed souls of Hassan Akhtar Gardezi and Haji Ghulam Nabi Bakhtawari, a gold medalist of the Pakistan Movement.

Chinese institute to boost Chinese language in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pak Educational Cultural Institute (CPECI) and the Office of International Education and Cooperation at the University of Chenab (UChenab) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), formalizing a partnership to expand Chinese language education, HSK certification and study-in-China advisory services for Pakistani students. The agreement brings together two institutions united by a shared commitment to broadening educational opportunities, China Economic Net reported on Saturday. Under the MoU, both parties will launch and sustain Chinese language classes with structured HSK preparation pathways at UChenab’s campus in Gujrat and CPECI’s center in Islamabad. Students will receive timely and transparent counseling on study-in-China opportunities. The partnership will facilitate MBBS transfer to Chinese medical universities, addressing the growing demand of Pakistani students for medical education abroad.—APP

Alif Education Alliance Islamabad chapter launched

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad chapter of Alif Educational Alliance, a platform of noted scholars, academicians and educationists striving for educational excellence in Pakistan, was launched here on Saturday, following the launch of its Karachi chapter a fortnight ago. Alif has been launched for bonding all Pakistani schools for sharing and learning from their experiences and resources, for the purpose of achieving educational excellence in the country. The ceremony was held at Riphah University I-14 campus. Dr. Atif Iqbal of Al Huda International presented the welcome address. Shaykh Jahangir Mahmud, Gen Secretary and Executive Editor of ‘Society for Educational Research’, a think-tank for the enhancement of Education, delivered the keynote address. He highlighted the relevance and importance of cooperation among the schools for raising educational standards. Mufti Atif Karamat, an Islamic scholar, and founder of multiple non-profit organizations like Shariah compliance services provider, Naafay, teachers training institute Ustaaz, and Tilmeez, highlighted the impacts of identity crisis of Muslim educationists the challenges they faced in the modern world.—APP

Makkah pact opens new window for eco uplift: Tahir

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has welcomed the landmark Saudi Arabia-Pakistan-Türkiye Joint Defence Agreement, terming it a significant development with the potential to strengthen regional stability, strategic confidence and the broader environment for economic cooperation and shared prosperity. Talking to a visiting group of trade and business leaders here on Saturday, he said stronger strategic ties among the three countries should also translate into greater economic integration, increased private-sector linkages and mutually beneficial investment partnerships. “Peace and security create the foundation; business, investment and innovation build prosperity on that foundation,” he remarked. Sardar Tahir said ICCI was also committed to converting the historic Pakistan-Türkiye relationship into tangible economic opportunities and announced that the Chamber would establish a dedicated Pakistan-Türkiye Business Facilitation Desk to provide a permanent platform for the business communities of both countries. The Desk will facilitate information sharing, connect investors and exporters, support B2B matchmaking, and help businesses navigate commercial opportunities, institutional linkages and potential joint ventures. He said the initiative would help transform bilateral economic engagement from occasional interactions into structured, sustained and results-oriented business cooperation. He said ICCI was taking its economic diplomacy agenda to the next level as he will lead a high-powered business delegation to Türkiye on August 13, 2026, comprising prominent business leaders and entrepreneurs from diverse sectors. During the visit, ICCI will organize a Business Opportunity Conference, focused B2B matchmaking meetings and a prestigious Global Excellence Award Ceremony, providing Pakistani businesses an opportunity to establish direct partnerships with Turkish counterparts and showcase Pakistan’s investment and business potential. He added that the ICCI initiative was designed to identify concrete opportunities for trade, investment, joint ventures, technology cooperation and market access, particularly in sectors where both countries could leverage their respective strengths. Sardar Tahir expressed confidence that stronger private-sector engagement would contribute meaningfully towards the shared economic vision of the leadership of Pakistan and Türkiye to increase bilateral trade towards the USD 5 billion target. He emphasized that economic diplomacy must now move from dialogue to delivery, with chambers of commerce, business organizations and private-sector leaders taking the lead in creating sustainable commercial partnerships. “The time has come to move from relationships to results—from meetings to market access, and from agreements to investments and jobs,” he added, reiterating ICCI’s resolve to position Pakistan’s private sector as a proactive partner in the country’s global economic outreach.

IIRIS convene conference on IWT

ISLAMABAD: The International Institute for Regional and International Studies (IIRIS), in collaboration with the (COPAIR), successfully convened a high-level International Conference on the Indus Water Treaty, bringing together distinguished diplomats, maritime experts, researchers, and water governance specialists to deliberate on emerging challenges to water security, climate resilience, and regional environmental cooperation. The conference provided an important platform for informed dialogue on the future of the Indus Basin, the evolving dynamics surrounding the Indus Water Treaty, and the wider implications of water security for regional peace, stability, and cooperation. The event commenced with opening remarks by Anna Munawwar Awan, , who highlighted the importance of sustained dialogue and cooperation in addressing the complex water challenges confronting the region. The technical sessions featured distinguished experts who offered diverse strategic, geopolitical, diplomatic, legal, environmental, and governance perspectives. Vice Admiral Dr. Ahmed Saeed addressed the Strategic Dimensions of the Indus Water Treaty and Regional Maritime Security, highlighting the broader strategic significance of water resources and maritime security. Flavius Caba-Maria examined Geopolitical Perspectives on Transboundary Water Management, focusing on the regional and geopolitical dimensions of shared water resources. Ambassador G.R. Baluch discussed the Diplomatic Challenges and Legal Frameworks of the Indus Waters, emphasizing the importance of diplomacy, international law, and institutional mechanisms. Shafiqat Rasool, President IIRIS, spoke on Climate Resilience and Regional Environmental Cooperation, emphasizing the growing impact of climate change on water security and the need for stronger regional environmental partnerships. Naseer Memon addressed Water Governance, Vulnerabilities, and Sustainable Allocation in the Indus Basin, highlighting governance challenges and the importance of sustainable and equitable water management. The discussions underscored that water security is no longer solely an environmental or developmental concern but has increasingly become interconnected with regional security, diplomacy, climate change, economic stability, and peace.—DNA

Tarbela dam’s storage nears full capacity

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Saturday reported that water storage at Tarbela and Mangla dams remained high amid the ongoing monsoon season, with Tarbela holding 97.94 per cent of its storage capacity and Mangla 62.99pc, as the authority reviewed reservoir levels

to assess the country’s water and flood situation and support timely preparedness measures. According to the latest assessment by the NDMA’s National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), the water level at Tarbela Dam stood at 1,548 feet, with storage recorded at 97.94pc. The corresponding storage level

during the same period last year was 95.98pc. At Mangla Dam, the water level was recorded at 1,205.2 feet, with storage at 62.99pc, compared with 62.80pc during the same period last year. The latest figures were came as the monsoon season was continuing to bring increased rainfall and rising water flows across parts of the country. The NDMA is maintaining close monitoring of reservoir levels and river flows and providing timely information and alerts to relevant authorities to strengthen preparedness against potential flooding.—DNA

Al-Shifa urges eye donation as corneal transplant backlog grows

DNA

RAWALPINDI: More than 300,000 people suffering from corneal blindness in Pakistan are awaiting sight-restoring transplants, while Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital performs only about 800 corneal transplant procedures a year, highlighting a severe gap between demand and the availability of donor tissue. Al-Shifa Trust, which operates one of the country’s major corneal transplant centres, said Pakistan continues to depend on imported donor corneas because of limited local donations and the absence of a nationwide eye-banking system capable of meeting demand. Talking to media, Al-Shifa Trust President Maj Gen (Retd) Rehmat Khan said the shortage of donated corneas had left hundreds of thousands of patients without access to transplantation. He urged people to pledge their eyes for donation after death, saying a single donor could potentially restore sight to two people. The scale

of the shortage becomes clearer when compared with global supply. Khan cited an international survey covering more than 95 per cent of the world’s population, which found that about 185,000 corneal transplants are performed annually in 116 countries, while around 284,000 donor corneas are recovered in 82 countries. By comparison, Pakistan performs only about 1,500 corneal transplants a year. International partnerships have helped sustain transplantation services in Pakistan but have not eliminated the supply gap. US-based Eversight has partnered with Al-Shifa since 2017 to support corneal donation and eye-banking services. Although some public-sector hospitals also provide corneal transplant services, eye-care specialists say Pakistan lacks a coordinated national system for corneal donation capable of meeting the reported demand. They say stronger public-sector investment in donor registration, cornea retrieval, preservation and distribution

is needed to expand access to transplantation. Khan said corneal transplantation is one of the more successful forms of tissue transplantation because the cornea has no blood vessels, reducing the risk of rejection and making close donor-recipient matching unnecessary in many cases. He said corneas donated by elderly people can also restore sight to much younger recipients. Dr Omar Farooq, manager of the Al-Shifa Eye Bank, said the consequences of delayed treatment extend beyond blindness. Children may be unable to attend school, while adults can lose their ability to work and support their families. He said the current capacity was insufficient even to address existing demand, while new patients continued to enter the system, steadily increasing the backlog. The hospital called for greater public awareness of eye donation and stronger institutional arrangements for cornea retrieval, preservation and distribution to reduce Pakistan’s dependence on imported donor tissue.

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Briefs

**Pakistan's
AI economy:
Missing half
its architects**

ISLAMABAD: As demand for AI and data science talent surges worldwide, Pakistan continues to lose thousands of qualified women between graduation and employment. Unlocking that talent could become one of the country's biggest competitive advantages in the digital economy. Women make up only 17% of Pakistan's IT workforce, and in AI, machine learning and data science, the figure is believed to be even lower. Although women continue to graduate with computer science degrees, only 14-17% enter the workforce, compared with 83% of their male counterparts. The gap reflects a broader national reality. Pakistan's female labour force participation stands at 24%, among the lowest in the world, placing the country 153rd out of 156 on the Global Gender Gap Index. Women are earning the degrees. They are just not getting, or keeping, the jobs. The imbalance is visible even before recruitment begins. When Haleema Mehmood, an HR professional at a multinational company, reviewed applications for a technical role, she received more than 900 resumes. "Fewer than 100 were from women. The numbers spoke for themselves" she shared while talking to APP. The shortage comes at a time when demand for AI and data talent has never been greater. According to the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025, Big Data Specialists and AI and Machine Learning Specialists are the world's two fastest-growing jobs, with Big Data roles projected to grow by 110% by 2030. Pakistan, however, continues to leave much of its talent on the sidelines. Research by McKinsey shows gender-diverse teams perform 25% better and produce 19% more innovative solutions. Yet many decisions involving hiring, healthcare and public services in Pakistan are still being shaped by overwhelmingly male technical teams.—APP

**Youth, civil
society join
hands in
plantation
drive**

ISLAMABAD: A monsoon tree plantation drive under the banner "Together for a Greener Tomorrow" was launched here on Sunday, aiming to expand the federal capital's green cover and foster long-term environmental sustainability. Under the initiative of Defence Housing Authority, around 50,000 indigenous and fruit-bearing saplings will be planted to bolster local environment system. The launch event witnessed enthusiastic participation from school and university students, youth volunteers, and civil society representatives, who actively planted saplings to mark the inauguration of the campaign. Highlighting the critical importance of afforestation, participants emphasized that large-scale tree plantation is essential to safeguard Pakistan against the severe adverse impacts of global climate change. They noted that Pakistan remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate-induced environmental disruptions, making immediate and sustained ecological action imperative. Trees serve as a crucial natural shield against environmental pollution and play a pivotal role in purifying the air. Increasing tree cover is vital to mitigating extreme weather patterns and securing a safer, healthier environment for future generations," the speakers at the event viewed. They stressed that tree plantation must not be treated as a one-day event, but rather as a continuous national obligation, highlighting that post-plantation care, nourishment, and protection of saplings are just as crucial as the initial planting process. Urging the younger generation to lead environmental preservation efforts, organizers and participants called for collective societal action, emphasizing that every individual must contribute toward building a clean, green, and climate-resilient Pakistan.—APP

Indonesian embassy hosts festivities ahead of 81st Independence Day

Alongside the Indonesian diplomats and their families, there were Indonesian students, pilots, journalists, staff members at several international organizations based in Pakistan, and housewives married to Pakistanis

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad organized a vibrant lead-up event featuring traditional games, popular sport competition, Archipelagic cuisine, and community gathering, as part of a series of events ahead of Indonesia's 81st Independence Anniversary. The program was started by community gym program at Garuda Lawn, inside the Embassy's premises. Hundreds of Indonesian nationals and their families gathered following the gymnastic movements demonstrated by Rama Fauzan, Indonesian student at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) along with his Pakistani counterpart, Maryam. The event was graced by Chandra W. Sukotjo, Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, accompanied by his spouse, Tamara Y. Sukotjo. The occasion was also attended by Indonesian nationals living in various cities in Pakistan from different backgrounds. Alongside the Indonesian diplomats and their families, there were Indonesian students, pilots, journalists, staff members at several international organizations based in Pakistan, and housewives married to Pakistanis. Among the participants was Herwening Wiji Kalpiko of Bio Farma who has been in Pakistan to closely work with the Pakistani counterparts for potential joint-vaccine production. In his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Chandra W. Sukotjo expressed his pleasure at seeing Indonesian and Pakistani friends gathered together.



ered together. "Your presence reflects the enduring friendship and strong people-to-people bonds between the two brotherly countries, as we celebrate together the Indonesia's Independence Day with the motto, 'Indonesia Berdaulat, Adil dan Makmur' (Indonesia Sovereign, Just, and Prosperous)," said Ambassador welcoming all Indonesian nationals at the Embassy as their home. Keeping warm and

welcoming spirit of the occasion, guests were presented with red and white shirts featuring a Batik pattern from Kalimantan, showcasing Indonesia's rich cultural heritage and national pride. Ambassador Chandra described the shirts as "a gift from the Indonesian taxpayers", allowing all to share in the warmth, pride, and togetherness associated with Indonesia's Independence celebration. One of the

highlights was the Indonesian food bazaar, featuring popular foods such as Nasi Padang (Padang-style rice), Sio-may Ikan (steamed fish dumplings), Bakso Kuah (meatball soup), Es Cendol (sweet iced dessert), Peyek/Rempeyek (crispy peanut crackers), Mendooan (fried tempe), and Kacang Telur (seasoned egg-coated peanuts), offering the participants a delightful taste of Indonesia's rich culinary



heritage. "It is wonderful to enjoy authentic Indonesian food. Although we live far from one another, this occasion brings us together as one family as Indonesians and gives us a beautiful sense of home and belonging," said Desi Mediawati, an Indonesian national married to a Pakistani from Islamabad. The festive atmosphere continued with traditional Indonesian games for children and adults, including the pop-

ular Balap Karung (Sack Race), Tarik Tambang (Tug of War) and Joget Tomat (Tomato Dance), creating laughter, excitement and friendly competition among participants of all ages. The occasion also carried special significance for Indonesian students living in Pakistan. "Although we are far from our homeland, this celebration makes us feel at home," expressed Muhsin Nasir, Head of the Indonesian Student Association in Pakistan. The

sport competition featured badminton, table tennis, volleyball, and futsal tournaments, promoting teamwork, healthy competition, and camaraderie among the Indonesian community. Embassy officials, students, and all diaspora. The Embassy of Indonesia expressed its sincere appreciation to the committee, volunteers, participants, and sponsors for their valuable contribution to the success of the event.

AIOU to hold first-ever job fair on August 20

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will hold its first-ever Job Fair on August 20 at the University's Science Block aimed at connecting students and graduates directly with leading public and private sector organizations and providing them with opportunities for employment, internships, training programs and professional development. The Job Fair will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and will be formally inaugurated at 9:00 a.m. by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. In addition to AIOU students and graduates, students from other universities across the country will also be eligible to participate. Prominent national and international companies, government and private organizations, financial institutions and leading organizations from the fields of information technology, telecommunications, banking, education, healthcare, industry and services will set up representative stalls at the event. Participants will have the opportunity to explore employment and internship opportunities, graduate trainee programs, career counseling and professional guidance while interacting directly with representatives of leading organizations. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that promoting professional skills among students and preparing them to meet the demands of the practical world is one of the University's top priorities. Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Professor Dr. Sher Muhammad said that the Job Fair is part of the Faculty's efforts to strengthen links between academia and industry, bring leading national and private-sector organizations onto a common platform and create new opportunities for employment, internships and professional training for students. The University administration has urged students, graduates and students from other universities to attend the Job Fair with their updated CVs and make the most of this unique opportunity to connect directly with leading organizations and explore opportunities for a brighter professional future.—DNA

SSP Qazi directs enhanced vigilance

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza on Sunday inspected security arrangements at various churches across the

federal capital, directing deployed police personnel to remain vigilant and ensure effective security for Christian worshippers. An ICT Police spokesperson told APP that the SSP visited different churches and reviewed the deployment of police personnel and security measures in place at Christian places of worship. Qazi interacted with officers performing security duties and directed them to maintain heightened vigilance and effectively implement all security protocols. The SSP Qazi said Islamabad Police was ensuring comprehensive security arrangements at Christian places of worship to provide a safe and peaceful environment to the Christian community during religious services. He directed officers to perform their duties with professionalism and remain alert to ensure the safety of worshippers and maintain peace and order. ICT Police remained committed to protecting all places of worship and ensuring the safety and security of citizens across the federal capital.—APP

Traditional knowledge recognition in coastal policy urged

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has called for greater recognition of traditional ecological knowledge held by coastal communities, saying it can strengthen climate adaptation, marine conservation and sustainable fisheries. In a statement marking the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, observed under the United Nations' 2026 theme, "Honouring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being," the minister highlighted the broader importance of traditional and Indigenous knowledge systems and their transmission across generations. He said traditional coastal communities had developed generations of knowledge about tides, fishing grounds, marine species, weather patterns, mangroves and coastal ecosystems. "Traditional knowledge is not merely a legacy of the past. It is a living resource that can contribute to climate resilience, sustainable fisheries and the protection of our marine ecosystems," Junaid Chaudhry said. He said communities along the coast from Karachi and the Indus Delta to Gwadar and Jiwan remained closely dependent on fisheries, mangroves, wetlands and other marine resources. The minister said fishing communities in Karachi's coastal settlements faced increasing pressure from urbanisation, pollution and habitat degradation, while communities in the Indus Delta were confronting freshwater shortages,

saline intrusion, erosion and changing fisheries. He said similar challenges were being experienced by traditional fishing communities along the Balochistan coast, including those in Sonmiani, Ormara, Pasni, Gwadar and Jiwan. Junaid Chaudhry said local fishers possessed detailed knowledge of tidal cycles, currents, winds, fishing seasons and changes in marine species. Integrating such knowledge with scientific research, he added, could improve fisheries management, ecosystem restoration and disaster preparedness. "Modern science and traditional ecological knowledge should complement each other. Communities that have lived with the sea for generations understand changes in their environment in ways that can strengthen formal climate and marine policies," he said. The minister said climate change was already disrupting traditional livelihood patterns through changes in sea temperatures, fish distribution, rainfall, salinity, coastal erosion and extreme weather. He called for community-based adaptation measures, stronger early-warning systems, climate-resilient coastal infrastructure and sustainable fisheries management. Junaid Chaudhry also stressed the need to involve coastal communities in decisions concerning their natural resources, saying conservation policies would be more effective when local people were treated as partners.—APP

FGEHA cancels 19 plots in F-14, F-15 so far

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has so far cancelled allotments of 19 plots in sectors F-14 and F-15 after their owners failed to clear outstanding installments and dues despite being provided multiple opportunities since 2016. Talking to APP, FGEHA spokesperson said the action was part of the Authority's ongoing measures to accelerate development work in the two sectors, address the concerns of allottees and ensure timely completion of the residential project. He said in the first phase, FGEHA cancelled allotments of six plots following recommendations of a special committee constituted on the directions of the Authority's Executive Board. The committee reviewed relevant records, rules, regulations and legal requirements before recommending cancellation of the plots whose owners had failed to meet their financial obligations since 2016. In a subsequent action, the Authority cancelled allotments of 13 more plots after further scrutiny of records by the special committee and its recommendations against the defaulters. The spokesperson said the action was taken in accordance with applicable laws and aimed at removing financial bottlenecks hindering development activities while safeguarding the rights and interests of allottees who had fulfilled their financial obligations. He said the Authority had also prepared a list of allottees in F-14 and F-15 with outstanding dues, adding that cancellation proceedings against other persistent defaulters would be initiated in accordance with the law. He warned allottees who had failed to clear their long-standing installments despite repeated opportunities that their allotments could also be cancelled if they did not fulfill their financial obligations. Meanwhile, the spokesperson said regular review meetings, field visits and administrative interventions were being undertaken to accelerate development activities and ensure provision of basic infrastructure and services in sectors F-14 and F-15. —DNA

Awais terms defence pact a pride

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Sunday termed the joint defence agreement between Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia a matter of honour and pride for the Pakistani people, describing the co-operation among the three important countries as a significant development for regional peace and security. In a statement, the minister said Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia possessed significant financial resources, military strength and capabilities to protect themselves, adding that their unity was aimed at strengthening deterrence and promoting peace in the region. He said the three countries would work together to protect each other and stand united against any unlawful aggression or hostile action, while ensuring the safety and security of their peoples. The minister said the combined strength of the three countries would enable them to collectively respond to any aggression and create a strong deterrent against hostile actions against any of them, either within or beyond the region.—APP

Makkha accord to promote regional peace: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal said that the defence agreement among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye was not directed against any country but would serve as a guarantee for peace and security in the region. He said recent developments had demonstrated that the uncertainty and deep shadows of conflicts created by geopolitics in the region had affected not only Pakistan but the entire region. The minister stressed that countries of the region would have to work together and enhance mutual cooperation to ensure lasting peace and security. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye enjoyed strong and enduring historical, religious and cultural ties. He expressed the hope that the trilateral defence agreement would further strengthen efforts for peace and stability in the region. Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Sunday termed the joint defence agreement between Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia a matter of honour and pride for the Pakistani people, describing the cooperation among the three important countries as a significant development for regional peace and security. In a statement, the minister said Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia possessed significant financial resources, military strength and capabilities to protect themselves, adding that their unity was aimed at strengthening deterrence and promoting peace in the region. He said the three countries would work together to protect each other and stand united against any unlawful aggression or hostile action, while ensuring the safety and security of their peoples. The minister said the combined strength of the three countries would enable them to collectively respond to any aggression and create a strong deterrent against hostile actions against any of them, either within or beyond the region. He said the defence cooperation also reflected the shared commitment to the protection of the Holy Mosques as well as the security of the peoples of Türkiye and Pakistan, demonstrating the mutual trust and fraternal bonds among the three countries. The federal minister congratulated the peoples, leaderships and governments of Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia on the important agreement and prayed that Allah Almighty would keep the unity and alliance among the three brotherly countries strong and enduring.—DNA

The alliance against Iran on three fronts

ABDULRAHMAN AL-RASHED

It has become clear that the war waged by Iran is directed against Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies, not against the US or Israel. Iran has attacked the Kingdom with more than 1,000 drones since last February, in addition to ballistic missiles that have targeted civilian and military facilities. The Iranians have widened the war through the territories of two countries, Iraq and Yemen, in a bid to surround Saudi Arabia. Riyadh, in contrast, surprised Tehran by establishing a bloc uniting three countries bordering Iran. Today, the alliance tips the balance of power against Iran. Turkiye and Pakistan have become rival states rather than onlookers: a force with strategic depth, greater military capabilities, 400 million people – four times that of Iran – and more than 1,400 km of land borders overlooking Iran. Internationally, Turkiye is a member of the western NATO alliance, while Pakistan is a nuclear power militarily close to China. This Saudi move will affect conflict management and negotiations, and gradually lead to Iran losing most of the trump cards it has enjoyed in its war with the US. Last month, Iran escalated its war on northern and southern Saudi Arabia by opening two fronts from inside Iraq and Yemen. This dangerous development coincided with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman signing the Makkah Agreement, and the announcement of the tripartite military alliance with Turkiye and Pakistan, which had been in the making since last year. This is the second alliance built and announced by Saudi Arabia within a week, following the establishment of an international naval military bloc led by Riyadh. The importance of the alliance with Turkiye and Pakistan rests on three fronts: deterring Iran, the oil market, and Arab and Islamic public opinion. The first front is Iran itself. Tehran's escalating military activity reveals its intentions to expand the scope of the conflict and perhaps create a new geographical reality in the Gulf imposed by force. The Riyadh-Ankara-Islamabad alliance aims to create a balance that deters Iran from thinking about advancing toward the Gulf region, as well as targeting Jordan, Syria, and Yemen. Expanding the scope of the war will cost Iran's leadership dearly. The Riyadh-Ankara-Islamabad alliance aims to create a balance that deters Iran from thinking about advancing toward the Gulf region.

IslamabadPOST

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 355

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

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



Tehran's strategy in its confrontation with the US was based on holding oil hostage. It made blocking the Strait of Hormuz, and targeting producing countries, its winning card in pressuring a superpower it cannot face on equal military terms. The new Saudi axis deprives Iran of this tactic. The tripartite alliance enjoys significant international support, given that most governments preferred to remain neutral in the conflict between the US, Israel, and Iran. Many countries, including those that consider confronting Iran justified, found that the war was launched without sufficient legal and diplomatic preparation. International backing for the Saudi-Turkish-Pakistani tripartite axis can be sensed from the broad support for the multinational naval alliance announced by Saudi Arabia last week, with 43 governments taking part in its meeting at the Ministry of Defense in Riyadh. This naval initiative is defensive, designed to counter Iranian aggression, and was prepared politically and legally. The front built to confront Iran is not for Saudi Arabia alone but also includes the Gulf region and the eastern Arab world. The objective is to stop Iran, which lost most of its centers of influence following the destruction of Hezbollah and the downfall of its ally, the Assad regime, and subsequently decided to destabilize the region and create a new geopolitical reality enabling it to threaten Arab states. The features of Iran's plan have become clear since the resumption of the war late last February; its attacks have focused on the Kingdom, the rest of the Gulf states, and Jordan rather than its two adversaries in the conflict, the US and Israel. There is also the oil front defended by the alliance, a battle watched by the entire world. Iran is closing the Strait of Hormuz and Bab Al-Mandab, targeting Gulf production and export facilities, and seeking to bring the world to its knees on Iranian terms. Oil markets reacted swiftly to the announcement of the new tripartite alliance, welcoming the news with a drop in oil prices on the global market. The third front is the struggle over public opinion – over the hearts and minds of around 300 million Arabs and more than a billion Muslims worldwide. They were watching a war marketed to them as US-Israeli aggression against a peaceful Muslim state. Because the war was not resolved early on, Iran focused on justifying its aggression and portraying its attacks on its neighbors as though they were in the US-Israeli camp. In facing the alliance, it will be difficult for the Iranian propaganda machine and its platforms to convince 1.5 billion people of its false narrative that Pakistan, Turkiye, and Saudi Arabia are nations opposing Arabs and Muslims. Tehran's leadership hiding underground will lose the propaganda war. We will see Tehran's aggressive behavior change during the coming days. The views expressed in the article are writer's own

Forging a solid foundation of unity under the Rule of Law embracing a brighter future through cooperation

Jiang Zaidong



Enacting the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law is a practical necessity for advancing Chinese modernization. In advancing Chinese modernization and achieving common prosperity, no ethnic group should be left behind. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), through policy measures such as industrial support...

ON July 1st, the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China officially came into effect. As the first foundational and comprehensive law concerning China's ethnic affairs, its enactment and implementation demonstrate China's firm resolve to ensure equality for all ethnic groups, safeguard the fundamental interests of all ethnic groups, and promote their common prosperity and development. It has laid a solid rule-of-law foundation for China's ethnic work, human rights protection, and enduring stability in border areas in the new era. Enacting the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law is an inevitable requirement for forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. China is a unified multi-ethnic country. Through long interactions, exchanges, and integration, people of all ethnic groups have jointly founded this unified multiethnic state, written a glorious chapter of Chinese history, created a splendid Chinese culture, and nurtured a great national spirit. Together, they have forged a community with a shared future characterized by shared blood ties, belief, culture, economic interdependence, and emotional affinity. General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that "a keen sense of national identity is the foundation of ethnic unity." In line with the historical trajectory of the Chinese nation from the past to the future, from tradition to modernity, and from diversity to unity, this law improves the institutional mechanisms for forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation through the rule of law. It guides people of all ethnic groups to firmly establish the philosophy of a community with a shared future, in which all ethnic groups share weal and woe, honor and disgrace, life and death, and a common destiny, and to stick together like seeds of a pomegranate. Enacting the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law is a practical necessity for advancing Chinese modernization. In advancing Chinese modernization and achieving common prosperity, no ethnic group should be left behind. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), through policy measures such as industrial support, capital investment, poverty alleviation relocation, and educational assistance, all 31.21 million impoverished people in ethnic regions have shaken off poverty, all 420 poverty-stricken counties in ethnic autonomous areas have been removed from the poverty list, and all 28 ethnic

groups with smaller populations have been lifted out of poverty. The combined GDP of the five autonomous regions, including the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, grew from 3.25 trillion yuan in 2012 to 8.66 trillion yuan in 2025. Ethnic regions have sustained rapid economic growth, the living standards of people of all ethnic groups have improved significantly, and economic and social development has reached a new level. The Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law further institutionalizes these successful experiences in the form of law. With a dedicated chapter on driving shared prosperity and common development, it implements the new development philosophy, supports ethnic regions in comprehensively deepening reform and opening up, fully integrating into national development strategies, and enhancing their capacity for self-development. It accelerates high-quality development in ethnic regions, promotes common prosperity for all ethnic groups, and propels them together toward socialist modernization. Enacting the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law is a crucial step in responding to profound changes unseen in a century. Currently, the world is entering a new period of turbulence and transformation, with various risks overlapping. Hostile forces both at home and abroad have never ceased their attempts to use ethnic issues to divide, infiltrate, and sabotage China. Well managing ethnic affairs is vital to China's unity and border consolidation, to ethnic unity and social stability, and to China's enduring stability and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The law balances development and security, leveraging the rule of law to consolidate foundations, stabilize expectations, and benefit long-term development. It uses the weapon of law to effectively prevent and defuse major risks and hidden dangers in the ethnic sphere, providing a solid guarantee for promoting high-quality development of China's ethnic unity and progress. For any multiethnic country, ethnic unity and social harmony are important prerequisites for safeguarding national security, maintaining social stability, and achieving long-term development. Facing the accelerating evolution of profound changes unseen in a century, China adheres to promoting ethnic unity and maintaining social stability through stable ethnic policies and comprehensive rule-of-law guarantees. This not only builds a solid foundation for achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation but also provides a Chi-

nese solution for other multiethnic countries to draw upon in responding to risks and challenges, safeguarding ethnic unity, and enhancing governance capacity. We are delighted to see that over the 75 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties, China and Pakistan have always stood firmly together regardless of the shifting international landscape. The China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership has become a model of friendly cooperation between nations. In particular, as countries where multiple ethnicities and cultures blend and coexist, China and Pakistan have always respected each other's history, culture, and national conditions, and have mutually understood and supported each other on major issues such as safeguarding national unity and promoting ethnic solidarity. Pakistan has consistently adhered to the one-China principle and firmly supported China on issues concerning its core interests, including those related to Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Xizang. We highly appreciate this. Currently, under the leadership of the Pakistani government, the entire Pakistani people are united and forging ahead with determination. The country maintains political stability, sees steady economic progress, and enjoys significantly enhanced international influence. As an ironclad friend, China is genuinely delighted by this and will continue to firmly support Pakistan in safeguarding its national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, support Pakistan in pursuing a development path suited to its national conditions, and support Pakistan in playing a greater role in international and regional affairs. Standing at a new historical starting point, China is ready to work with Pakistan to leverage our advantages of close geographical proximity, solid mutual trust, and profound friendship. We will jointly build the CPEC 2.0 with high quality, expand and deepen exchanges and all-round cooperation in various fields, cope with the uncertainty of the external environment with the certainty of China-Pakistan relations, and accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era. This will provide new and greater momentum for both countries to achieve their respective modernization. May China and Pakistan enjoy prosperity and may the friendship between our two countries endure for generations to come! – Mr. Jiang Zaidong is the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan

Does Pakistan Need More Provinces—or a Democratic Reset?

Qamar Bashir



This arrangement weakened the civilian system from within. Bureaucrats became reluctant to take responsibility. Ministers lost authority. Professional expertise was subordinated to institutional preference. The civilian machinery, which should have been the engine of national growth, administration and public service, became cautious, dependent and increasingly ineffective. Although Musharraf eventually left power, the culture of military dominance did not disappear

THE latest restrictions imposed on international journalists in Pakistan have once again exposed a deeper crisis of governance. Under the new guidelines, foreign correspondents and even Pakistani journalists working for international media may require prior government permission before travelling outside a limited number of major cities for reporting assignments. In practical terms, breaking news may now have to wait for administrative approval. The government describes these measures as an administrative mechanism rather than an attempt to suppress journalism. Critics, however, see them as an effort to control the flow of information, especially from sensitive regions where public unrest, political agitation, security operations or protests may be taking place. International media organizations are often relied upon to provide independent coverage when local journalists face pressure, censorship, intimidation or professional insecurity. Restricting their movement therefore raises serious questions about transparency, accountability and the public's right to know. This latest development cannot be viewed in isolation. It is part of a much broader pattern in which civilian institutions have steadily lost their independence and decision-making authority. Over the decades, Pakistan has gradually evolved into a system where the military institution exerts influence far beyond its constitutional responsibility for national defence. During the tenure of General Pervez Musharraf, the idea of an "umbrella leadership" became deeply embedded in the structure of governance. Under this philosophy, the military was not merely responsible for security. It was expected to guide, supervise or influence almost every important sector, including administration, taxation, infrastructure, economic planning, development, law and order, communications and public policy. Military officers were placed in civilian departments and assigned responsibilities for which they had not necessarily received professional training. A brigadier or general could be asked to supervise matters involving taxation, public finance, infrastructure, local government or economic development. Such officers naturally depended upon civilian experts for technical advice, yet the civilian officials understood that the final decision rested elsewhere. As a result, many officers stopped offering independent professional opinions and instead provided advice that they believed would satisfy the expectations of the military leadership. This arrangement weakened the civilian system from within. Bureaucrats became reluctant to take responsibility. Ministers lost authority. Professional expertise was subordinated to institutional preference. The civilian machinery, which should have been the engine of national growth, adminis-

tration and public service, became cautious, dependent and increasingly ineffective. Although Musharraf eventually left power, the culture of military dominance did not disappear. It survived informally and continued to shape national life. The military remained influential in areas including major development projects, public administration, security policy, political management, strategic industries and national economic initiatives. More seriously, the military establishment has repeatedly been accused of influencing the composition of parliament, the rise and fall of political governments, the selection of prime ministers, the formation of political alliances and the careers of civilian officers. Whether every allegation is fully accurate or not, the widespread public perception of interference is itself damaging. A political system cannot command confidence when citizens believe that the final authority rests outside parliament. Civilian governments created under such circumstances remain weak because their survival depends less upon public legitimacy and more upon institutional approval. Ministers, advisers, bureaucrats and political leaders understand that their continuation in office may be linked to support from powerful quarters. This weakens their willingness to resist pressure, challenge policy or defend civilian authority. Supporters argue that population growth has made the current provincial structure too large and that smaller provinces would bring government closer to the people. The argument may appear attractive at first glance, but it ignores the real causes of failure. Pakistan already has divisions, districts, tehsils, local administrations, commissioners, deputy commissioners and numerous departments intended to deliver services. New districts have repeatedly been created. Yet governance has not improved because the central problem is not simply the size of the provinces. It is the collapse of accountability, political legitimacy, institutional independence and democratic authority. Creating additional provinces would also impose enormous financial costs. Each new province would require a governor, chief minister, cabinet, provincial assembly, secretariat, departments, residences, security arrangements, vehicles, staff and administrative infrastructure. Billions would be spent on buildings and bureaucracies rather than schools, hospitals, clean water, employment, agriculture and local development. More provinces may also create more political offices to distribute, more budgets to control and more opportunities for institutional manipulation. Instead of empowering the people, such a structure could strengthen centralized control by fragmenting political authority and making regional governments more dependent upon the establishment.

The proposal therefore risks becoming another narcissistic illusion: a belief that by redrawing the map, the system will automatically improve. But a dysfunctional political order cannot be repaired through geography alone. If the same culture of interference, manipulation, censorship and administrative domination continues, ten provinces will fail just as four provinces have failed. Pakistan does not primarily need new provincial boundaries. It needs a new democratic understanding. The solution is to allow the Constitution, parliament, judiciary, media, civil service and elected governments to function independently. The people must be allowed to choose the representatives they genuinely trust, support and love—leaders whom they believe can rescue the country from its present political, economic and administrative quagmire. Elections must be held fairly, transparently and without interference. Political parties must be allowed to compete on equal terms. Popular leaders must not be removed through manipulation, coercion or manufactured political engineering. Governments must rise and fall through the ballot box, not through decisions made behind closed doors. The army must return fully to its constitutional responsibility of defending the country. It should remain respected, professional and powerful within its legitimate domain, but it should not determine who governs, who enters parliament, who becomes prime minister, which political party survives or which civilian officer receives promotion. Pakistan's people are not incapable of choosing their leaders. They have repeatedly demonstrated political awareness, courage and commitment. What they require is not guardianship but freedom. They must be trusted to make their own decisions and, when necessary, correct those decisions through future elections. Breaking the provinces will not heal Pakistan. Breaking the cycle of interference will. The country can move toward progress and prosperity only when authority flows from the people, when institutions remain within constitutional limits and when elected representatives are allowed to govern without fear or external control. Pakistan's map does not need to be repeatedly redrawn. Its democratic contract needs to be restored. The real reset is not administrative fragmentation. The real reset is free elections, civilian supremacy, constitutional governance, press freedom and the unconditional right of the people to choose their own future. Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

Briefs

Pakistan dismisses Afghan...

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ceasefire in October 2025, following clashes triggered by unprovoked gunfire by the Afghan Taliban regime at multiple border points. Despite many rounds of talks, both countries have so far failed to reach an agreement due to the Afghan Taliban regime's reluctance to take action against terrorist outfits operating from its soil.

Pak says Makkah defence...

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He added that the pact remains open to any country in the region prepared to uphold its fundamental principles and resolve differences through mutual respect, cooperation and peaceful means. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by their ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence, pose after signing a joint defence agreement in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, August 7, 2026.

Security forces kill 15 terrorists...

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Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir also present. Meanwhile, A constable was martyred and another sustained bullet wounds while on duty in an attack in the Saeedkhel area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district on Sunday, police said. District police officer's spokesperson Quadratullah Khan told Dawn that the cops were attacked near the Saeedkhel graveyard, in the limits of the City Police Station. "The terrorists opened fire on the rider squad personnel while they were patrolling the area," he said, adding that Constable Sajidullah lost his life in the attack while Constable Muhammad Waqas was seriously wounded.

Tehran says won't reopen...

FROM PAGE 01
Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said discussions with Oman over transit and management of the strait were "approaching the final stages", but added the reopening of Hormuz "is subject to other conditions and compensation for the violation" of the June agreement. Security chief Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr on Saturday laid out a list of demands for reopening the strait, including an end to the "war and aggression against Iran and its allies in Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq". He also demanded the lifting of a parallel US naval blockade of Iran, the end of sanctions, the release of frozen assets and compensation for wartime damage, according to remarks reported by Tasnim news agency.

US to continue applying...

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troops across the Middle East. A temporary memorandum of understanding had paused hostilities, but Iran quickly resumed ship attacks, prompting Vance to warn that America would "punch back harder than ever." At the same time, the administration has directed the U.S. defense industry to escalate production and delivery of weapons to sustain operations. Analysts caution that inventories of specialized interceptors and long-range missiles have been cut by more than half in just over a month of fighting, with replenishment expected to take between one and four years. The war has already cost \$37.5 billion, and the White House is seeking nearly \$90 billion in supplemental funding to cover the mounting expenses.

PHF and PSB conduct 4-Day umpiring Workshop

He appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Hockey Federation, Pakistan Sports Board, and Mr. Faiz Muhammad (Fazi) for their commitment to the education and professional development of Pakistan's hockey officials

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), in collaboration with the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), successfully organized a comprehensive four-day Hockey Umpiring Workshop as part of its ongoing mission to develop world-class Pakistani umpires and technical officials capable of representing the country at the highest international level. The workshop was conducted by internationally renowned FIH Umpire Manager & Educator, Mr. Faiz Muhammad (Fazi), who delivered extensive classroom and practical sessions on the latest FIH Rules, match management, positioning, communication, teamwork, and decision-making under pressure. Held under the supervision of the Pakistan Hockey Federation and Pakistan Sports Board, the course provided participants with outstanding learning opportunities, modern rule interpretations, and practical on-field guidance to improve the overall standard of hockey officiating in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ali Rizwan, star player of Rising Stars Hockey Club, proudly receives his Level 1 Umpiring Certificate from renowned umpires Faiz Muhammad and Haroon Rashid after successfully completing the umpiring course. – DNA

The initiative reflects the Pakistan Hockey Federation's vision of strengthening the country's officiating structure by producing highly qualified umpires and technical officials who can proudly serve at continental and international competitions. The workshop concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony, where Deputy Director General, Pakistan Sports Board, Mr. Mumtaz, presented certificates to all successful participants. He appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Hockey Federation, Pakistan Sports Board, and Mr. Faiz Muhammad (Fazi) for their commitment to the education and professional development of Pakistan's hockey officials. Participants described the workshop as an exceptional learning experience that significantly enhanced their knowledge, confidence, and practical skills. The successful completion of the course marks another important milestone in the continued efforts of the Pakistan Hockey Federation to revive hockey and raise the standard of umpiring and technical officiating across Pakistan and on the international stage.

Pakistan's M. Zubair becomes Tekken 8 champion at Esports World Cup in Paris

PAKISTAN'S Muhammad Zubair emerged victorious in the Tekken 8 championship at the Esports World Cup (EWC) in Paris on Saturday, becoming the new World Champion of the popular fighting game. Zubair achieved a clean victory over South Korea's LowHigh in the grand final of the tournament held from Aug 5-8, after having just scraped through during the early stages. "He came out of nowhere and took the crown!" EWC posted on social media following the player's triumph. In Friday's second group stage, Zubair decisively defeated another Pakistani eSports icon and Tekken star – Lahore-born Arslan "Ash" Siddique – before once again beating the eight-time Evolution Championship Series (Evo) winner in a thrilling 5-4 semifinal on Saturday.

Arslan is one of Pakistan's most prominent esports figures and one of the leading names in the global fighting game community. Advancing into the grand final, Zubair faced off against LowHigh in a decisively less close game, sweeping his opponent with a 5-0 victory. The newly-crowned World Champion was awarded a cash prize of \$250,000. Ash, meanwhile, settled for fourth place after losing the decider to Australia's Yagami. In June, he had won the 2026 Evo series in Las Vegas, considered the world's largest fighting game tournament, with his fourth consecutive title. Tekken is a world-renowned video game with a massive following. Other ongoing and completed tournaments at the EWC include Call of Duty: Black Ops 7, Counter Strike 2, Dota 2, League of Legends, Street Fighter, and Valorant. – DNA

Pak wins 3 medals at Int'l Nuclear Science Olympiad

PAKISTAN has won a gold and two silver medals at the third International Nuclear Science Olympiad (INSO-2026), held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Backed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the competition was held from August 2 to 8, and brought together around 120 students and experts from 19 countries, including China, Japan, Russia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia. Muhammad Ali from Government College University (GCU), Lahore, won a gold medal. – APP

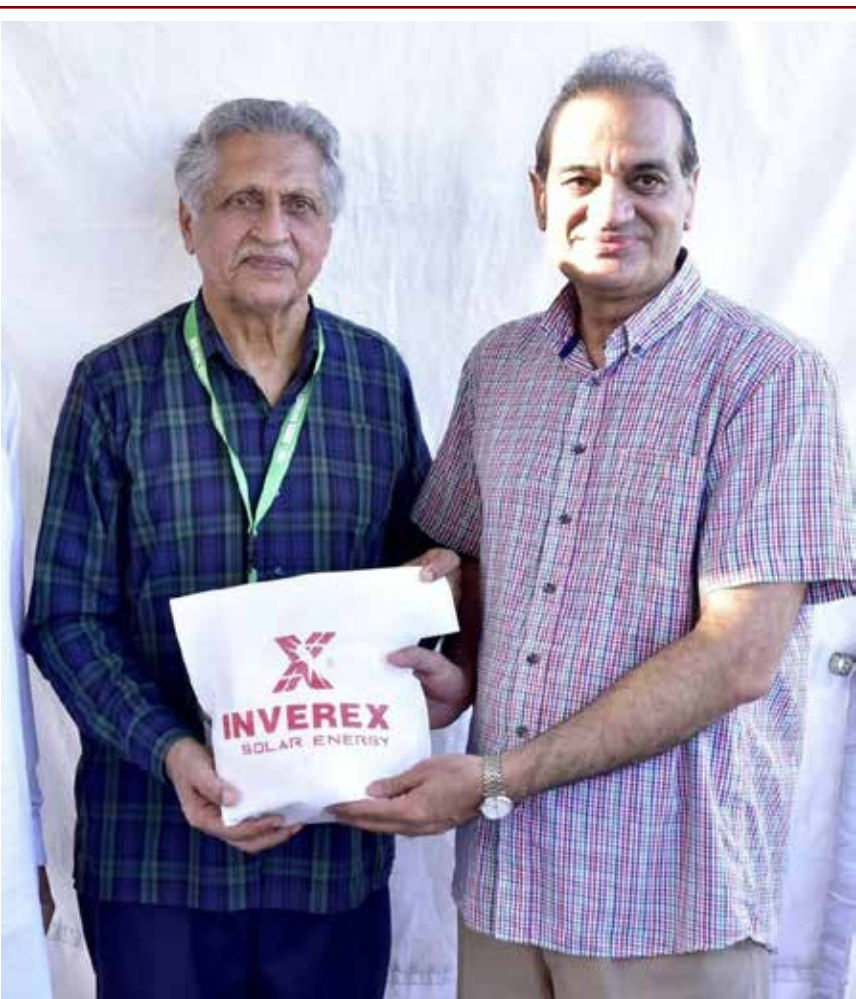
Messi absent after father's death

MIAMI: Lionel Messi was absent following the death of his father as Inter Miami lost 2-1 to reyn on Saturday in a Leagues Cup match. Teams observed a minute of silence before the match for Jorge Messi, who died at age 68 in Argentina, where the Inter Miami captain Lionel Messi arrived on Saturday night. "Our hearts are with our captain, Leo, and the entire Messi family," Inter Miami said in a statement. Argentine midfielder Rodrigo De Paul scored in the 32nd minute to give Miami a 1-0 half-time lead in the group match against the Mexican side. De Paul took off his number seven shirt to show a number 10 underneath, in a gesture of support to Messi. Belgian striker Hugo Cuypers leveled in the 47th minute before Uruguay-an striker Diego Rossi scored a 90th-minute winner. – APP

Morocco, Algeria reach WAFCON semis, book World Cup spots

JOHANNESBURG: A triumphant night for north Africa ended Saturday with hosts Morocco and Algeria reaching the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) semifinals and securing places at next year's Women's World Cup in Brazil. They took contrasting paths to quarter-final success, with Morocco building a two-goal lead before defending resolutely against South Africa for a 2-1 victory in Rabat, while Algeria came from behind against Ivory Coast in Casablanca to win by the same scoreline. The four WAFCON semifinalists qualify automatically for the World Cup, which will be held from June 24 to July 25, 2027. For Algeria, the victory secured a historic first appearance at the women's World Cup. Morocco will return to the global finals after reaching the round of 16 in 2023. Morocco withstand South Africa fightback Morocco, runners-up to South Africa four years ago, took the lead after 31 minutes when Sakina Ouzraoui volleyed her second goal of the tournament over goalkeeper Kaylin Swart. Hanane Ait El Hajj doubled the advantage six minutes into the second half after Morocco were awarded a penalty for Naxolo Cesane's challenge on Ghizlane Chebbak. South Africa, who won the WAFCON title in 2022, pulled one back through

Thembi Kgatlana in the 67th minute after a lengthy video review overturned an initial offside decision. Kgatla had earlier gone close in the first half and has now scored nine WAFCON goals since making her tournament debut in 2018. Morocco held on for victory and will face the winner of Sunday's quarter-final between defending champions Nigeria and Cameroon in Wednesday's semifinal. Algeria turn tide after red card In Casablanca, Ivory Coast took the lead after 29 minutes through Ines Konan but lost momentum when 18-year-old N'Sira Ouedraogo was sent off in the 41st minute for kicking Algeria goalkeeper Chloe N'Gazi in the face. Algeria, who had barely threatened during the opening 45 minutes, seized control after the break. Substitute Ines Khiri equalized before Amira Ould Brahm completed the comeback six minutes later to put Algeria into the semifinals. Ivory Coast missed a chance to restore their lead when Rebecca Elloh struck the post from a second-half penalty with the score level at 1-1. The result marked Algeria's first qualification for the Women's World Cup. They will meet the winner of Ghana and Malawi in Wednesday's semifinal. World Cup hopes remain alive for quarter-final losers. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Editor Daily Islamabad POST Ansar Mahmood Bhatti receives souvenir from hockey legend Samiullah on the sidelines of Pakistan-Korea hockey series. – DNA

World number one Sabalenka ousted in Toronto by Alexandrova

Sabalenka, who will seek her third consecutive US Open title next month, fell to 5-5 in her career WTA rivalry with Alexandrova, who will face either American eighth seed Amanda Anisimova or Ukraine's ninth-seeded Elina Svitolina in the quarter-finals

DNA

TORONTO, Canada: World number one Aryna Sabalenka was eliminated by Russian 16th seed Ekaterina Alexandrova on Saturday in a fourth-round match at the WTA Toronto Masters tournament. Alexandrova defeated the four-time Grand Slam winner from Belarus 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 6-4 in 2hr 29min to book a berth in the quarter-finals. Sabalenka, who will seek her third consecutive US Open title next month, fell to 5-5 in her career WTA rivalry with Alexandrova, who will face either American eighth seed Amanda Anisimova or Ukraine's ninth-seeded Elina Svitolina in the quarter-finals. Sabalenka broke for a 2-0 lead in the opening set, dropped the next four games, then held and broke back to 4-4 on a forehand drop volley winner. Double faults by Sabalenka in the 11th game and Alexandrova in the 12th surrendered breaks leading to a tie-break. Aryna Sabalenka reacts during a match against Ekaterina Alexandrova during the round of 16 National Bank Open Tennis tournament in Toronto, on Saturday, Aug.



8, 2026. (Keito Newman/The Canadian Press via AP) The Russian took five of the last six points to seal the first set when Sabalenka swatted a crosscourt forehand wide. In the second set, Alexandrova hit a forehand long to surrender a break and give Sabalenka a 4-3 lead. The top seed then held serve twice to force a decider. Sabalenka was broken when she netted a forehand to give Alexandrova a 3-1 edge, but the Russian double-faulted away a break in the seventh game. In the 10th game, Sabalenka made three unforced errors to give Alexandrova break and match points. Sabalenka saved the first on a service winner and the second on an ace. But after sending a backhand beyond the baseline, the Belarusian made her sixth and final double fault to lose the match. "I didn't have any expectations before the match," Alexandrova said. "I knew it was going to be super difficult when I walked on the court. I was trying to risk as much as possible because it felt like it was the only way to create some chances. It caused many more mistakes but at the same time I created many more opportunities."

Turkiye to soon begin drilling operations in Pak

FROM PAGE 01
preparing a comprehensive roadmap for the country's energy sector, which would be presented to the national leadership in the coming months. Malik maintained that the flow of circular debt had been halted and efforts were underway to clear outstanding liabilities inherited from previous administrations. He also announced that LPG tenders would open on Monday, saying the government had made arrangements to issue new gas connections to facilitate consumers. The minister said that Pakistan's next major destination after achieving strategic and diplomatic successes was sustainable economic progress. Describing the Makkah defence agreement as a matter of national pride, he said that Pakistan had emerged as a net security provider in the region.

JI protests against fuel price hike on Agu 16

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the world's oil shipments passes. He alleged that the government had generated substantial revenue through the petroleum development levy and claimed the mechanism was being used to hide corruption. Announcing the next phase of the party's protest campaign, he said sit-ins would be held simultaneously across all four provinces on August 16. The demonstrations would be staged outside the Chief Minister House in Punjab and Governor Houses in Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he detailed. He defended the planned protests, saying public demonstrations were traditionally held on roads, and urged citizens to participate while calling on other political parties to support the movement.

Indian pilot undergoes drug test...

FROM PAGE 01
capital, whose conditions were described as "stable", after which both pilots were given a standard "psychoactive substance screening test", the statement read. "The screening test in respect of the Pilot-in-Command (PIC) indicated a result requiring confirmatory testing," it said. "Samples have accordingly been sent to the designated laboratory for confirmatory analysis, and the final report is awaited." The ministry said the flight has been classified as a "Serious Incident", and that India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) has launched an investigation. Both pilots have been removed from the flying roster pending the outcome of the investigation.

Pak hostage seeks help for release

FROM PAGE 01
the ransom, said to be around \$3 million, for the recovery of the hostages, despite concerns about their declining health. In two video messages broadcast on Dawn-NewsTV and dated August 7, the Pakistani hostages and foreigners can be seen in a state of extreme distress, with most looking sick and weak. They requested that the Pakistani government talk to the Somali pirates and take steps to release them. Yasir Khan, a hostage aboard the ship, said that many of the crew members had fallen ill and had no access to medicine. He appealed to the government, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Maritime Affairs Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry to secure their release "before it is too late" and before they suffered more. He also appealed to Jamaati-Islami (JI) chief Hafiz Naemur Rehman to "please do something for us", noting he had already made many efforts in this regard. Hussain Yousuf, another Pakistani hostage, said, "More than a hundred days have passed and still nothing is known about what is happening to us, or what will happen to us."

Briefs

**Syria says
reached deal
with Moscow on
fate of Russian
bases**

DAMASCUS: Syria on Sunday said it reached a memorandum of understanding with Moscow over the fate of Russia's two bases in the country, agreeing to convert the military facilities into joint training and rehabilitation centers within three months. Quoting the foreign ministry, Syria's official SANA agency said the military bases and facilities at Hmeimim Airport and Tartus port would be turned into "joint training and rehabilitation centers, within new arrangements that preserve mutual interests." Rs10b sanctioned to support export sectors Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has announced that the Ministry of Commerce has sanctioned Rs.10 billion (Rs10,000 million) for the textile and apparel industry and other export sectors under the Duty Drawback and Technology Upgradation Schemes, aimed at improving industrial liquidity and supporting export growth. —APP

**Wildfire in
Indonesian
national park
grows**

JAKARTA: Indonesia sent airplanes and hundreds of firefighters on Sunday to fight a blaze in a popular national park, one of a growing number of wildfires the country is battling during an unusually dry season. The largest fire reported this week has burned about 176 hectares (435 acres) of Mount Bromo, located within the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park in East Java province, one of Indonesia's best-known tourist destinations. Authorities closed the park to visitors Saturday and Rudijanta Tjahja Nugraha, the park chief, said the shutdown would remain in effect until further notice. Hundreds of firefighters, disaster management personnel, police, soldiers, park rangers and volunteers have been mobilized to contain the blaze. Helicopters and drones have also been deployed to help battle the fire, while crews have built firebreaks to try to prevent further spread. Nugraha said difficult terrain has complicated efforts, with some hotspots located on steep volcanic slopes that are difficult to reach by land. The Bromo fire comes as several other wildfires have been reported across Indonesia during an unusually dry season. A forest and land fire broke out in Central Java's Banyumas Regency on Friday, authorities said. That fire was triggered by land-clearing activities and spread rapidly to surrounding areas, fueled by dry conditions. In West Java, a fire broke out this week in the Suryakencana Meadow area of Mount Gede Pangrango National Park, a popular hiking destination. The incident prompted authorities to temporarily close hiking trails to Mount Gede and Mount Pangrango. Indonesia's Meteorological, Climatological and Geophysical Agency said strong winds and extremely dry vegetation are accelerating the spread of fires. The El Niño weather pattern, combined with seasonal dry winds from Australia, has increased the risk of fires across parts of the country. —APP

Sri Lanka, Pak explore new avenues to boost eco coop

The Silk Route Festival is envisioned as a global platform for enhancing cultural, economic, and tourism connectivity among participating countries and communities. The High Commissioner appreciated the initiative and commended the organizers for their efforts to promote tourism and international cooperation through the Festival

ISLAMABAD: Sri Lankan, High Commissioner to Pakistan, Fred Seneviratne, held a meeting with a delegation of the organizers of the Silk Route Festival (SRF), led by Vice Admiral Ahmed Saeed HI (M), together with Sadaf Khalid Khan, Director and Global Coordinator of Silk Route Enterprises, to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in tourism, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges. The High Commissioner warmly welcomed Vice Admiral Ahmed Saeed and the members of his delegation. During the meeting, the delegation briefed the High Commissioner on the forthcoming Silk Route Festival and its objectives in promoting tourism, cultural exchange, trade, investment, and economic cooperation, said a release issued here on Sunday. Sadaf Khalid Khan briefed the High Commissioner on the activities of Silk Route Enterprises, which has more than 20 years of experience in tourism promotion, destination marketing, trade facilitation, and investment outreach in Pakistan. She highlighted that the Silk Route Festival aims to bring together international expertise and provide a platform for sharing experiences, best practices, and innovative models for achieving sustainable and inclusive tourism development. She further explained that the Festival seeks to promote cultural diplomacy, tourism connectivity, trade, investment, economic growth, and gender inclusion, while creat-



ing opportunities for international stakeholders to build partnerships and explore new avenues of cooperation. The Silk Route Festival is envisioned as a global platform for enhancing cultural, economic, and tourism connectivity among participating countries and communities. The High Commissioner appreciated

the initiative and commended the organizers for their efforts to promote tourism and international cooperation through the Festival. He expressed his interest in participating in the event and indicated the desire of the High Commission of Sri Lanka to showcase and exhibit Sri Lankan products, includ-

ing tea, food, handicrafts, and other products reflecting the country's rich cultural and tourism heritage, at the Festival. The meeting concluded with a shared understanding of the importance of strengthening cooperation in tourism, cultural exchange, trade, and economic engagement, and of utilizing the

Silk Route Festival as a platform to further enhance people-to-people contacts and bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Pakistan. A Christy Ruban, Head of Chancery of the High Commission of Sri Lanka, and Mian Hashim Masood, Director of Silk Route Enterprises, also attended the meeting.

Pak HC hails Tariq's contribution to UK halal industry

LONDON: Pakistan's newly appointed High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Tipu Usman, has praised leading British-Pakistani entrepreneur Tariq Sheikh for his contribution to the British economy, describing the success of Tariq Halal Meats as an example of the positive impact Pakistanis have made across the United Kingdom. The High Commissioner, who assumed charge in London around two weeks ago, made the remarks during a meeting with Tariq Sheikh, founder and chairman of Tariq Halal Meats, at the Pakistan High Commission. Usman congratulated Sheikh on recently receiving the Freedom of the City of London, recognising his contribution to Britain's halal meat industry, entrepreneurship, employment and community service. The High Commissioner said Sheikh's journey represented an important British-Pakistani success story and demonstrated how members of the Pakistani diaspora had contributed to the economic and social development of the United Kingdom. He said that while negative stories involving some British Pakistanis often received considerable attention, the enormous contribution made by successful Pakistanis across Britain was frequently overlooked. He noted that British Pakistanis were making significant contributions in business, education, medicine, law, technology, public service and numerous other sectors, creating employment and contributing billions of pounds to the British economy. The High Commissioner described Tariq Sheikh as a visionary entrepreneur who had helped transform and modernise Britain's halal meat industry, taking the sector beyond the traditional butcher-shop model and introducing modern retail standards, professional presentation, quality control and customer service. He said Sheikh's achievements were a source of pride for Pakistan and reflected the entrepreneurial potential of the Pakistani diaspora. Tariq Sheikh was born in Pakistan in October 1961 and moved to Britain with his family at the age of seven. He entered the fast-food industry at 17, becoming a store manager within months and, by the age of 19, supervising several outlets as an area manager. —APP

Future belongs to entrepreneurs who embrace AI

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has called for a fundamental transformation in Pakistan's entrepreneurial mindset, urging youth and the business community to move beyond conventional business models and prepare for the emerging "Fifth Age", where Artificial Intelligence, biotechnology, genetic engineering, healthcare, information technology, robotics and advanced manufacturing are converging to create unprecedented economic opportunities. Addressing a motivational session titled "How to become a real entrepreneur-Build, Grow & Lead," Sardar Tahir said the world was entering an unprecedented era in which technologies were no longer developing in isolation but were converging to transform industries, businesses and human lives. He stressed that Pakistan must shift from producing predominantly job seekers to job creators, making entrepreneurship, innovation,

leadership, wealth creation and problem-solving central to its economic development strategy. "We should not raise a generation that asks where it can find a job; we must raise a generation that asks how many jobs it can create," he emphasized. The ICCI President said Pakistan should stop viewing itself only through the lens of its challenges and instead recognize its enormous untapped potential, including its young population, expanding cities, growing consumer market and vast unmet needs. He urged entrepreneurs to think big, remain positive and resilient, embrace technology and treat failure as a learning opportunity. Highlighting the Fifth Age, he said the convergence of AI with biotechnology, genetic engineering with healthcare, information technology with advanced manufacturing and robotics with intelligent systems would fundamentally reshape global competition. "The future will not belong to those who wait for it. The future will belong to those who build it," he declared. Mazhar Muneer Mehdi, motivational speaker, delivered an engaging and thought-provoking presentation, urging young entrepreneurs to remain positive, reject pessimism and develop confidence, resilience and a solution-oriented mindset. He emphasized that setbacks should be treated as opportunities for learning and growth and encouraged participants to pursue their ambitions with determination, discipline and a strong belief in their abilities. ICCI Vice President Tahir Ayub emphasized the need to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovation, saying Pakistan's young population represented one of the country's greatest economic assets. —APP

PC signs FASA with KPMG-led Consortium for HBFCL privatisation

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission (PC) has signed a Financial Advisory Services Agreement (FASA) with a consortium led by KPMG which includes Bridge Factor (a Corporate Finance Advisory firm), Haidermota & Co. (a legal firm), HRSG (a HR Firm) & Asiatic Public Relations (a media PR firm), for the privatisation of House Building Finance Company Limited (HBFCL). The consortium brings together established expertise in financial advisory, transaction structuring and execution to support the Privatisation Commission in taking the HBFCL privatisation process forward. This would be the second attempt to privatise House Building Finance Company Limited (HBFCL), reflecting a renewed effort by the Privatisation Commission. In the previous attempt, only a single bidder i.e. Pakistan Mortgage Refinance Company Limited (PMRCL); was pre-qualified. However, the privatisation could not be successfully concluded as the bid submitted was rejected by the Privatisation Commission for being lower than the Reference Price approved by the Federal Cabinet. Under the agreement, the Financial Advisor will undertake comprehensive due diligence of HBFCL, advise on an optimal transaction structure, conduct valuation, and support the Privatisation Commission throughout the marketing and execution of the transaction. —APP

Pope calls for humanitarian corridors in Sudan

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV called Sunday for humanitarian corridors to be opened for civilians caught up in a conflict in Sudan, which has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions. Leo said he was following "with concern the tragic situation in Sudan, especially in the city of El-Obeid," the largest city in the southern Kordofan region, which has come under intense drone attacks in recent weeks. The attacks have prompted the UN to issue a "red alert" over what it described as an unfolding catastrophe. "In expressing my spiritual closeness to all the people of the nation, I renew my appeal to those in authority to guarantee humanitarian corridors for the civilian population," Leo said at the end of the Angelus prayer. "At the same time, I urge the international community to support efforts aimed at bringing about an immediate ceasefire. 'Let us pray that the Lord may sustain those who are suffering, convert the hearts of those who sow violence, and grant the long-awaited peace,'" he said. The war between Sudan's regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces erupted in April 2023, creating what the UN describes as the world's largest displacement and hunger crises. —APP

Kuwaiti direct flights to Deir after 14-year closure

DEIR EZZOR: Kuwait's Jazeera Airways launched regular direct flights to Syria's Deir Ezzor on Saturday, marking the first service by a foreign commercial carrier to the eastern city since its airport reopened following a 14-year closure. The inaugural flight from Kuwait City landed at Deir Ezzor International Airport on Saturday morning, three days after the facility officially resumed civilian operations, Syria's state news agency SANA reported. Omar Hosari, head of Syria's General Authority of Civil Aviation and Air Transport, described the new route as an important step toward returning Deir Ezzor to the regional aviation network and reconnecting the eastern governorate with the wider Arab world. He said restoring air links aims to support economic recovery by facilitating travel and encouraging investment and commercial activity in the strategically important province. —APP



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Afghanistan's gold rush upends lives and landscapes

SHIWA MINE: In Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province, dozens of excavators operate day and night to extract gold from the mountains where villagers and their livestock once roamed. Thousands of miners are deployed across the Shiwa area, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) northeast of the provincial capital Faizabad, extracting gold for investors nationwide. Some residents in the area have profited from the gold rush, only to regret it later, such as farmer Muhammad Amin. "Before, the river was deep, the water was clean," said the 74-year-old from Pul-e-Ziri Ban valley. Since mining got underway, "the water of the river is not drinkable; you can't even wash your body with that water," he told AFP. With tears in his eyes, Amin said the grass along the riverbank "has all gone" and farming is no longer possible due to "the wind and dust." Now he can only feed up to 15 goats, compared with as many as 40 previously. Amin said he was paid half the \$20,000 for which he agreed to lease his land to a mining firm that failed to fulfil a promise to restore his fields after the work stopped. The Taliban authorities have expanded the mining sector

since returning to power five years ago, aiming to tap into Afghanistan's vast underground resources to boost state coffers. Abdul Mateen Rahimzai, head of Badakhshan's mines department, said they have registered "almost 650 to 700 companies, and there are thousands of people working manually." The World Bank said hundreds of mining contracts have been signed since 2021, with "real growth averaging 25 to 30 percent" annually according to a May report. While mining has temporarily stopped in Amin's village, not far from his home, in Gulak-Dara valley, dozens of diggers were carving into the mountainside. With jobs scarce in Afghanistan, the area has drawn workers from across the country. Mohammad Agha Khwaja Khail, from Kabul, has worked in mining for five years and earns 10,000 Afghanis (\$150) a month loading trucks. "It's better than anything else... There aren't many jobs in Kabul," said the 21-year-old, above the din of diggers. Shafullah Ehsas, a father-offive, transported his excavator hundreds of kilometers from Jalalabad about three months ago. In Jalalabad, the gold (mining) work hasn't started, and it was happening in Badakhshan, so

we didn't have any other option but to bring our machinery here," said the 32-year-old, who earns 25,000 Afghanis per month. The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has sought to regulate the industry, with spokesman Hamayoun Afghan saying resources "used to be extracted erratically; it wasn't done under supervision" by the previous government. Gold mining has accelerated in the north, the ministry spokesman said, including in neighboring Takhar province where an Afghan company was operating with Chinese partners. Fabrizio Foschini, a researcher at the Afghanistan Analysts Network, said during earlier decades of war "mining mainly benefited insurgent groups, including the Taliban, and local strongmen with links to corrupt government officials." Mining firms are now taxed 20 grams of gold per hectare per month, or the equivalent in cash, no matter their profits. Mohammadullah Mubarez, the manager of a mining company with about a hundred laborers and 20 diggers, said the team can extract "200 to 300 grams of gold" in a week. Despite this, he said the firm was operating at a loss because of start-up costs since April. —APP

Briefs

Transporters
strike
cripples' life

DNA

KARACHI: A countrywide strike by goods transporters and oil tankers started affecting industrial and export supply chains on Saturday, with operators vowing to continue the protest until the outcome of talks with the government on Monday, while manufacturers warned that prolonged disruption could halt production and jeopardise export commitments. Pakistan Goods Transporters Alliance Chairman Nisar Hussain Jafry told Dawn that "our countrywide strike will continue as our leadership intends to meet the ministers concerned with petroleum, transport and ports on Monday". He said the movement of more than 400,000 goods-carrying vehicles, ranging from small to large, had been suspended from Saturday until the outcome of Monday's meeting. "We have already unloaded our containers at the ports," he said. Mr Jafry said goods transporters were striking over multiple issues, including the government's recently introduced daily fuel price mechanism. "We are dissatisfied with the daily fuel price fixation introduced by the government, which is only creating problems," he said.

Increase in
wheat prices
irks masses

DNA

KARACHI: Consumers continued to face rising prices for wheat and wheat flour as the federal government plans to import one million tonnes of grain to curb the escalating costs. According to the Sensitive Price Index data as at Aug 6, the prices of 20 kg wheat flour, 10 kg wheat bag and one kg fine flour have further increased in Karachi to Rs2,700-3,000, Rs1,200 and Rs158.56, up from Rs2,600-2,900, Rs1,160 and Rs149.46, respectively, prevailing at the week ending July 30. The national average prices of a 20 kg flour bag, 10 kg wheat, and 1 kg fine flour for the week ending Aug 6 were Rs2,200-3,133, Rs1,235, and Rs153, as compared to Rs2,200-3,133, Rs1,223, and Rs152.14 for the week ending July 30. In the above period, wheat flour price has risen by 0.52pc.

Flight cancellations,
evacuations in China

Nearly 1,400 flights in and out of Shanghai's two main passenger airports had been cancelled

BEIJING: China's densely populated eastern coast was preparing Sunday for the arrival of Typhoon Dolphin, which has triggered more than 1,000 flight cancellations, evacuations and a top-level alert from authorities. Nearly 1,400 flights in and out of Shanghai's two main passenger airports had been cancelled on Sunday, state broadcaster CCTV reported. Hangzhou's airport in nearby Zhejiang province saw 270 inbound and outbound flights cancelled, the report said. Typhoon Dolphin, which brought heavy rain and strong winds to Japan's Okinawa in recent days, is expected to make landfall late Sunday or early Monday in Zhejiang or its neighbouring province of Fujian. Seven people in Okinawa suffered minor injuries, including a man aged over 100 who was blown by gusts, fell on the ground and hit his head, according to the island's government. By Sunday afternoon, 5,290 households in Okinawa were without electricity, according to regional utility Okinawa Electric Power. In Taiwan, dozens of ferry services were suspended, and more than 180 flights were cancelled as the storm brought downpours and strong winds to the island's north on Sunday. China's National Meteorological Centre (NMC) issued a red typhoon alert — its most severe warning — on Sunday morning, forecasting "extraordinary torrential rain" in some areas of central and eastern Zhejiang. Heavy precipitation is also expected to fall in Shanghai and parts of Fujian, Anhui and Jiangsu provinces through Monday afternoon, the NMC said. After Typhoon Dolphin makes landfall, it is expected to weaken while moving in a northwesterly direction over eastern China. In Fujian, nearly 99,000 people had been relocated from "risky areas" on Saturday evening ahead of the storm's arrival, state news agency Xinhua reported. Services on more than 200 ferry routes were suspended in Zhejiang and Fujian, Xinhua said. Work at offshore projects had been halted while 474 construction vessels had been called to port by Friday morning, Xinhua added. Some train services in affected areas had also been suspended on Sunday to ensure passenger safety, state media reported. Typhoon Dolphin's arrival in China comes two weeks after Typhoon Noul lashed southern Guangdong province, declared by authorities at the time as the strongest to hit China this year. Three people were killed and hundreds of homes were damaged by Typhoon Noul in the Philippines before reaching China. — DNA

France welcomes Pakistani
students with open arms

Ambassador Galey emphasized that a French degree is globally recognized and opens doors to international careers, while also offering exposure to innovation, entrepreneurship, and cultural diversity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of France in Pakistan hosted a pre-departure orientation session bringing together representatives from Pakistan International Airlines, partners, alumni, and students preparing to pursue higher education in France. French Ambassador Nicolas Galey addressed the gathering, congratulating the students on their success in securing admission to French universities and highlighting the growing academic cooperation between France and Pakistan. He noted that only a few years ago, very few Pakistani students studied in France, but thanks to the efforts of Campus France Pakistan and partnerships with local universities, thousands are now enrolled. This year alone, more than 700 Pakistani students will begin their studies in France, including 33 who have been awarded prestigious scholarships funded by the French Government and the European Union, half of whom are women. Ambassador Galey emphasized that a French degree is globally recognized and opens doors to international careers, while also offering exposure to innovation, entrepreneurship, and cultural diversity. He reminded students that France hosts over 400,000 international students from 180 countries annually, making it one of the world's leading destinations for higher education. The event provided practical guidance on



student life, administrative procedures, accommodation, health insurance, and settling into France, while alumni shared personal experiences to help newcomers adapt to French culture and build networks. The Ambassador also expressed gratitude to PIA, which resumed direct flights from

Islamabad to Paris last year and continues to support the Embassy's initiatives. In a gesture of goodwill, PIA offered two return tickets to students, enabling them to visit their families during their studies. Encouraging students to embrace the adventure ahead, Ambassador Galey urged them to

be curious, bold, and proud representatives of Pakistan in France, concluding with warm wishes for their success and happiness: "Travel broadens the mind. Discover France — its language, history, culture, food, and landscapes. You will be the brilliant representatives of your country."

Initial medical report
'reveals' Mir Raza Ali
was shot from behind

Investigation team removed; medical report provides answers to all 14 points raised by police surgeon, say sources

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Deceased businessman Mir Raza Ali was shot from behind and bore marks of violence on his body, according to an initial medical report cited by Geo News following the exhumation of his body for a post-mortem examination. According to sources, the initial report — a copy of which is available with Geo News — has provided answers to all 14 points raised during the examination by police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed. The development came hours after Ali's body was exhumed for a post-mortem examination, after which he was reburied at the graveyard near Tariq Road. As per the medical report, Ali sustained a gunshot wound from the rear, while marks of violence were also found on his body. The report also revealed that Ali had fractured ribs, while multiple injury marks were found on his head and face, according to sources. The report read that black marks were also found on his body, while injury marks were present on his feet. Blood stains were found on tissues in the lower part of his body. A fracture and injury measuring approximately 12 centimetres in length were identified on Ali's right thigh, according to the report. The report also found evidence of a deep injury and fracture in the jaw area. In addition, injuries were found to the nasal bone and various parts of his face, the report said. The report further revealed multiple se-

vere injuries to the chest area, including a fracture of the sixth rib. After the medical report emerged, Karachi police removed the investigation team formed to probe the case, police officials said on Friday. According to police officials, SSP East Zubair Nazir Sheikh, SSP Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Samiullah Soomro and other officers have been removed from the investigation. Sindh Inspector General Javed Alam Odho has formed a new four-member investigation team to probe the case. DIG Crime Branch Amir Farooqi will head the newly constituted team, while CTD SSP Irfan Bahadur and SP Investigation Korangi Qais Khan are among its members. The development comes after Mir Raza's parents expressed a lack of confidence in the investigation team. Separately, investigation sources said the exhumation process continued for around three hours and was carried out under the supervision of forensic experts. A total of 17 samples were collected during the exhumation of Ali's body. Four samples were collected for DNA testing, while the remaining samples were obtained for chemical examination, the sources said. Two reference samples were also collected from Ali's parents for DNA matching. The chemical examination and DNA reports are expected to be available within three to four days, sources said. All samples collected during the exhumation have been preserved, investigation sources added.

Spain checks
200 Italy
arrivals
in border
controls

MADRID/MILAN: Spain checked around 200 travellers arriving from Italy at the country's six largest airports on the first day of border controls reintroduced following a dispute with Italy over irregular migration. Spain's Interior Ministry carried out checks on a total of 199 people on 12 flights from Italy to airports in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Bilbao, Alicante and Valencia, it said late on Saturday. Spain said on Friday border controls for flights and ships from Italy would remain in force until September 7 after Rome applied its own measures, which it said were motivated by the mass migration rush by 72,000 people to Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta on July 30. Italy has suspended the European Union's border-free Schengen arrangements with Spain since August 1 and said it would maintain border controls until at least August 15. Rome said the measure would not affect Spanish or other EU citizens traveling to Italy and would instead involve targeted checks on non-EU nationals arriving from Spain by air or sea. "We hope to be able to lift the suspension soon, as soon as there is no longer any risk," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani told Italian daily Corriere della Sera in an interview published on Sunday. — APP

"Near collision"
between two
passenger
aircraft

SYDNEY: Safety regulators launched an investigation on Sunday into a "near collision" between two passenger aircraft at Australia's busiest airport that injured a crew member. The incident, which involved a Jetstar pilot being forced to apply sudden brakes to avoid crashing into a Qatar Airways jet on Sunday morning, disrupted operations at Sydney Airport. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) said a Jetstar Airbus A320 was taxiing for a flight to the Gold Coast on Sunday morning when its crew "observed a Qatar Airways Boeing 777, under tow from an aircraft tug, in close proximity on a crossing taxiway." "A cabin crew member aboard the [Jetstar] A320 was injured, and there was damage to the connection between the 777 nose gear and aircraft tug" as both planes stopped abruptly, the statement said. — APP

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