



Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

US wants to have close economic links with Pakistan

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Minister says price formula appreciated

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PM Shehbaz says

Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye defence pact 'entirely for defensive purposes'

PM Shehbaz particularly felicitated Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as well as Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir on the signing of the agreement

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday affirmed that the recently signed Makkah Joint Defence Agreement was "entirely for defensive purposes", and not for any aggression. The joint defence agreement, signed on August 7 between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye, aims to strengthen collective deterrence and empowers its signatory states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them. Addressing the federal cabinet on Monday, PM Shehbaz recalled that he, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed the pact in Makkah on Friday.

The prime minister stressed that the objective of the pact is to "promote peace, progress, and prosperity in the region". "Its purpose is definitely not that any aggression occurs. It is entirely for defensive purposes, for peace, tranquillity and progress in the region," he affirmed. "I believe this agreement is a source of strength not just among these three countries, but for the entire Muslim ummah," he noted. PM Shehbaz particularly felicitated Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as well as

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Briefs

IHC asks seeks govt reply in judges case

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday issued notices to the president and the prime minister through their respective secretaries in a case concerning a pending summary for the appointment of judges to the high courts, while questioning the delay in completing the constitutional process. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir issued the notices during the hearing of a writ petition challenging the president's failure to approve the summary and sought responses by Wednesday. Addressing Additional Attorney General Rashid Hafeez, the judge questioned the federal government's handling of the matter and asked about the status of the summary concerning judicial appointments.

Govt keeps petrol prices unchanged

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday kept petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) prices unchanged at Rs327.62 per litre and Rs380.86 per litre, respectively. The government continues to charge Rs114 per litre in taxes and duties on petrol and Rs100 per litre on HSD. According to a Petroleum Division notification, the prices will remain in effect for August 11. The OGRA has begun publishing daily petroleum prices on its website to improve transparency and allow international price changes to be passed on to consumers more quickly. Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik said the daily prices are based on a seven-day average of international market prices, in line with international practice.

Iran says deal shows 'change in perception' towards US

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iran's foreign ministry said on Monday that the defence pact signed last week between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye was "a sign of a change in the perception" of regional countries towards the United States. The joint defence agreement, signed in Makkah on Friday, aims to strengthen collective deterrence and empowers its signatory states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them.

"This development is a sign of a change in the perception of the countries of the region," ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said while responding to a query during a weekly press briefing on Monday. "Considering the developments of the last two to three years, the countries of the region have realised that security is not a commodity that can be bought from false security brokers," Iran's state media quoted him as

saying, referring to the United States. Baqaei further said that there was "no reason to worry that this treaty will be against Iran", highlighting Iran's deep religious, historical and civilisational ties with Pakistan, Turkiye and even Saudi Arabia.

"This development is an important sign that the countries of the region have concluded that they cannot rely on and trust the claim of security provided by the United States and some other actors outside the region, and they are attempting to try another method; by relying on their own capabilities and perspectives," IRNA quoted Baqaei as saying. "Any plan that is based on the geopolitical and historical realities of the region, is comprehensive and inclusive, and correctly identifies the enemy and the threat, has a chance of helping to strengthen security and prevent instability and abuses by the Zionist enemy and its allies," he added, referring to Israel.

Kazakh envoy calls on Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 10 August 2026, Ambassador of Kazakhstan Calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Upon completion of his tenure, H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, paid a farewell call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House today. Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Sen.Mohammad Ishaq Dar, SAPM Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Amb. Amna Baloch were also present. The Prime Minister appreciated the Kazakh Ambassador's valuable contribution towards further strengthening the historic bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Kazakhstan during his tenure.

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Five terrorists killed

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Security forces carried out an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Sarkini and Chedgi areas of Panjgur district in Balochistan under Operation Rad-ul-Fitna-3 and killed five terrorists, including a key militant commander, security sources said on Monday. The operation targeted members of Fitna al-Hindustan and resulted in the killing of five terrorists, including the group's commander Wazir, son of Jamal, the sources added. Security forces also recovered four motorcycles, machine guns, heavy weapons and a cache of ammunition from the possession of the slain terrorists.

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Trump says Iran must pay compensation

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is demanding "compensation" from Iran "for all of the people that they have killed and gravely wounded with their roadside bombs and many conflicts", saying he has instructed that this demand be made in any further negotiations. In a post on Truth Social, he noted that Iran's representatives were asking for compensation for damages done to the country over the last five months, despite this not being mentioned in negotiations. "But it is an interesting idea,"

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PML-N's AJK lawmaker Rukhsar denies rape allegations

Ahmed was arrested at Manchester airport in July 2024 on suspicion of rape

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Newly-elected Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly lawmaker Rukhsar Ahmed has denied being involved in grooming gang crimes in the UK and has stressed his innocence. The Guardian disclosed last week that Ahmed, a former Azad Kashmir minister, was arrested at Manchester airport in July 2024 on suspicion of raping and trafficking at least two underage girls from care homes in the city's Rusholme area during the 1990s. He was released on bail and flew to Pakistan nearly two months ago, missing an appointment at a police station after telling officers he was too unwell to fly back to the UK. Ahmed has published a statement on his Facebook account, rejecting the allegations. It read: "I categorically deny all the allegations against me and will address these matters through the appropriate forums. On legal advice, I will not comment further while these matters remain ongoing."

He was elected an MLA on PML-N's ticket two weeks ago in the first phase of the ongoing elections.

On the weekend, a UK paper's Pakistan reporter met Ahmed, 61, at his office in Khari Sharif, a village in Mirpur district. According to the Mail on Sunday, he told a reporter he would fly back to Britain to meet his bail conditions, but declined to give a date. "Everything is with my legal team in Manchester and London, they told me I can't discuss this," he told the newspaper. "What they done, this media in the United Kingdom and Europe, is out of order. I have not been convicted of anything nor charged for anything, so what is going on? I don't want to discuss it, because if I discuss it, things may go wrong." Asked directly whether he had raped two underage girls, he refused to answer, telling the reporter: "You are doing wrong now, I told you not to talk to me like this ... please don't talk to me like this, I told you I have nothing to do with it, OK."

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Bangladesh PM seeks 'conductive environment' to reset India ties

PM Tarique Rahman also urges India to expedite Hasina's extradition



NEWS DESK

DHAKA: Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman told India's envoy on Monday that there was a need to create a "conductive environment" to boost ties between the neighbours, as Dhaka continues to press New Delhi over the politically sensitive issue of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's exile in India. Rahman's remarks underline his six-month-old government's efforts to stabilise relations with its largest neighbour while seeking progress on issues that have remained major irritants since Hasina's ouster in August

2024. While Rahman has sought good relations with India since coming to power, Monday's comments are his first that stress the need to improve conditions to boost ties.

Rahman made the comments during his first meeting with the new Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Dinesh Trivedi. Rahman "emphasised the need to create a conducive environment to further advance the bilateral relations between the two countries", the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement after the meeting.

Bangladesh also urged India to expedite Hasina's extradition, it said. Hasina, who has been staying in India since the fall of her government, is facing legal proceedings in Bangladesh and was sentenced to death in November.

Dhaka's request came days after Hasina interacted with the media for the first time since she fled the country. In an online audio conference she reiterated that she would return to Bangladesh in December, drawing renewed attention to her continued presence and political activities in India. The Bangladesh foreign ministry strongly criticised the event, saying that giving Hasina the opportunity to hold the event was deeply hurtful and that Bangladesh was outraged. India has said it is examining Bangladesh's extradition request in accordance with its legal and judicial procedures. In a post on X, the Indian High Commission said Trivedi reiterated India's commitment to working with Bangladesh in a "positive, constructive and forward-looking manner".



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 10 August 2026. – DNA

Sohail Afridi says

PTI, TTAP leadership Fully on board with Sept 27 long march

Afridi confident of convincing Aleema Khan for long march, says she's non-political

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi has said PTI's political leadership and the Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) alliance are on board with the September 27 long march to Islamabad. "All our political leadership, the provincial leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf across all provinces, and central, and along with that the alliance too, Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ayeen-e-Pakistan – yes, all of them are on board," he said. Afridi was responding to concerns raised by Aleema Khan, the sister of PTI founder Imran Khan, who has reportedly questioned why the long march was scheduled for September 27 rather than an earlier date. Describing Aleema as "non-political", Afridi said she would speak in her capacity as Imran Khan's sister and expressed

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Opp leaders urges PM to appoint CEC

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: In his letter, the opposition leader cited two provisions of the Constitution, including Article 213(2A), which he said "mandates that the prime minister shall, in consultation with the leader of the opposition in the NA, forward three names for the appointment of the CEC to a Parliamentary Committee for hearing and confirmation". "Article 218(2)(b): Mandates that the appointment of the members of the election commission from each province shall follow the exact same procedural requirement of consultation

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Call for green, clean environment for citizens in Waziristan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, :The district administration South Waziristan Lower is taking effective steps to ensure green and healthy environment for people of the area. According to the administration Deputy Commissioner Musarrat Zaman has formally inaugurated the monsoon plantation drive 2026 in the district by planting a sapling. The Sub-Divisional Forest Officer (SDFO) was also present on the occasion. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the deputy commissioner highlighted the importance of plantation in protecting the environment and addressing the challenges posed by climate change. He said increasing tree cover was a pressing need, as trees play a vital role in reducing environmental pollution, mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change, conserving natural resources and ensuring a clean and healthy environment for future generations. The deputy commissioner directed the relevant departments to take effective measures to make the plantation campaign successful and ensure the protection and maintenance of newly planted saplings. He also urged citizens, students, social organizations and government departments to actively participate in the plantation drive and contribute to making South Waziristan Lower greener and more environmentally sustainable. The district administration reiterated its commitment to promoting plantation and environmental protection across the district under the monsoon plantation drive 2026.—APP

Wheat and flour shortage rumours baseless: DFC Attack

ATTOCK: Rejecting rumours regarding an alleged shortage of wheat and flour in Punjab, District Food Controller (DFC) Attock Shams Abbas has said that the province is fully capable of meeting its food requirements and that quality flour is available in sufficient quantities across markets. He said there was no need for the public to stand in queues or resort to panic buying, as adequate stocks of flour were available throughout the province. "All rumours being spread regarding a shortage of wheat and flour are baseless. Quality flour is readily available in markets and bazaars, and there is no situation anywhere that requires people to stand in long queues to obtain flour," Shams Abbas said. He stated that, unlike flour crises witnessed in the past, the present situation remained stable, with the government ensuring not only an uninterrupted supply of flour but also maintaining strict standards of quality. According to the DFC, Punjab produced approximately 21.9 million metric tonnes of wheat this year, while the province's annual requirement stands at around 16.5 million metric tonnes. He said this meant Punjab had produced approximately 33 percent more wheat than its own requirement, leaving a surplus of nearly 5.4 million metric tonnes, which could play an important role in meeting the food requirements of other provinces.—APP

First Lady opens Autism Residential Facility

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that when C-ARTS was established in 2018, it was founded on the belief that every child with autism deserves opportunities to learn, grow and thrive

KARACHI: First Lady of Pakistan Aseefa Bhutto Zardari on Monday inaugurated Pakistan's first dedicated residential facility for children with autism, established under the Centre for Autism Rehabilitation and Training, Sindh (C-ARTS), in Korangi, Karachi. The landmark initiative marks a major milestone in the country's efforts to provide comprehensive, long-term and specialised care for children with autism and support for their families. The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, addressing the inauguration ceremony, described the project as a symbol of hope, inclusion and dignity for children with autism and their caregivers. He said the residential facility reflected the Sindh Government's unwavering commitment to ensuring that every child with autism has access to quality diagnosis, education, rehabilitation, life-skills training and opportunities for an independent future. The ceremony was attended by Secretary DEPT Tauha Farooqi, members of the diplomatic and development community, autism specialists, educationists, parents and representatives of civil society. Chief Autism Consultant and CEO of C-ARTS, Ms Irum Rizwan, briefed participants on the services and future expansion plans of the institution. The newly inaugurated facility has been designed to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children with autism who require specialised support. It will offer residential accommodation, therapeutic interventions, educational programmes, behavioural support, life-skills development and vocational training under one roof. According to C-ARTS officials, the facility will cater to around 250 children and will operate through a multidisciplinary team trained in evidence-based autism intervention programmes. It will provide two key services: respite care for children with severe behavioural challenges requiring short-term professional support, and long-term residential care for children with autism who do not have guardians or adequate family support. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that when C-ARTS was established in 2018, it was founded on the belief that every child with autism deserves opportunities to learn, grow and thrive. He noted that the institution has since evolved into the largest autism support and rehabilitation network in Pakistan, serving more



than 1,500 children and their families. "Today's inauguration is not merely the opening of a building; it is the opening of new doors of hope for children, parents and families. This facility is a home where children will be understood, respected and encouraged to discover their strengths and talents," he said. Murad Shah highlighted that the

Sindh Government's commitment to autism support extends across the province. He said ten C-ARTS centres are currently operational in Karachi, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Gambat, Sukkur and Larkana, providing free-of-cost services including diagnosis, education, rehabilitation, behavioural therapy, life-skills training.—DNA

Railways expands freight, passenger services in KP, Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Railways has undertaken a series of measures to strengthen freight and passenger services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, with a focus on improving connectivity, facilitating trade and providing economical transportation facilities. "A state-of-the-art dry port has been established at Azakhel in Peshawar Railway Division to cater to the business requirements for bulk transportation of goods between Peshawar and other parts of the country," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said the brake vans and luggage vans attached to major trains are also facilitating farmers and small traders in transporting vegetables, fruits, dairy products and other small consignments at economical rates. The official said the regular freight services are operating from

Balochistan for transportation of minerals, livestock feed and agricultural products to Karachi and other markets across the country. He said continuous improvements in digital ticketing, complaint management systems, station facilities and onboard services were providing safer, more comfortable and economical travel options to railway passengers, including those in KP and Balochistan. At present, he said four Mail/Express trains are operating from Peshawar, connecting the city with different parts of the country. Similarly, two Mail/Express trains are running from Quetta, linking Balochistan with Peshawar and Karachi. He said the ministry intends to engage with the provincial governments of KP and Balochistan to introduce

additional passenger services, in line with the expansion plans being pursued in other provinces. The official said the department has set a direction of self-reliance and growth by increasing Pakistan Railways' market share from 8 percent to 30 percent, improving service delivery, ensuring sustainable operations, expanding its network and promoting regional connectivity. "To achieve these objectives, a four-pronged strategy is being implemented, focusing on financial sustainability, governance and growth, private-sector participation, and leveraging technology and innovation," he added. He said the implementation of the strategy has produced encouraging results, with Pakistan Railways recording its highest-ever revenue of Rs94 billion during the financial year 2024-25.—DNA

Gandhara Hindko Board shifts to digital printing

PESHAWAR: The Gandhara Hindko Board has shifted to digital printing to continue literary and cultural activities as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has not provided funding to the literary and cultural organisation for the last four years, an official said. "Despite the absence of government funding, we have continued our academic and research activities, particularly those aimed at promoting native languages," said the organisation's General Secretary, Muhammad Ziauddin, while speaking at a function held at the board's office at Rampura Gate. A press release issued on Sunday quoted him as saying that the board had continued research and academic work after being deprived of government financial support beyond June 30, 2022. "The board is currently engaged in various research projects and is working to develop and preserve the languages of the

region, including Hindko and other local languages," said Ziauddin, a Hindko writer, poet and research scholar specialising in documentation. He said the board was making efforts to strengthen its research infrastructure and establish a dedicated research centre where language enthusiasts could conduct research and access relevant material and resources. The general secretary said the board was also collaborating with researchers and universities in different parts of the country. "Researchers associated with various universities, including the University of Peshawar, Bacha Khan University, Charsadda, and other institutions, are benefiting from the board's research resources and activities," he said. Muhammad Ziauddin, who has research-based publications to his credit, said the board had published a number of books and research works on regional languages and

cultures. He said the board was making efforts to document and preserve the linguistic heritage of the region for future generations. According to him, the board had initiated several research projects focusing on the history, literature, vocabulary and linguistic characteristics of regional languages. He said these projects were being carried out in collaboration with scholars and researchers. The office-bearer said the board had also been producing and publishing research material through its print and digital platforms. "Researchers from different areas are contributing to these projects, while research journals and other academic publications are also being brought out," he said. He added that the board's research and academic activities would continue and that every possible effort would be made to protect and promote the regional languages of the country, as this was necessary to foster national unity. Ziauddin said the board had been carrying forward literary and cultural work since its establishment in 1993 and vowed to move ahead despite the challenges.—APP

Equal-sized bench cannot depart from earlier judgment: SC

The five-member bench held that any departure from a previous judgment of a co-equal bench must necessarily be made through a larger bench

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has ruled that a subsequent bench comprising the same number of judges is bound by the judgment of an earlier co-equal bench and cannot issue a conflicting ruling on the same legal point. If it disagrees with the earlier judgment, the matter must be referred to a larger bench through the Chief Justice. A five-member larger bench, in a detailed judgment authored by Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, held that adherence to judicial precedent was essential for legal certainty, consistency and institutional integrity. The court said a previous judgment of a co-equal bench was binding not only on benches of lesser strength but also on subsequent benches of equal strength. If a subsequent bench believed that an earlier judgment contained an error or that changed legal circumstances warranted its reconsideration, it could not overrule it on its own. The matter had to be placed before a larger bench. The Supreme Court observed that Article 189 of the Constitution made the legal principles laid down by the Supreme Court binding on all courts in Pakistan. It added that adherence to earlier judgments of co-equal benches was also a fundamental requirement of judicial discipline. The ruling came in a tax matter involving conflicting judgments concerning the applicability of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 to assessments completed under the repealed Income Tax Ordinance, 1979. The court held that the principle laid down in the 2009 judgment in Commissioner Inland Revenue v. M/s Eli Lilly Pakistan (Private) Limited was correct, while the contrary view adopted by an equal-strength bench in the 2016 case of Commissioner Income Tax, Peshawar v. M/s Islamic Investment Bank Limited was inconsistent with the doctrine of judicial precedent. The court set aside the conflicting Islamic Investment Bank judgment and restored the legal position established in the Eli Lilly case. According to the judgment, the Eli Lilly case had held that assessments completed under the 1979 Ordinance could only be dealt with under that law and that provisions of the 2001 Ordinance, including Section 122(5A), could not be applied retrospectively to completed assessments. The case arose from tax proceedings concerning a taxpayer in Rawalpindi who had purchased property for Rs300,000 in 1999. The Inland Revenue authorities treated the amount as income after the taxpayer allegedly failed to respond to notices regarding the source of investment and imposed a penalty. The Commissioner (Appeals), Income Tax Appellate Tribunal and Lahore High Court, Rawalpindi Bench, did not uphold the department's position, prompting it to approach the Supreme Court. The five-member bench held that any departure from a previous judgment of a co-equal bench must necessarily be made through a larger bench.—APP

Pakistan mango exports reach 44,882 tonnes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has so far exported 44,882 metric tonnes of mangoes during the ongoing 2026 season, with Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Oman emerging as the leading destinations. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, Iran led Pakistan's mango exports during the period with shipments of 20,336 metric tonnes, followed by the UAE with 10,068 metric tonnes and Oman with 6,359 metric tonnes. Together, the three markets accounted for 36,763 metric tonnes, or nearly 82% of Pakistan's mango exports recorded up to July 9. The 44,882 metric tonnes represents mid-season data rather than the country's full-year export performance, as mango harvesting and overseas shipments were still underway. The final export volume is expected to increase with the completion of the season. Pakistan also continued to supply mangoes to several high-value markets during the current season. The United Kingdom received 3,439 metric tonnes up to July 9, while exports to Germany reached 836 metric tonnes. Saudi Arabia imported 710 metric tonnes, Norway 518 metric tonnes and Qatar 418 metric tonnes. Other destinations included Japan with 251 metric tonnes, the United States with 248 metric tonnes, Canada with 227 metric tonnes, Sweden with 175 metric tonnes and Bahrain with 171 metric tonnes. The documents show that Pakistan continues to maintain a broad presence in the international mango market, exporting fresh mangoes to nearly 70 countries. The Middle East remains the principal destination, followed by Afghanistan. The European Union, United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, China, Australia, Canada and the United States have been identified as important high-value markets where ex-

porters are required to comply with specific phytosanitary import conditions. Pakistan's mango export performance in recent years also shows the sector's capacity to supply substantial volumes to international markets. Fresh mango exports stood at 118,121 metric tonnes in 2022 before increasing by around 9.4% to 129,230 metric tonnes in 2023. Shipments rose by a further 2.6% to 132,587 metric tonnes in 2024, the highest level during the period covered by the documents. Exports subsequently stood at 116,011 metric tonnes in 2025. The composition of Pakistan's major mango markets has varied over the years. The UAE was the largest destination in 2022, receiving 39,596 metric tonnes, followed closely by Iran with 38,162 metric tonnes. The UAE retained the leading position in 2023, when shipments increased to 47,523 metric tonnes. Iran received 30,016 metric tonnes, while exports to Afghanistan more than doubled from 11,309 metric tonnes in 2022 to 26,369 metric tonnes in 2023. Iran emerged as the largest market in 2024, importing 53,205 metric tonnes, while the UAE received 42,723 metric tonnes and Afghanistan accounted for 19,858 metric tonnes. In 2025, the UAE again became the largest destination, receiving 35,783 metric tonnes, followed by Iran with 27,632 metric tonnes and Afghanistan with 23,403 metric tonnes. Oman received 10,261 metric tonnes, while shipments to Iraq reached 8,346 metric tonnes. The 2026 season is progressing despite lower fruit availability. According to the Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company, mango availability is 30% to 35% below normal levels this year due mainly to climate change and temperature fluctuations, which affected fruit setting and caused premature fruit drop.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

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Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Royal Thai embassy marks King’s birthday with free medical Camp

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Virabutr thanked Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital, its management and healthcare professionals for partnering with the Royal Thai Embassy in organizing the humanitarian initiative. He said commemorating His Majesty the King’s Birthday through service to the community reflected the values of compassion, goodwill and friendship that continue to strengthen the longstanding relations between Thailand and Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Royal Thai Embassy in Pakistan, in collaboration with Dr. Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital (ANTH), commemorated the Birthday of His Majesty the King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajirakulchaoyuhua of Thailand by organizing a Free Health Screening Medical Camp, bringing quality healthcare services for free to hundreds of underserved residents access to medical consultations and The one-day medical camp attracted hundreds of people who received consultations across multiple specialties, including general medicine, breast health, and diet and nutrition, along with screening and diagnostic services and free medicines, all under one roof, said a release issued here on a Sunday. Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to Pakistan Rongvudhi Virabutr along with a delegation of Thai Embassy, visited the camp and interacted with patients, doctors, healthcare professionals and volunteers. He was received by Yasir Khan Niazi, Group Chief Executive Officer of GAK HealthCare International, and Dr. Areej Neyazi, Director of Dr. Akbar Niazi Teaching



Hospital, along with the hospital’s senior management. The Ambassador toured the consultation, screening and diagnostic facilities, met patients and appreciated the dedication of doctors, healthcare professionals and volunteer students from Islamabad Medical & Dental College, who played an important role in guiding patients and facilitating the smooth conduct of the camp. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Virabutr thanked Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital, its management and healthcare professionals for partnering with the Royal Thai Embassy in organizing the humanitarian initiative. He said commemorat-

ing His Majesty the King’s Birthday through service to the community reflected the values of compassion, goodwill and friendship that continue to strengthen the longstanding relations between Thailand and Pakistan. He also commended the professionalism and dedication of the doctors, healthcare teams and volunteers whose collective efforts made the medical camp a success. Yasir Niazi said that, “Healthcare has the unique ability to bring nations together through compassion and service. Pakistan and Thailand enjoy warm and longstanding relations, and there remains significant untapped po-

tential for collaboration in healthcare, medical education, public health, clinical training, research and knowledge exchange. We are grateful to the Royal Thai Embassy for commemorating this special national occasion through an initiative that has directly benefited hundreds of deserving patients while further strengthening the bonds of friendship between our two countries,” he said. He added that Dr. Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital remained committed to supporting initiatives that expand access to quality healthcare, promote community well-being and advance international co-

operation for the benefit of the people. Hundreds of patients expressed appreciation after receiving free medical consultations, diagnostic services and medicines. Many described the camp as timely and beneficial, particularly for families who often face financial barriers in accessing preventive healthcare. The organizers expressed hope that such collaborative initiatives would continue to improve community health, promote stronger people-to-people engagement and further deepen Thailand-Pakistan cooperation in the healthcare sector.

Two car-lifting gang put behind bars

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police’s Anti-Vehicle Lifting Unit (AVLU) have put two members of an active car-lifting gang behind bars and recovered five stolen vehicles worth around Rs6.7 million from their possession. An ICT Police official told APP on Monday that the suspects were identified as Shah Nawaz and Mushtaq, who were allegedly involved in vehicle theft incidents across the federal capital. The official said the five recovered vehicles had been stolen from the jurisdictions of different police stations in Islamabad. During investigation, the suspects also allegedly disclosed their involvement in the theft of several other vehicles, he added. SSP Investigation Islamabad Suleman Zafar said ICT Police would continue an indiscriminate crackdown against active car-lifting gangs operating in the capital. He said those depriving citizens of their valuable assets would be challenged before courts on the basis of solid evidence to ensure exemplary punishment in accordance with law. —APP

Police honour two retiring sub-inspectors

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police honoured Sub-Inspectors Muhammad Ayaz and Malik Muhammad Farooq at a farewell ceremony held on their retirement, recognising their services and contribution to the police force. An ICT Police spokesperson told on Monday that the ceremony was organised by the Law and Order Staff of Islamabad Police, where colleagues and officials paid tribute to the retiring officers for their professional services. The services rendered by both officers during their careers were appreciated, while their commitment and contribution to the department were also acknowledged. On the occasion, commemorative gifts were presented to Muhammad Ayaz and Malik Muhammad Farooq as a token of recognition for their service. The participants extended their best wishes to both retiring officers for a healthy, peaceful and fulfilling post-retirement life. —APP

AIOU starts dispatching textbook alongside admissions

ISLAMABAD: For the first time in the history of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), the process of supplying textbooks to students has been initiated alongside admissions, ensuring that students receive their prescribed academic materials without unnecessary delay. On the special instructions of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the dispatch of textbooks to students enrolled in Semester Au-

umn 2026 has commenced simultaneously with the ongoing admissions process. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, said that relieving students of the wait for textbooks and providing them with academic materials in a timely manner was the university’s priority. He said the initiative was aimed at providing students with the necessary academic materials at the very beginning

of their educational journey and making the distance learning system more effective. He directed that the dispatch of textbooks should be completed according to the prescribed schedule in line with the university’s annual academic calendar, and that every student should receive a complete set of textbooks corresponding to the courses in which they are enrolled. Referring to complaints received during the previous semester regarding students receiving incomplete sets of textbooks, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that such complaints should not arise during the current semester. He directed the relevant authorities to prepare complete textbook packages carefully according to the courses selected by each student and ensure their timely delivery. —APP

Vacant seats in medical colleges not due to fees or MDCAT

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C), Mustafa Kamal informed the Standing Committee on NHSR&C that vacant seats were a genuine and broader concern and could not be attributed solely to fee levels or MDCAT eligibility percentages. The meeting of the committee was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Mahesh Kumar Malani, Member National Assembly (MNA), in which Ministry of NHSR&C and the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) were directed to undertake immediate measures to address vacant seats in medical colleges, examine fee disparities and strengthen monitoring of medical education institutions, said a press release issued here on Monday. The Minister also stated that the Ministry had examined the issue in comparison with other professional fields and that the declining interest in medical education also required consideration. The Committee discussed increasing number of seats in public-sector medical colleges as one possible measure. PMDC informed the Committee that additional seats had already been allo-

cated following inspections, including seats for Punjab, erstwhile FATA and Balochistan. The Committee also discussed the position in Sindh in this regard. The Members of the Committee and the Vice Chancellors of admitting universities explained that enhancement of public-sector seats would require additional infrastructure, registration capacity and physical space. The Chairman decided that a separate meeting would be held with the Government of Sindh and relevant representatives to examine the matter in detail. Meanwhile, the Committee reviewed the PMDC’s preparedness regarding the Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) 2026. It was informed the PMDC rescheduled the MDCAT 2026 exam to Sunday, 20 September, to ensure a transparent, secure and well-organized process and to provide relief to candidates. The Vice Chancellors of MDCAT conducting universities shared their input on various other matters including the issue of vacant seats and fee structure of medical colleges particularly institutions charging higher fees. The Minister for Health informed the Committee that a number of colleges had asked for en-

hancement of fees and that universities could not independently increase fees. Of the 61 medical colleges considered, 35 had qualified on the prescribed criteria. The Committee sought details fee justification and scrutiny along with the audited financial statements of each one of these 35 qualified institutions. The PMDC was asked to share status of institutions that had not qualified but were nevertheless charging higher fees and still displaying the fee on their websites. PMDC informed the Committee that notices had been issued to non-compliant institutions and that monitoring was being undertaken. The Committee asked for details of the notices issued in this regard. The Committee emphasised that any increase in fees should be supported by clear criteria and credible evidence, including educational standards, faculty strength, infrastructure and audited financial information. The Committee stressed that vacant seats must be properly investigated before any further policy decision was taken. PMDC was directed to inspect private colleges having vacant seats and submit a report identifying the reasons for the vacancies. —APP

Defence pact aims to strengthen security: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council Allama Tahir Ashrafi has said the primary objective of the defence agreement between Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia is to strengthen the defence and stability of the three countries and promote mutual cooperation. He said the agreement clearly stipulated that an attack on any one of the three countries would be considered an attack on all three. Speaking on behalf of the International Council for the Honour of the Two Holy Mosques, Allama Ashrafi said that, in view of the prevailing global situation, Saudi Arabia had demonstrated remarkable patience and restraint. He said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir had, from the outset, worked to prevent the US-Israel conflict with Iran from turning into a broader confrontation involving the Arab world, the Muslim Ummah and Iran. He said Israel had sought to provoke a confrontation between the Arab countries and Iran, but the three leaders had played an important role in preventing such a conflict. Allama Ashrafi described their efforts to prevent the escalation of the conflict as a great achievement, saying the leadership of the three countries had demonstrated responsibility and wisdom in the face of a challenging regional situation. —APP

Breastfeeding for healthier start to every child’s life stressed

ISLAMABAD :Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath stressed the importance of breastfeeding for ensuring better health and nutrition for infants. “Together, we must ensure that every child has the healthiest start in life,” he said, while talking on the global theme of World Breastfeeding Week. Dr. Bharath said breastfeeding was the foundation of child health and nutrition and played a vital role in building a healthier and more sustainable future for Pakistan. He said significant progress had been made in promoting breastfeeding in the country, but there was still a need to further increase the practice of initiating breastfeeding immediately after birth and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. The minister stressed the need for effective community-level support to strengthen the healthcare system and create a supportive environment for

mothers and families. He urged that effective employment protection measures, adequate workplace facilities, and proper implementation of breastfeeding-related laws during maternity were essential to enable mothers to continue breastfeeding. It is pertinent to mention that Too many mothers and families around the world still lack access to services and interventions that enable and support breastfeeding. Yet breastfeeding is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to protect a child’s health. It provides infants and young children with essential nutrition, increases immunity, helps protect against serious illness, and supports cognitive development. For mothers, breastfeeding brings important health benefits too, helping reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases such as breast and ovarian cancers, and type 2 diabetes. Encouragingly, breastfeeding rates around the world are going up. Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months rose from around 37 per cent in 2012 to over 47 per cent today. In the past five years, the prevalence of breastfeeding up to two years of age rose from 38 per cent to 50 per cent. These gains show that sustained investments in policies and programmes for mothers and families are working. Yet progress remains uneven, with many countries lagging behind global targets. Coverage of services supporting breastfeeding remains low, policies are inconsistently enforced, and service quality is often inadequate, especially in low-income, fragile, and humanitarian settings. —APP

FIA recovers Rs400,000 from visa fraud suspect

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Islamabad has recovered Rs400,000 from an alleged visa fraud suspect and returned the entire amount to the complainant at the inquiry stage, after the suspect had allegedly withheld both the money and the complainant’s passport for nearly two years. An FIA official told APP on Monday that the action was taken under Inquiry No. 522/2026 immediately after the complaint was received by AHTC Islamabad. The complainant told the FIA that the suspect had received Rs400,000 through bank transactions in different instalments during 2024, promising to arrange an overseas visa within nine to 10 months. However, despite the passage of nearly two years, the suspect allegedly neither arranged the visa nor returned the money. He had also kept the complainant’s passport in his possession for around two years. The official said the suspect initially used delaying tactics when asked to return the money and later allegedly threatened the complainant with dire consequences. Acting on the complaint, AHTC Islamabad initiated an inquiry and succeeded in recovering the entire Rs400,000 from the suspect at the inquiry stage, which was subsequently handed over to the complainant. The complainant expressed satisfaction over the prompt action and thanked the Director FIA Islamabad Zone, Deputy Director AHTC Tariq Masood and Inquiry Officer Sub-Inspector Aqsa Iqbal for recovering his money. —APP

Consumer court proceedings against BISP official set aside

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has held that the jurisdiction of a consumer court requires a legal relationship between the parties as consumer and service provider, or a legally recognized relationship involving payment for a service, and that merely making a person a party to a complaint does not confer jurisdiction on a consumer court. A two-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali converted into an appeal and allowed a civil petition filed by Muhammad Ishaq, Deputy Director, Bannu Income Support Programme (BISP), Bannu. The court set aside the July 1, 2025 judgment of the Bannu Consumer Protection Court and the November 6, 2025 judgment of the Peshawar High Court, Bannu Bench, and dismissed the complaint filed before the consumer court. In its detailed judgment, the Supreme Court observed that the primary purpose of consumer protection laws was to protect consumers against

unfair and deceptive business practices. However, a consumer court could entertain only those matters falling within the legal relationship of consumer, goods or services contemplated by law. The court noted that the complainant himself had claimed that he was working as a retailer or agent for franchises under the BISP scheme. However, there was no retailer agreement between him and BISP, nor any documentary evidence on record establishing that BISP had provided him a service or received any consideration from him for such service. The court further observed that BISP had produced a list of point-of-sale (POS) agents operating in Bannu district, but the complainant’s name did not appear on the list. The Supreme Court held that the very basis of the complaint was defective and, therefore, it was not maintainable before the consumer court. It observed that both the consumer court and the High Court had failed to examine the fundamental ques-

tion of jurisdiction and the legal relationship between the parties, and instead decided the matter on the basis that the complainant had not been given notice before his retailer ID was blocked. The judgment clarified that jurisdiction goes to the root of a case and any order or judgment passed by a court lacking jurisdiction cannot legally be sustained. The question of jurisdiction, it added, should be determined at the outset of proceedings. The Supreme Court also noted that under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Consumer Protection Act, 1997, a consumer complaint was required to be filed within 10 days, while the law allowed extension of the period in specified circumstances subject to prescribed conditions. The court held that in the present case, no consumer relationship between the complainant and BISP had been established that could attract the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1997. —APP



اسحاق ڈار
نائب وزیر اعظم / وزیر خارجہ

میں پاکستان، سعودی عرب اور ترکیہ کے درمیان مکہ باہمی دفاعی معاہدے پر دستخط کے موقع پر پوری قوم کو مبارکباد پیش کرتا ہوں۔ یہ تاریخی معاہدہ ہمارے برادرانہ تعلقات کی گہرائی، مشترکہ عزم کا مظہر ہے۔ امن، سلامتی اور استحکام کے لیے ہمارے مشترکہ عزم کا مظہر ہے۔ امن، سلامتی اور استحکام کے لیے ہمارے دفاعی نوہیت کا ہے اور کسی بھی ملک کے خلاف نہیں۔ اس کا مقصد بین الاقوامی جارحیت کے خلاف انتہائی دفاعی صلاحیت اور درجہ کی قوت کو مضبوط بنانا، تیز رفتاری، علاقائی سالمیت اور اپنے عوام کے دفاع کی صلاحیت کو مزید مستحکم کرنا ہے۔ وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف کی قیادت میں چیف آف ڈیفنس فورسز، فیملی مارشل سید عامر سید، اور دفتر خارجہ پاکستان نے اس تاریخی معاہدے کو عملی جامہ پہنانے میں کلیدی کردار ادا کیا ہے۔ پاکستان کے قومی مفادات کے تحفظ اور سعودی عرب اور ترکیہ کے ساتھ ہماری اشرافیہ شراکت داری کو مزید مضبوط بنانے کے لیے ان کی قیادت اور صلاحیت قابل تحسین ہے۔



خواجہ آصف
وزیر دفاع

میں پاکستان، سعودی عرب اور ترکیہ کے مابین مکہ جو انٹرنیشنل ایکریٹس پر دستخط کا خیر مقدم کرتا ہوں۔ یہ معاہدہ ہمارے تینوں برادر ممالک کے درمیان انتہائی سلامتی، دفاعی تعاون اور تزویراتی شراکت داری کو مزید مضبوط بنانے کی جانب ایک اہم پیش رفت ہے۔

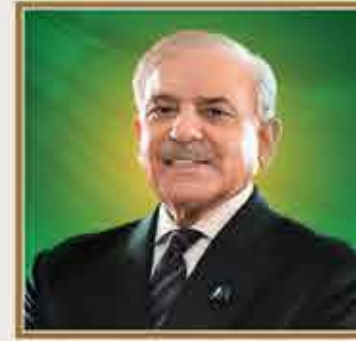
یہ معاہدہ تینوں ممالک کے درمیان تاریخی برادرانہ تعلقات، اسلامی یکجہتی اور مشترکہ تزویراتی مفادات کا مظہر ہے۔



فیلڈ مارشل سید عاصم منیر
چیف آف آرمی سٹاف - چیف آف ڈیفنس فورسز

اقوام عالم نے اس بات کو تسلیم کیا کہ اس خطے میں پاکستان ایک ناقابل فراموش حقیقت اور ناقابل تسخیر طاقت ہے۔ گزشتہ سال کے دوران پاکستان کے قومی وقار میں بے مثال اضافہ ہوا جس کا اعتراف پوری دنیا کر رہی ہے۔ الحمد للہ آج عالمی ایوانوں اور بین الاقوامی مجالس میں ہماری قیادت کو عزت اور تکریم کی نظر سے دیکھا جا رہا ہے۔ آج دنیا میں ہمارے دوستوں کی تعداد اومانی کے تمام ادوار سے کہیں زیادہ ہے۔

10 مئی 2026 کو بی ایچ کیو میں معرکہ حق (MeH) کی پہلی سالگرہ کے موقع پر چیف آف ڈیفنس فورسز (CDF) کا خطاب



محمد شہباز شریف
وزیر اعظم اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان

مجھے اپنے عزیز برادران، عزت مآب ولی عہد شہزادہ محمد بن سلمان اور عزت مآب صدر رجب طیب اردوان کے ہمراہ مکہ باہمی دفاعی معاہدے پر دستخط کرنے کا اعزاز حاصل ہوا۔ تین برادر ممالک، جو عقیدے، دوستی اور امن و سلامتی کے مشترکہ عزم کے رشتے میں بندھے ہوئے ہیں۔

اللہ تعالیٰ سے دعا گو ہیں کہ عربین شریفین کے سامنے ملے پائے والا یہ تاریخی معاہدہ آنے والی نسلوں کے لیے امن کی ڈھال ثابت ہو اور ہمارے تینوں برادر ممالک سمیت پوری امت کے لیے خوشحالی کا ذریعہ بنے۔

میں بالخصوص فیملی مارشل سید عامر منیر کی انتہک کوششوں اور غیر معمولی لگن کو خراج تحسین پیش کرنا چاہتا ہوں، جن کی خدمات کادوشوں نے اس عظیم مقصد کی تکمیل میں نہایت اہم کردار ادا کیا۔



آصف علی زرداری
صدر اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان

میں مکہ مکرمہ میں تاریخی مکہ باہمی دفاعی معاہدے پر دستخط کا خیر مقدم کرتا ہوں۔ یہ تاریخی معاہدہ خطے اور اس کے اطراف میں امن، سلامتی اور استحکام کے فروغ میں ایک اہم کردار ادا کرے گا۔

میں اس اہم اقدام کو آگے بڑھانے پر وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف اور چیف آف ڈیفنس فورسز، فیملی مارشل سید عامر منیر کی قیادت کو سراہتا ہوں۔ ان کی کادوشوں سے ہمارے برہنہ برادرانہ تعلقات اور اشرافیہ شراکت داری کو مزید قریبی تعاون کے ایک مضبوط فریم ورک میں ڈھالنے میں مدد ملی ہے۔

مجھے یقین ہے کہ مکہ معاہدہ ہماری اشرافیہ شراکت داری میں ایک نئے باب کا آغاز کرے گا اور علاقائی امن و استحکام کے لیے ہماری مشترکہ کوششوں کو مزید تقویت دے گا۔



ایک پر حملہ تینوں پر حملہ تصور ہوگا

تین برادر ممالک
ایک مشترکہ ڈھال



ایمان سے جڑے
دوستی سے بندھے
امن کے لیے پر عزم



امن، سلامتی اور استحکام
کے لیے ہمارا عزم
غیر متزلزل ہے



اپنی عوام کے لیے متحد
اپنے خطے کے لیے متحد
اپنے مستقبل کے لیے متحد



گزشتہ دو روز سے ”مکہ باہمی دفاعی معاہدے“ (میثاق مکہ) کے حوالے سے جاری بحث اور عوامی دلچسپی کے تناظر میں، اس معاہدے سے متعلق درج ذیل پس منظر اور وضاحت سب کے لیے مفید ہو سکتی ہیں۔

اجتماعی حق دفاع سے مکمل مطابقت رکھتا ہے۔
میثاق مکہ خالصتاً دفاعی نوعیت کا معاہدہ ہے۔ یہ کسی ملک کے خلاف نہیں، بلکہ اس کا واحد مقصد وسیع تر خطے میں امن، استحکام اور خوشحالی کے لیے جاری مشترکہ کوششوں کو مزید تقویت دینا ہے۔

میثاق مکہ خطے کے ہر اس ملک کے لیے کھلا ہے جو اس کے بنیادی اصولوں کی پاسداری اور باہمی اختلافات کو احترام، تعاون اور پرامن ذرائع سے حل کرنے کا عزم رکھتا ہو۔
میثاق مکہ پاکستان کی خارجہ پالیسی کے بنیادی اصولوں سے پوری طرح ہم آہنگ ہے۔ پاکستان خطے میں دیرپا امن و استحکام کے لیے تمام برادر ممالک کے ساتھ قریبی تعاون جاری رکھنے کا خواہاں ہے۔ ہم تمام تنازعات کے پرامن حل کی کوششوں کو آگے بڑھانے اور اپنے عوام کے لیے زیادہ محفوظ، مستحکم اور خوشحال مستقبل کی تعمیر کے عزم پر ثابت قدم ہیں۔

مکہ باہمی دفاعی معاہدہ، جس پر پاکستان، سعودی عرب اور ترکیہ نے مشترکہ طور پر جمعہ، 17 اگست 2026 کو مکہ مکرمہ میں دستخط کیے، تینوں ممالک کی قیادت اور عوام کے درمیان گہرے برادرانہ تعلقات کا مظہر ہے۔

میثاق مکہ کی برسوں پر محیط مشاورت، تہاؤلہ خیال اور باہمی رابطہ کاری کا ثمر ہے۔ اس کی بنیاد امن و سلامتی کے کثیر الجہتی چیلنجز سے نمٹنے کے لیے تعاون کو مزید مستحکم کرنے اور خطے میں امن، استحکام اور خوشحالی کے فروغ کی مشترکہ خواہش پر قائم ہے۔

میثاق مکہ تینوں ممالک کے مابین، یا ان کے دیگر ممالک اور عالمی علاقائی تنظیموں کے ساتھ موجود کسی دوطرفہ یا کثیر الجہتی معاہدے کو نہ منسوخ کرتا ہے اور نہ ہی اس کی جگہ لیتا ہے۔

تینوں ممالک میں سے کسی ایک کے خلاف کسی بیرونی قوت کا مسلح حملہ، سب کے خلاف حملہ تصور کیا جائے گا۔ یہ اصول اقوام متحدہ کے منشور کے آرٹیکل 51 کے تحت انفرادی اور

ہم خطے میں امن، سلامتی اور استحکام کیلئے متحد ہیں۔ یہ تاریخی معاہدہ ہماری خودمختاری کے تحفظ، اپنی عوام کے دفاع اور پوری امت کیلئے فلاح، امن اور خوشحالی کا پیش خیمہ ثابت ہوگا۔



Pakistan, partners and perception

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL



TIME is a stern teacher of nations. It changes the character of alliances, reshapes national priorities and repeatedly reminds states that geography is destiny only when political wisdom knows how to use it. Countries may differ in ideology, resources and ambitions, yet history repeatedly brings them to the same conclusion; in an uncertain world, security and prosperity are rarely achieved in isolation. Sixty-two years ago, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey confronted a similar question. In July 1964, the three regional members of the Central Treaty Organisation established the Regional Cooperation for Development, or RCD, through the Istanbul Agreement. Unlike CENTO, the RCD was not conceived as a military alliance. Its principal purpose was economic, technical and socio-economic cooperation. It sought to turn geographical proximity into commercial opportunity and political understanding into practical development. The three countries pursued joint ventures in industry, trade, transport and culture, and facilitated travel and postal exchanges. One of its most enduring physical legacies in Pakistan was the RCD Highway, now known as the N-25, which remains an important artery linking Sindh and Balochistan. But RCD became a lesson in the difference between aspiration and achievement. Financial constraints, protectionist policies, administrative weaknesses and divergent national priorities slowed implementation. The organisation never acquired the institutional depth needed for genuine economic integration. Political upheaval in Iran brought its formal end in 1979. Yet the idea survived. In 1985, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey revived it through the Economic Cooperation Organization, later expanded to include Central Asian states and Afghanistan. The history of RCD contains a paradox; its institutional record was modest, but its strategic imagination was ahead of its time. Today the region is witnessing another attempt to convert shared interests into collective strength—this time principally through security. On August 7, 2026, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, declaring that an armed attack against one would be regarded as an attack against all. Signed in Makkah amid extraordinary regional uncertainty, it aims to strengthen collective deterrence and defence cooperation. The governments have emphasised that the arrangement is defensive and not directed against any particular country. The agreement did not emerge from a vacuum. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had already signed their Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement in September 2025. The Makkah pact therefore widens an existing security relationship. Türkiye brings one of the

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region's most capable armed forces and a sophisticated defence industry. Saudi Arabia contributes economic weight, strategic geography and an ambitious defence-localisation programme. Pakistan offers decades of military experience, defence-industrial capacity and the Muslim world's only established nuclear deterrent. Together they combine military capability, economic strength and technological capacity. If wisely institutionalised, their cooperation could move beyond symbolism. Joint exercises, intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism, maritime security, cyber-defence, defence production and technological research could gradually create a functioning security architecture. That distinction is crucial. The history of RCD teaches that agreements perish when institutions remain weak. The Makkah agreement will face the same test; its future depends not on the grandeur of its declaration but on the seriousness of its implementation. For Pakistan the arrangement carries particular significance. Islamabad gains a stronger regional security partnership with two states of considerable diplomatic, economic and military influence. Saudi Arabia remains a vital economic partner; Türkiye has become a trusted defence and technological partner. The combination offers greater strategic depth in a fragmented international system. Yet Pakistan must approach the opportunity with confidence and prudence. A defence agreement should never substitute for economic strength. Sustainable national power rests on economic resilience, technological advancement, political stability and institutional capacity. Pakistan should therefore convert the relationship into industrial partnerships, technology transfer, investment, energy cooperation and increased trade. There is also a danger of allowing outsiders to define the agreement. Some interpret it as a sectarian bloc directed against Iran. Others see an anti-Western arrangement or speculate about hidden nuclear dimensions. India and Israel seem particularly troubled by the trilateral understanding. Such conclusions are premature. The signatories have rejected claims of a sectarian or nuclear alliance and described the pact as defensive. Nor is it a rejection of the West. Each country maintains important Western relations. The pattern is better understood as strategic diversification: regional powers seeking the capacity to protect their interests without depending on a single external guarantor. That is the most important change since the days of RCD. In 1964 cooperation was imagined through the language of development—roads, trade, industry and culture. In 2026 the vocabulary has shifted to deterrence, maritime security, terrorism, technological warfare, energy security and strategic autonomy. Beneath the changing language lies the same idea: regional states must turn common interests into common strength. If current arrangements translated into permanent mechanisms, joint capabilities and sustained political will, the Makkah agreement could become a cornerstone of a more autonomous regional security architecture. Pakistan must seize the moment without losing sight of wider responsibilities. Its relationships with Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Iran need not be mutually exclusive. History does not repeat itself exactly; it echoes. RCD began with the dream of regional development. The Makkah agreement begins with the necessity of regional security. One sought to build roads across borders; the other seeks to build deterrence across frontiers. One faltered for lack of political will and institutional capacity. The other will face the same test. The signatures in Makkah are not the conclusion of a story. They are its opening sentence.

Trump called his critics traitors

Qamar Bashir



He claimed that the United States possessed “massive amounts” of munitions and that defense companies were rapidly expanding production. He then declared that the sources of what he called “treasonous statements” were being hunted down and that lengthy prison sentences would be sought. Yet the reports did not originate

THERE is a disturbing irony at the heart of America's war with Iran. President Donald Trump, accused by retired generals and political opponents of disregarding constitutional restraints, is now using the language of treason against Americans who have reportedly exposed dangerous shortages in the country's military stockpiles. Thus, a president whose conduct has raised questions about loyalty to the Constitution is branding whistleblowers, officials or “leakers” as disloyal to the nation. This is not merely a quarrel over words. It concerns the difference between loyalty to a president and loyalty to the United States. It also raises a fundamental question: Is revealing a threat to America's military readiness an act of treason—or is concealing that danger the greater betrayal? On August 6, Trump rejected reports that the Iran war had severely depleted American weapons. He claimed that the United States possessed “massive amounts” of munitions and that defense companies were rapidly expanding production. He then declared that the sources of what he called “treasonous statements” were being hunted down and that lengthy prison sentences would be sought. Yet the reports did not originate from hostile governments. The American officials with direct knowledge of the military inventory said the United States had consumed nearly all its global stockpile of certain long-range precision missiles, including virtually all available Army Tactical Missile Systems and Precision Strike Missiles. The reported condition of defensive weapons is equally alarming. Estimates cited by CBS suggested that the United States entered the conflict with approximately 2,330 Patriot interceptors but had only 759 to 827 remaining by the end of July. Its stock of THAAD interceptors reportedly declined from roughly 452 to between 234 and 278. Rebuilding both inventories to their prewar levels could take until at least 2029. If these assessments are accurate, the Iran war has not merely consumed billions of dollars. It has weakened America's ability to respond to another emergency in Europe, East Asia or elsewhere. A nation cannot fire years of missile production in five months and pretend that industrial assurances will immediately refill empty launchers. This is precisely why criticism of the administration cannot simply be dismissed as treason. The Constitution does not define treason as embarrassing a president, contradicting an official narrative or informing the public about a dangerous policy failure. It defines treason narrowly—levying war against

the United States or adhering to its enemies and giving them aid and comfort. Disclosing classified information may, depending on the circumstances, violate other laws, but presidents should not casually stretch the word “treason” to cover politically inconvenient reporting. That distinction becomes especially important when viewed against the warnings of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley during his retirement address. Milley said American service members do not swear allegiance to a king, queen, tyrant, dictator or “wannabe dictator.” They swear allegiance to the Constitution and to the American idea. His remarks were widely understood as a warning about Trump, although Milley did not name him. The statement identified the essential difference between a constitutional military and a personal army. American troops are not the private instruments of a president. They are governed by law, accountable to civilian authority and bound to refuse unlawful orders. Their oath is not a ceremonial phrase; it is the barrier separating a republic from authoritarian rule. Trump's critics argue that he has repeatedly tested that barrier by treating the military as a political backdrop, demanding personal loyalty and condemning officials who challenge his assertions. Retired General Barry McCaffrey has likewise criticized Trump's partisan rhetoric before uniformed personnel, warning that an officer who behaved similarly could face serious disciplinary consequences. The president is entitled to command the armed forces, but commander-in-chief is a constitutional office—not a license to convert the military into an extension of a political movement. The Iran war has magnified these concerns. It reportedly began without specific congressional authorization, without broad domestic support and without a coherent explanation of its ultimate objective. Regime change, elimination of Iran's nuclear program, destruction of its missile forces, liberation of the Iranian people and reopening the Strait of Hormuz have all been presented as rationales. By the administration's own declared standards, however, success remains elusive. Iran's former leadership may have been removed, but a younger, more uncompromising generation of revolutionary figures appears to have replaced it. Iran reportedly retains missiles, drones, mobile launchers and the capacity to rebuild. Its knowledge of uranium enrichment cannot be destroyed by bombing, while concerns remain about enriched material and nuclear assets potentially concealed in hardened mountain facilities. Most dramatically, the

Strait of Hormuz—open and toll-free before the war—has become Iran's principal bargaining weapon. Reports of negotiations involving Iran and Oman indicate that Tehran is seeking oversight of shipping movements, restrictions on American and Israeli vessels and compensation from countries it considers hostile. Even if the final arrangements remain unsettled, Iran has transformed the waterway from an international passage into a negotiating instrument. Meanwhile, Americans are paying the price through military casualties, higher fuel costs, more expensive fertilizer, pressure on food prices and tens of billions of dollars in additional war spending. The administration is reportedly seeking still more funding even after repeatedly claiming that Iran's armed forces and nuclear capabilities had been destroyed. This contradiction lies at the center of the crisis. If Iran was defeated within the opening weeks, why has the war continued for more than 140 days? If its military was rendered ineffective, why are American forces still intercepting Iranian missiles and drones? If its nuclear capability was obliterated, why is further war funding necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a weapon? And if American stockpiles remain plentiful, why do multiple reports describe severe shortages and years-long replacement schedules? A democratic government answers such questions with evidence, congressional scrutiny and public accountability. It does not answer them by threatening reporters or hunting officials who reveal uncomfortable information. Calling critics traitors may intimidate dissenters, but it cannot manufacture Patriot interceptors, reopen the Strait of Hormuz or transform strategic failure into victory. Nor can patriotic language conceal the deepest irony of this war: those warning that America has been weakened are being accused of betraying America by the very leader whose decisions may have produced that weakness. The real test of loyalty is not obedience to Donald Trump—or to any president. It is fidelity to the Constitution, protection of American lives and honest stewardship of national power. A president who confuses personal loyalty with patriotism risks becoming the danger against which the constitutional oath was designed to protect the republic. —The Writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

The Makkah Agreement: A new architecture for regional security

Dr. Ali Awadh Asseri

Makkah has now given these relationships a powerful new strategic expression. Some outside observers were quick to describe the agreement as a “Muslim NATO” or a new Sunni alliance. Both descriptions miss its purpose. The agreement is not directed against Iran, Israel or any other country. It is neither a sectarian coalition nor the beginning of an arms race. It is a defensive agreement among three sovereign states that have watched their regional security environment deteriorate rapidly and have decided to strengthen their ability to deter future aggression. They seek no war but are determined to defend peace together. The timing has naturally attracted attention because the agreement was signed amid the continuing Iran conflict

THE signing of the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye on Friday was a historic development for our region. When Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif came together in Makkah, they established a collective defense framework among three of the most powerful states of the Muslim world. Its central commitment is clear: an armed attack against one will be regarded as an attack against all. Its purpose is equally clear: to deter aggression, strengthen collective security and contribute to lasting regional peace. The public response reflected the importance of the occasion. There was understandable pride and jubilation in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye as people watched their leaders come together at an exceptionally difficult moment for the region. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan already share an extraordinary relationship rooted in faith, history and decades of solidarity, while Türkiye enjoys deep historical and popular bonds with both countries. Makkah has now given these relationships a powerful new strategic expression. Some outside observers were quick to describe the agreement as a “Muslim NATO” or a new Sunni alliance. Both descriptions miss its purpose. The agreement is not directed against Iran, Israel or any other country. It is neither a sectarian coalition nor the beginning of an arms race. It is a defensive agreement among three sovereign states that have watched their regional security environment deteriorate rapidly and have decided to strengthen their ability to deter future aggression. They seek no war but are determined to defend peace together. The timing has naturally attracted attention because the agreement was signed amid the continuing Iran conflict. But timing must not be confused with origin. Detailed consultations had been taking place for years. The Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement signed last September was itself the culmination of more than half a century of defense cooperation, while Pakistan and Türkiye also possess a long-standing and extensive military relationship. Saudi-Turkish defense cooperation has likewise expanded considerably. Türkiye's inclusion did not suddenly arise from the present conflict. The crisis accelerated a process already underway because it demonstrated, with painful clarity, why stronger and more structured regional cooperation had become necessary. This is where the dynamic and visionary leadership of the crown prince deserves particular recognition. The real test of leadership comes during a crisis, when decisions must be taken under enormous pressure and their consequences may shape the future for decades. A wise leader must appreciate the lessons of history, understand the realities of the present and possess the foresight to prepare for what may come next. The crown prince has demonstrated precisely these qualities. His decision to conclude the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement with Pakistan last year now appears even more farsighted in light of subsequent events. The Makkah Agreement takes that vision further by bringing Türkiye into a wider framework capable of strengthening the security of all three states and contributing to regional stability. His leadership during the present conflict has been equally important. As war spread and the danger of escalation grew, Saudi Arabia faced enormous pressure. Yet the crown prince exercised remarkable strategic patience and refused to allow the Kingdom or the wider Gulf to be dragged into a war they neither initiated nor wanted. Saudi Arabia defended its sovereignty, protected its national interests and supported diplomatic efforts without allowing restraint to become a vul-

nerability. When the changed security environment required a stronger and more durable response, that response came in Makkah. This was not an emotional reaction to war but the action of a leadership determined to learn from the crisis and prepare for the future. Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman has described the agreement as establishing a long-term partnership that strengthens “deterrence, coordination and integration.” These words are backed by experience. Saudi-Pakistani defense coordination was already deep before the present conflict and became even more important during it. Prince Khalid has maintained close engagement with Pakistan's military leadership, particularly Field Marshal Asim Munir, while military contacts among Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye have steadily expanded. The experience of recent months demonstrated the value of such close political and military consultation. The Makkah Agreement now places it on a stronger and more enduring foundation. The strengths that the three countries bring together are considerable. Saudi Arabia possesses growing defense capabilities, economic power and a pivotal position connecting the Gulf, Red Sea and wider Arab world. Türkiye has one of the region's strongest militaries and an increasingly advanced defense industry. Pakistan contributes one of the Muslim world's most experienced and professional armed forces and decades of defense cooperation with both countries. Saudi Arabia seeks peaceful relations with its neighbors and has no interest in creating new divisions in an already troubled region. Intelligence sharing, joint exercises and training, maritime security, counterterrorism, air and missile defense, cybersecurity, logistics, advanced technologies and joint defense production can all become important areas of deeper cooperation. The institutional mechanisms envisaged under the agreement can ensure regular coordination and allow the three countries to prepare together before threats become crises. At the heart of this framework is the collective defense provision. By declaring that an armed attack against one of the three states will be regarded as an attack against them all, the agreement removes ambiguity about their commitment to one another's security and territorial integrity. How that commitment is exercised will naturally reflect the circumstances and requirements of a particular situation, but the principle itself is unequivocal: aggression against one engages the collective responsibility of all three. The greatest success of this provision would be for its credibility to ensure that it never has to be invoked. That is the essence of deterrence—convincing any potential aggressor beforehand that aggression will encounter collective resolve and impose costs far exceeding any possible gain. This commitment has become necessary because the nature of threats facing our region has changed. Missiles, drones, proxy forces, attacks on commercial shipping and threats to critical infrastructure have enabled state and nonstate actors to impose heavy costs on countries that may have played no role in starting a conflict. The Gulf states have experienced the consequences directly. Their cities, citizens, energy installations, economic infrastructure and maritime routes cannot remain pressure points in wars conducted by others. The Makkah Agreement provides a viable, state-led response: stronger defenses, closer coordination and a clear warning that sovereignty cannot be violated without consequences. At the same time, this agreement creates no new enemy. Dr. Rayed Krimly, undersecretary at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has made clear that it does not establish a military or sectarian bloc, is unrelated to nuclear ambitions or an arms race, and does not come at the expense of Saudi

Arabia's strong Gulf, Arab and international relationships. Nor does it replace the existing bilateral and multilateral commitments of the three countries. Erdogan has similarly stressed that the agreement targets no country, while Prince Khalid has expressed the hope that the platform can provide a foundation for broader regional cooperation. This positive purpose deserves emphasis. Saudi Arabia seeks peaceful relations with its neighbors and has no interest in creating new divisions in an already troubled region. Dialogue remains necessary, diplomacy indispensable and international partnerships important. But recent events have also demonstrated that regional states must possess the capacity to defend their sovereignty and contribute more directly to their own security. Strong defense and serious diplomacy are not contradictory. Credible deterrence can prevent the very conflicts that diplomacy then works to resolve. The ultimate purpose of security, moreover, is not military power but human progress. Vision 2030 is transforming Saudi Arabia on an extraordinary scale. Türkiye and Pakistan likewise possess immense economic, technological and human potential. All three need secure trade routes, reliable energy supplies, investment confidence and regional stability. The security provided by closer cooperation can create greater space for partnerships in technology, research, investment, education, industry and development. Peace must ultimately produce prosperity for our peoples. There is something especially meaningful about the fact that this agreement was signed in Makkah. For Muslims everywhere, the Holy City represents unity and a bond that transcends nationality and geography. Having served for almost a decade as my country's ambassador to Pakistan, I know from personal experience how deeply Pakistanis cherish their relationship with Saudi Arabia and how warmly Saudis regard Pakistan. Türkiye shares profound historical and popular bonds with both nations. The jubilation surrounding the agreement therefore reflects something diplomacy alone cannot create: genuine affection and confidence among three brotherly peoples. Last year, the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement transformed the extraordinary Saudi-Pakistani defense relationship into a binding strategic commitment. This year, after one of the gravest periods of regional insecurity in recent memory, the Makkah Agreement has widened that vision. The crown prince showed patience when patience was required, firmness when Saudi interests had to be protected and foresight in preparing for the future. Together with the leaderships of Pakistan and Türkiye, he has now helped establish a framework whose importance should be measured not only by the difficult circumstances in which it was signed but by what it can achieve for decades to come. The Makkah Agreement is therefore much more than another defense pact. Three powerful regional states have taken greater responsibility for their security while extending a hand of peace to everyone around them. They seek no confrontation but they will stand together against aggression. If this historic commitment is translated into sustained cooperation, it can become a pillar of regional stability and a foundation for wider cooperation in the future. Our region has spent too long responding to wars after they begin. Makkah offers a better path: strength that deters aggression, cooperation that protects sovereignty and security that gives our peoples the peace and prosperity they deserve. —Dr. Ali Awadh Asseri is deputy chairman of the International Institute for Iranian Studies in Riyadh and a former Saudi ambassador to Pakistan and Lebanon.

Briefs

Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye defence...

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Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir on the signing of the agreement. Efforts for the joint defence pact had been underway for “many years and materialised this Friday”, the prime minister said. He noted that while Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had already entered the “Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement” in September 2025, Islamabad and Ankara also had “arrangements for decades” between them. PM Shehbaz recalled that the Pakistani nation and the army had been honoured to “defend the world’s holiest places” of Makkah and Madina for years along with the Saudi forces. “Last year, with Allah’s grace, this arrangement was officially recognised so that a proper agreement was signed. Friday’s agreement is another extension of it, with a trilateral agreement signed.” In a statement issued by the Foreign Office earlier in the day, Dar felicitated the nation on the agreement’s signing. He reiterated his comments from Sunday wherein he said the pact was defensive in nature and not directed against any country. Dar also noted that the term of treating an attack on one of them as an attack against all three was “consistent with the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter”. The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement has been hailed by the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as an “important strategic step”. Kuwait, Bahrain and Somalia are among the countries that have welcomed it. Iran’s comments also took a rather positive tone, stressing its stance of pursuing “security mechanisms based on cooperation between regional countries”.

PML-N’s AJK lawmaker Rukhsar...

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Ahmed was a minister in various state governments from 2006 until he lost his seat in 2021. The Guardian has reported that Greater Manchester police (GMP) had wanted to restrict Ahmed’s ability to travel abroad as part of his bail conditions, but a judge rejected tougher measures in July 2024. Ahmed was arrested at Manchester airport on July 18, 2024, in relation to past child sexual abuse allegations linked to the Rusholme area, where he lived for many years. The ongoing investigation relates to allegations from several women about sexual abuse of children at care homes in the early 1990s, when Ahmed was in his late 20s. He is understood to be expected to answer police bail in the next six weeks. If he does not attend, GMP may issue a warrant for his arrest or take steps to extradite him. Greater Manchester Police declined to comment, saying it does not discuss individual cases.

PTI, TTAP leadership Fully on..

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confidence that he would be able to convince her after explaining the “facts and figures” behind the decision. “Aleema apa is Imran Khan sahib’s sister, and we repeatedly say that she is non-political; she has nothing to do with politics,” he said. “We will, God willing, satisfy her.” Afridi also rejected allegations by PTI leaders based overseas that he had agreed to the September 27 date following a secret deal. He said those making such allegations should have contacted him first instead of raising them on public platforms. “This is an attempt to mislead people, and this should not happen,” Afridi said, adding that those who were sincere with Imran and PTI should not make such allegations publicly without first seeking clarification. Responding to a specific claim that he had met Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and another official on August 4 before announcing the long march date, Afridi termed the allegation “completely baseless”.

Pakistan’s Zubair seals Tekken 8 Esports World Cup crown

32 players competed for glory from August 5 to 8; Zaubair earns \$300,000 prize money, 1,000 Club Championship points

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan’s Khawaja Muhammad Zubair has claimed the Tekken 8 crown at the Esports World Cup 2026, defeating South Korea’s LowHigh in a dominant 5-0 victory in the grand final in Paris. The Tekken 8 competition was held from 5 to 8 August, with 32 players competing for a share of the prize pool. Zubair finished the tournament as champion, earning \$300,000 in prize money and 1,000 Club Championship points. Zubair defeated LowHigh, one of the established names in the international Tekken scene,

in a dominant grand-final performance. The Pakistani player did not drop a single game in the deciding match, completing a 5-0 victory to secure the biggest title of his career. His triumph was particularly remarkable given his relatively limited experience on the international stage. According to the Esports World Cup, Zubair made his international debut just two months before the tournament, when he was eliminated in the pools. He returned to Paris for the Last Chance Qualifier, where he fought his way back into contention before going on to claim the Tekken 8 title. He subsequently battled through the EWC qualification route before defeating several

high-profile opponents during his title-winning campaign. His run included a crucial victory over fellow Pakistani star Arslan Ash, while Australia’s Yagami finished third and Ash placed fourth. Zubair topped the final standings ahead of South Korea’s LowHigh, with Yagami in third and Arslan Ash fourth. LowHigh received \$130,000 in prize money, while Yagami earned \$70,000 and Arslan Ash took home \$50,000. Zubair’s achievement adds another significant chapter to Pakistan’s growing reputation in competitive Tekken. The country has established itself as a powerhouse in the fighting game, with players such as Arslan Ash and Atif Butt already

recognised internationally. The victory is significant not only for the prize money but also for the manner in which Zubair reached the top. After securing his place in the EWC through the qualification route, the Pakistani player overcame experienced international opposition before producing a commanding performance against LowHigh in the final. The official Tekken esports database lists the champion as Khawaja Muhammad Zubair, who competes under the name AG M. Zubair. His 2026 season record also includes participation in the Tekken World Tour, further strengthening his credentials on the international competitive scene.

World number one Sabalenka ousted in Toronto by Alexandrova

Alexandrova defeated the four-time Grand Slam winner from Belarus 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 6-4

TORONTO: 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. The 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 Amer-

ican 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. The Russian took five of the last six points to seal the first set when Sabalenka swatted a cross-

court 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.” – APP

Father of soccer star Lionel Messi dies at 68 in Argentina

Jorge spent his final months alternating between medical centre in Rosario and his home, says family

BUENOS AIRES: Jorge Messi, the father of soccer star Lionel Messi, died on Friday night at the age of 68 at a medical clinic in the Argentine city of Rosario after a long illness, the Argentine footballer’s family confirmed to Reuters. Jorge spent his final months alternating between a medical centre in Rosario and his home, accompanied by his wife Celia and his children Rodrigo, Matias and Maria Sol, the family said. Lionel Messi spent time with his father after the World Cup before rejoining his club, Inter Miami, for whom he returned to action a week ago. Jorge closely accompanied his son Lionel throughout his career, beginning with his early years at Barcelona. He acted as a crucial pillar of support and, for several years, served as his representative. “I always needed my dad’s approval, ever since I was a kid. After every match, I’d ask him what he thought of how I played,” the global soccer star said previously. During the World Cup, the captain of the Argentine national team experienced mixed emotions after scoring a hat trick in the opening match against Algeria, breaking down in tears while celebrating his first goal. Later, at a press conference, Lionel explained that his tears were due to “something unrelated to football” after going through “a few difficult, complicated days.” – APP

Trump says Iran must pay compensation

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the US president added, “because I am now likewise demanding compensation from Iran.” He added that compensation should also be paid to the families of “hundreds of thousands of innocent protesters that Iran has killed over the last 50 years” as well as 52,000 killed in recent months. “I have instructed my representatives to put this firmly into any, and all, future negotiations,” Trump said.

Opp leaders urges PM to appoint...

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between the prime minister and the leader of the opposition under Article 213,” he added. He also urged the prime minister to meet with him to finalise the names for the key posts. It is pertinent to mention here that PM Shehbaz had invited then National Assembly Opposition Leader Omar Ayub for a meeting regarding consultations over the appointment of a CEC in June last year. The NA, however, removed Ayub and other PTI-backed leaders from prominent parliamentary positions following their disqualification by the ECP in the May 9 cases in August last year.

Kazakh envoy calls on Shehbaz

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He especially acknowledged the Ambassador’s role in facilitating the visit of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Pakistan in February 2026, which elevated bilateral relations to the level of a Strategic Partnership. The Prime Minister conveyed his warm regards to President Tokayev and reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to deepening the multifaceted partnership with Kazakhstan, including through enhanced regional connectivity, expanded trade linkages, and closer collaboration in the fields of energy, education, and people-to-people exchanges. Ambassador Kistafin thanked the Prime Minister for the cooperation and assistance extended to him during his tenure and expressed confidence that the trajectory of Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations would continue to grow under the strategic partnership framework. The Prime Minister wished the Kazakh Ambassador success in his future assignment.

Five terrorists killed

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The killed militants were involved in robbery, extortion, kidnapping and terrorist activities targeting traders and civilians in the area. A clearance operation is underway to eliminate any remaining Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists in the vicinity, the security sources said. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi praised security forces for carrying out a successful IBO in Panjgur, Balochistan, and commended their professionalism after five terrorists were killed during the raid. In a statement, the interior minister said that the security forces had once again demonstrated their resolve in the fight against terrorism. He added that the country’s courageous troops were continuing efforts to eliminate terrorists from Balochistan and restore lasting peace in the province. Naqvi said the entire nation stood united against terrorism and remained firmly alongside the security forces in the fight against militant elements. The minister reiterated the government’s commitment to supporting security forces in their efforts to eradicate terrorism from the country. A day ago, security forces eliminated 15 India-backed terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij during a series of IBOs conducted under Operation Rad-ul-Fitna-3 across multiple districts of Balochistan, including Mastung, Bolan, Washuk, Awaran, Sibi, Khuzdar, Harnai and Nushki. Pakistan witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its KP and Balochistan provinces, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban came into power.

Joaquin Niemann wins on LIV Golf for 9th time

BEDMINSTER, New Jersey: Joaquin Niemann closed with a 2-under 69 Sunday for a three-shot victory in LIV Golf New York, extending his record with his ninth career victory in the last three years. Jon Rahm shot 76 and tied for 41st, but that still was enough to clinch the season points title for the third straight time since the two-time major champion joined LIV Golf. Niemann, who won earlier this year in South Korea, went wire-to-wire at Trump International. He finished at 16-under 268. Harold Varner III caught Niemann until the Chilean pulled away late with a birdie on the 13th and an eagle on the par-5 15th. Varner shot 70 to finish second. “I feel like the more they push me, the better golfer I’m

going to become from every experience than I experience,” Niemann said. “To be able to hit the shots that I did and make the putts that I did coming down the stretch, I put credit on myself.” Bryson DeChambeau shot 71 and tied for 38th, 23 shots out of the lead. He cannot catch Rahm with one tournament remaining. “It’s been a great year,” Rahm said. “Again, a little sour taste in my mouth because of how badly I played this week. But it’s been something to be proud of.” It capped a week in which LIV Golf CEO Scott O’Neil said it has signed a term sheet with a lead investor that will allow the league to go forward without Saudi Arabia funding. O’Neil did not identify the investor or the size of the investment. – APP

Roger Ibanez to stay at Al-Ahli until 2030

DUBAI: Brazilian defender Roger Ibanez has extended his contract with reigning Asian champions Al-Ahli until the summer of 2030, the club announced on Sunday. Ibanez signed his new contract on Sunday at Al-Ahli’s headquarters in Jeddah, ending the negotiations that had started before the center back departed for the US to represent his country at the 2026 World Cup. Talks had been put on hold during the tournament, but resumed after the player returned from his post-World Cup holidays, which had followed Brazil’s exit at the hands of Norway in the Round of 16.

UEFA, AFC, CONCACAF hit out at Infantino over World Cup stake sale



UEFA, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and CONCACAF, which runs football in the Caribbean, North and Central America, issued a joint statement on Monday attacking FIFA President Gianni Infantino over his conduct during the proposed sale of stake in the commercial rights to the World Cup. The statement said that Infantino had broken trust “through deception” with the now abandoned proposal, had “placed himself above the collective” and the

three confederations called for a fully independent review of what had happened. “Football’s strength has always been its unity,” the statement concluded. “We call for that unity to be honored now, for leadership that serves football, not seeks to command it.” – APP

Niemann earns wire-to-wire victory at LIV Golf New York

Torque GC’s push was fueled once again by Niemann, whose closing two-under 69 sealed his win by three shots and pushed him to 16-under for the week, three shots clear of Varner III

BEDMINSTER: Joaquin Niemann added to his record number of tournament wins and Jon Rahm clinched another season-long Individual Championship on Sunday at LIV Golf New York 2026. Rahm secured his third consecutive season title while Crushers GC claimed the team honor. Niemann fought off Harold Varner III to win his ninth individual LIV Golf title, extending his all-time record, and recording his second win of the season. Crushers GC’s win in Bedminster was also their 11th regular-season team title in LIV Golf, extending their own all-time record as the winningest side in league history. Their success has been built on a core roster that has remained together since 2022 under captain Bryson DeChambeau. Paul Casey led the way for the team on Sunday with a three-under 68, backed by steady rounds from Anirban Lahiri and Charles

Howell III as DeChambeau’s group held off both Legion XIII and Torque GC down the stretch. Legion XIII and Torque GC finished tied for second on the team leaderboard, both two shots back of the Crushers. Rahm’s championship-clinching week came despite a poor final round of five-over 76, with Caleb Surratt (71) and Tom McKibbin (72) doing the heavy lifting for Legion XIII. Torque GC’s push was fueled once again by Niemann, whose closing two-under 69 sealed his win by three shots and pushed him to 16-under for the week, three shots clear of Varner III. Niemann said the pressure of the final round only sharpened his game. “That’s when I love it,” he said. “I feel like we like to be in our kind of comfort place, and I feel like the more they push me, the better golfer I’m going to become from every experience that I experience.” He added: “I was just hoping to be this way,

be as exciting as it was, and then to be able to hit the shots that I did and make the putts that I did coming down the stretch.” For Rahm, the third straight title came despite a rough week individually, where he finished T41. The Legion XIII captain was candid about his difficult stretch over the past two LIV Golf events. “Yeah, the last two weeks haven’t been the best, have they,” Rahm said. “I would say proud of earlier in the season. I think to start off as well as I did with a few second places and not getting the win and then going to Hong Kong and getting it done when I needed to, having a lead and then basically losing it and birdieing four in a row in the last few holes was probably the most proud moment.” He added: “It’s been great. It’s been a great year. Again, a little sour taste in my mouth because of how badly I played this week.

But it’s been something to be proud of. “After last year and not getting the win, having possibly a question mark over the season-long race, to win twice and do it effectively and win it again definitely feels good.” Varner III could not quite close the gap despite another strong round, a one-under 70 that left him solo second at 13-under. Lee Westwood and Scott Vincent tied for third at nine-under, with Westwood one-over 72 and Vincent closing with a five-under 66, the low round among the group. Byeong Hun An finished fifth at seven-under, while Thomas Pieters, Tom McKibbin and Paul Casey tied for sixth at six-under. Younghun Song and Branden Grace shared ninth at four-under, and Laurie Canter, Sergio Garcia and Richard T. Lee tied for 11th at three-under. Danny Lee rounded out the top 15 at two-under, with Caleb Surratt and Peter Uihlein finishing at even par. – APP

Briefs

Rupee gains
01 paisa
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.70, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.71. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 278.50 and Rs 278.75, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 1.21 and closed at Rs 321.14 against the previous day's closing of Rs 319.93, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.75, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 1.55 and closed at Rs 374.96 compared to the previous day's Rs 373.41. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 75.60. While the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant at Rs 73.96.—APP

PSX sheds
119 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Monday, losing 119.74 points, a negative change of 0.07 percent, to close at 181,310.28 points against 181,430.02 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 917.269 million shares, compared to 716.039 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs44,806 billion from Rs34,102 billion. Market capitalisation rose to Rs20,258 trillion from Rs20,238 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 496 companies that traded in the ready market, 225 posted gains, 234 suffered losses, while 37 remained unchanged, reflecting a mixed trend across the market. Energycro PK led the volume chart with 173.553 million shares, followed by Bank of Punjab with 61.614 million shares and TPL Properties with 50,021 million shares. Among the top gainers, Attock Refinery Limited surged by Rs71.60 to close at Rs1,059.47, while National Refinery Limited advanced by Rs44.58 to settle at Rs492.95.—APP

Gold price
surges by Rs
800 per tola

ISLAMABAD, Aug 10 (APP): Gold prices witnessed an upward trend in the local market on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs800 to settle at Rs457,336, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs685 to reach Rs392,091, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs628 to Rs359,429. In the international market, the price of gold climbed by \$8 to \$4,349 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, silver prices also recorded an upward trend in the local market. The price of silver per tola increased by Rs77 to Rs6,903, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs66 to Rs5,918. The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$0.77 to \$64.24 per ounce, the association added.—APP

Govt's proposed oil price deregulation initiative lauded

The Federal Minister said that maintaining fuel supplies and keeping prices stable during the crisis had been a challenging task, but the government, in coordination with the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) and other relevant stakeholders, took timely measures to ensure continuity of fuel supplies and protect consumers from disruptions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Gunvor Group, a Switzerland-based global energy trading company, called on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema and discussed opportunities for cooperation in Pakistan's energy and petroleum sectors. The delegation comprised Shahb Richyal, Global Head of Portfolio; Seth Thomas Pietras, Corporate Affairs Director; and Kashif Mayo, Head of Corporate Affairs. During the meeting, Federal Minister Ahad Cheema highlighted the Government of Pakistan's efforts to upgrade and modernize the country's oil refineries, saying that the government was actively pursuing measures to strengthen the petroleum sector and improve its efficiency and competitiveness. The Gunvor Group delegation expressed its willingness to support the government in the refinery upgradation process and explore avenues for greater cooperation in this regard. The Federal Minister also discussed the government's proposed initiative to deregulate oil prices, describing it as an important step towards reforming the petroleum market. He said the Cabinet may soon approve the proposed deregulation policy, paving the way for a more competitive and efficient petroleum market. The Gunvor Group officials welcomed the proposed deregulation initiative, noting that it would promote healthy competition



among Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and contribute to greater efficiency in the sector.

Ahad Cheema further apprised the delegation of the government's ongoing reform process in Pakistan State Oil (PSO), emphasizing the importance of strengthening the country's leading state-owned oil marketing company through institutional and operational reforms.

The Gunvor Group officials appreciated the efforts of the Government of Pakistan in ensuring an uninterrupted fuel supply during

the recent Gulf crisis. They noted that adequate fuel remained available in the country despite the challenging international situation, reflecting the government's effective management of the supply chain. The Federal Minister said that maintaining fuel supplies and keeping prices stable during the crisis had been a challenging task, but the government, in coordination with the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) and other relevant stakeholders, took timely measures to ensure continuity of fuel supplies and protect

consumers from disruptions. The Gunvor officials also informed the Federal Minister that Parco Gunvor Limited (PGL) was expanding its business and network in Pakistan. Ahad Cheema welcomed the expansion plans and assured the delegation that the Government of Pakistan was committed to facilitating legitimate business and investment activities and creating a conducive environment for investors and international companies. The Federal Minister also highlighted the important role being

played by OGRA in regulating and overseeing the petroleum sector, while emphasizing the government's broader agenda of reforms aimed at improving transparency, efficiency, competition and investment in the energy market. Both sides expressed their commitment to continued engagement and cooperation, particularly in areas relating to refinery modernization, petroleum-sector reforms, market development and investment, with a view to further strengthening Pakistan's energy security and economic growth.

SAPM calls for stronger
Pak-China eco partnership

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Monday met with a delegation of the Dongguan Ganzhou Chamber of Commerce, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening economic and business ties with China. The meeting was attended by the President of the Dongguan Ganzhou Chamber of Commerce, Special Secretary Industries Ahsan Ali Mangi, and Joint Secretary Freedoon Akram Sheikh, said a news release. Welcoming the Chinese delegation to Pakistan, Haroon said that China holds a special place in the hearts of the Pakistani people, adding that the remarkable progress achieved by China under its visionary leadership offers valuable lessons and opportunities for Pakistan. He said that the visionary leadership and sustained efforts of prime minister have brought Pakistan and China closer than ever before. He emphasized that Pakistan looks forward to expanding economic cooperation with China through business-to-business partnerships, joint ventures, investment, technology transfer, and people-to-people contacts. The SAPM highlighted significant opportunities for cooperation in battery energy storage, solar and renewable energy, electric vehicles, and modern technologies integrated with Artificial Intelligence. He said these emerging sectors offer considerable potential for joint investment, technology cooperation, and industrial development between the two countries. Haroon said that Pakistan and China have already signed numerous Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), and efforts are now underway to move these agreements into the implementation phase. He emphasized the importance of translating bilateral commitments into tangible investment, production, and employment opportunities. He said Pakistan is entering a new phase of industrial transformation and that this is an opportune time for Chinese investors to explore the country's growing investment potential. The government, he added, is working to transform Pakistan into a global manufacturing hub and an attractive investment platform. Highlighting the government's reform agenda, Haroon said practical measures are being undertaken to facilitate investors and the business community. He particularly mentioned the recently introduced Regulatory Guillotine reforms, aimed at eliminating unnecessary regulations, reducing red tape, and making it easier to do business in Pakistan. The Chinese delegation briefed the SAPM on business opportunities in various sectors and the activities and initiatives of the Dongguan Ganzhou Chamber of Commerce. The delegation expressed interest in exploring opportunities for enhanced business and investment cooperation with Pakistan. Haroon Akhtar Khan assured the delegation of the government's full support and facilitation for strengthening Pakistan-China economic relations and encouraged Chinese businesses to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan. At the conclusion of the meeting, the SAPM presented a commemorative shield to the visiting delegation.—DNA

UK couple held in
Iran end hunger
strikes: family

LONDON: A British couple detained in Iran accused of spying have ended their latest months-long hunger strikes protesting their treatment in prison, their family said Monday. Lindsay and Craig Foreman, both aged in their early 50s, were seized in January 2025 as they passed through central Iran while on a round-the-world motorbike trip. They were each sentenced in February this year to a decade in prison on espionage charges that they deny, with two years subsequently added to Craig Foreman's term for talking to the media, his stepson said in July. They launched their latest hunger strikes

in May, protesting the "serious physical toll" their detentions were taking, with Craig Foreman lasting 93 days and his wife 84 days, according to their relatives. The couple have consistently complained about overcrowded and unsanitary conditions at Evin Prison, a large, heavily fortified complex in northern Tehran, which rights groups say holds political prisoners and foreign nationals. "After almost three months of protest, Lindsay and Craig chose to end their hunger strikes," the family said in a statement, noting the pair ended the action by turning the final

five days into a "fast for good." It aimed to transform the protest "into something constructive and collective, drawing attention not only to their own detention but to the rights and humanity of others imprisoned in Iran." The action follows the couple staging a month-long joint hunger strike late last year, demanding Iranian authorities let them have more regular contact. Around a month into the latest hunger strike, United Nations rights experts warned they were at serious risk, while charging that their detention could amount to "hostage-taking." Lindsay Foreman's son Joe Bennett said in Monday's statement that "the immediate focus remains Lindsay and Craig's health, their welfare and securing their release after more than 18 months in detention." "This has become even more challenging recently as the UK embassy was closed again on July 22 and is now operating remotely," he noted. Bennett, who has been campaigning full-time for their release, has spoken previously about his fears about the negative impact the US war with Iran could have on their case.—APP

Philippines, Pakistan
seek to boost bilateral
trade to \$500m

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Philippines to Pakistan, Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez, on Monday reiterated the commitment to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and the Philippine to US\$ 500 million, stressing that the private sectors and chambers of commerce of both countries could play a pivotal role in expanding trade and economic relations. "The current bilateral trade between Pakistan and the Philippines stood at around US\$ 197 million, which was significantly below the actual trade potential of the two countries. There was, therefore, a need to explore new avenues for trade, investment and business-to-business linkages," Ambassador of Philippines to Pakistan, Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez said this in an exclusive interview to APP here. The Ambassador said the Philippines, being the second-largest market in The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in terms of population, could serve as an important gateway for Pakistan to the ASEAN region and the Philippines could also play a significant role in strengthening Pakistan's trade and economic engagement with ASEAN member states. The envoy said that after the finalization of a Regional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with ASEAN, Pakistan could benefit substantially from the approximately US\$ four trillion ASEAN market.—DNA

S Korea, US
exercises
to bolster
readiness
against North's
threats

SEOUL: South Korean and US troops will begin their annual exercises next week to beef up readiness against North Korean threats, the allies announced Monday, days after North Korea resumed ballistic missile testing activities that are banned by the UN. The Ulchi Freedom Shield is to begin next Monday for a 11-day run and its scale will be similar to previous years with about 18,000 South Korean soldiers participating in it, South Korean military spokesperson Jang Do-young told reporters. Speaking at the same news conference, US military spokesperson Ryan Donald said by incorporating realistic threats including "lessons from recent conflicts," the exercise will serve as an opportunity to further strengthen the alliance's readiness and capabilities through combined, joint, all-domain operations. He cited North Korea's dispatch of troops to support Russia's war against Ukraine in recent years.—APP

Greece
battles new
fire near
Athens driven
by winds

ATHENS: A new wildfire broke out in Greece Monday morning southeast of the capital Athens, fanned by strong winds of more than 70 kilometers per hour, firefighters said. At least 172 firefighters and around 40 vehicles have been deployed to fight the blaze in Kouvaras, 60 km (37 miles) southeast of Athens, in the Attica region, the fire service announced on X. "Two water-bombing aircraft and four helicopters" are also taking part, the service added. Agios Stylianos, a village near Kouvaras, has been ordered to evacuate by civil protection authorities. It marks the second fire near Athens this summer, after one that broke out 10 days ago northwest of the Greek capital and destroyed more than 11,000 hectares of pine forests and farmland. Because of gusts reaching up to 130 km/h, it took five days to bring the fire under control. Two helicopter crew members died in a collision with another helicopter while battling the flames. Like much of the Mediterranean, Greece has experienced increasingly frequent and intense wildfires that scientists link to climate change.—APP

Flood death toll in Assam reaches 100

Experts say human-caused climate change is intensifying South Asia's monsoons, which traditionally run from June to September and again from October to December. The rains, once predictable, now arrive in erratic bursts that dump extreme amounts of water in short periods, followed by dry spells

GUWAHATI, India: The flood crisis in India's northeastern Assam state remained critical on Monday, with the death toll reaching 100 after two more people died overnight, officials said. Several rivers remain above danger levels, raising the risk of fresh flooding in vulnerable areas, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said. Days of heavy monsoon rain has caused rivers, including the Brahmaputra, to overflow that inundated communities while disrupting livelihoods and damaging infrastructure. The river, one of Asia's largest that originates in China's Tibet region and flows about 900 kilometers (560 miles) through Assam, flooded villages, swept away homes and forced nearly 300,000 people into government-run relief camps, officials said. The floods that began last month displaced more than 700,000 people and submerged vast stretches of farmland and damaged roads and other local infrastructure. Although many residents have begun returning to their

homes as floodwaters recede, at least 49,000 flood-affected residents remain housed in 125 relief camps and relief distribution centers, officials said. Authorities remained engaged in relief and monitoring efforts as they assessed the extent of the damage and the needs of affected populations. The floods also devastated livestock, with large numbers of cattle lost, dealing a blow to rural communities and raising concerns about disease outbreaks. As the waters receded in some areas, many families returned to homes buried under thick layers of silt, adding to the challenges of recovery. Farukuddin Ahmed, a 47-year-old trader from Nazira town in Assam's worst-hit Sivasagar district, said displaced families were slowly returning home, many to rebuild on ground still buried under two to three feet (up to a meter) of silt. A nearby village, Nepali Khuti, had about 100 households before the floods. "Only a few houses are left and the rest washed away by the surging flood waters," Ahmed said. "The residents, main-

ly dairy farmers, have to rebuild their lives from scratch having lost all their cattle." Aid in the form of roofing sheets and other building materials was beginning to arrive, he added. "We have directed officials to complete damage assessment as soon as possible so the government could provide financial assistance for their rehabilitation," Assam Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Pijush Hazarika said after a review meeting. He said some 50,000 affected people were already paid interim monetary compensation. The annual monsoon season frequently triggers flooding in Assam, where swollen rivers inundate large areas and displace thousands of residents each year. Experts say human-caused climate change is intensifying South Asia's monsoons, which traditionally run from June to September and again from October to December. The rains, once predictable, now arrive in erratic bursts that dump extreme amounts of water in short periods, followed by dry spells.—APP

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Briefs

'Acid traces' found in Mir Raza Ali's stomach, clothes

DNA

KARACHI: Evidence of acid has been found in deceased businessman Mir Raza Ali's stomach, and severe acid-related damage was detected in his lungs, sources said on Monday. According to sources, traces of acid were also found on Ali's hands and feet, while his shirt reportedly carried traces of acid and another person's sweat. Sources said that police had sealed a guesthouse located near the scene after it was deemed suspicious, and detained six people working at the guesthouse. The arrest of the six individuals took the total number of people detained in connection with the case to 21, including the deceased businessman's friends and business partners, they added. Statements of the detained individuals have also been recorded, sources said. The revelations emerged a day after Ali's body was exhumed and reburied after a medical board conducted a second post-mortem examination. The initial medical report — a copy of which is available with Geo News — provided answers to all 14 points raised during the examination by police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed. According to sources, the report revealed that Ali sustained a gunshot wound from the rear, while marks of violence were found across his body.

Pakistan plans to open new gateway for foreign oil suppliers

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to open its petroleum storage sector to international oil suppliers through a customs-bonded framework that would permit local sales as well as re-exports. The move is aimed at positioning Pakistan as a regional petroleum storage and trading hub while enhancing energy security and supply-chain resilience. The Policy Guideline on Import on Foreign Suppliers' Account through Customs Bonded Storage Facilities-2026 offers international suppliers a mechanism to maintain inventories in Pakistan without immediately triggering domestic duties and taxes, while giving them greater flexibility to decide whether to supply the domestic market or re-export their stocks. The Petroleum Division has sent the 168-page policy to ECC (Economic Coordination Committee) for approval. The policy covers a wide range of strategic energy commodities, including crude oil of all grades, motor spirit, high-speed diesel, jet fuel, fuel oil, LPG and LNG. — APP

Sudan's Burhan pushes for inclusive national talks as early as August

DNA

KHARTOUM: Sudanese political sources revealed to Asharq that Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, has held political and societal consultations as part of ongoing preparations to launch the upcoming Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue. The sources said the consultations focused on ways to create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue in Sudan, confidence-building measures, and proposed agenda items, as well as exploring options to broaden participation and achieve a national consensus for the upcoming phase. They noted that al-Burhan held a series of separate meetings with political leaders and factions to emphasize the importance of advancing toward a comprehensive Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue that addresses current national challenges and yields agreements to enhance stability and support the transitional track. According to the sources, al-Burhan stressed during the meetings that the country is passing through a critical juncture requiring an inclusive dialogue that responds to the aspirations of the Sudanese people and allows various political and societal forces to participate in shaping the country's future—with the exception of the National Congress Party and the Founding Alliance (Tasis) affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The consultations encompassed political groups, technocrats, Sufi leaders, native/tribal authorities, civil society representatives, and independent figures, as part of efforts to expand participation in the anticipated talks. The sources pointed out that al-Burhan promised to implement confidence-building measures and foster a favorable

political climate for dialogue, including reviewing and resolving a number of related legal complaints and administrative procedures to ensure a suitable environment for all parties to engage in the political process. The Arranging the dialogue's date and agenda the sources also told Asharq that there is a proposal to convene the Sudanese-Sudanese dialogue during the current month of August. They explained that current consultations aim to build consensus on the timing, agenda, and participation structure before establishing a final date. In the same context, sources reported upcoming contacts with the Alliance of Civil Democratic Forces (Samood) to engage various political and civil groups, discuss their positions on the proposed dialogue, and explore their potential participation. They confirmed that consultations remain ongoing to reach a common understanding on the structure, agenda, and participants of the dialogue, alongside practical steps to prepare the political and legal environment for a broad-based Sudanese dialogue. These efforts come amid growing calls to launch a Sudanese-led political track that brings together various national components to discuss issues of war and peace, the future of the state, and transitional arrangements toward a comprehensive political settlement. War broke out between the Sudanese Army and the Rapid Support Forces in mid-April 2023 over disagreements regarding the integration of the RSF into the armed forces and other key issues during a transitional period intended to culminate in democratic elections and a transition to civilian rule. In November of last year, the United States presented a peace plan to both the Sudanese Army and the Rapid Support Forces to end the war, but it was rejected by both warring parties, according to statements by US Envoy Perriello at the time.

Pakistan, US discuss bilateral trade, economic cooperation

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meets with US Chargé d'Affaires to Pakistan, H.E. Ms. Natalie Baker, at the Finance Division



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to Pakistan, H.E. Ms. Natalie Baker, at the Finance Division to discuss Pakistan-U.S. economic relations and opportunities for further strengthening bilateral economic cooperation. The Finance Minister briefed the Chargé d'Affaires on his recent visit to Washington, where he held discussions with the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, senior management of the International Monetary Fund

(IMF), the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the U.S. Export-Import Bank (EXIM). He highlighted the constructive engagement with U.S. institutions and discussed opportunities to further strengthen financial cooperation, investment and financing for commercially viable projects in Pakistan. The Finance Minister also shared an update on the recent engagement with the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) regarding the Pakistan-U.S. reciprocal trade framework. He noted the considerable progress made in the discussions and emphasized Pakistan's interest in taking the framework forward on a mu-

tually beneficial basis, including through enhanced market access, greater export opportunities and increased bilateral trade. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb also briefed the Chargé d'Affaires on Pakistan's engagement with international capital markets and efforts to diversify financing sources. He highlighted the Government's focus on improving foreign exchange reserves, strengthening the sovereign credit profile and accessing longer-term financing instruments to support economic stability and sustainable economic growth. The discussion also covered opportunities for greater participation of U.S. financial institutions, including DFC, in Pakistan's in-

vestment landscape. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of identifying specific, investment-ready projects and developing appropriate financing structures to facilitate greater participation by U.S. companies and financial institutions. The two sides also exchanged views on ports and logistics, energy, telecommunications, digital technology, artificial intelligence and other emerging sectors. The Finance Minister highlighted the Government's efforts to create an enabling environment for private-sector investment and welcomed growing interest among U.S. companies and investors in Pakistan. Ms. Baker appreciated Pakistan's efforts in navigating the recent regional conflict and its economic implications, particularly rising energy prices, while maintaining economic and financial stability. The Finance Minister briefed her on measures to manage the evolving situation, including the recent move towards a daily price revision mechanism for petroleum products to align domestic prices more closely with international market conditions. He emphasized the Government's continued focus on fiscal discipline, strengthening foreign exchange reserves, promoting exports and sustaining economic growth. The Finance Minister acknowledged the constructive role of US partners and emphasized Pakistan's openness to facilitating investment and improving the business environment. He reiterated the government's focus on structural reforms, export-led growth, and strengthening institutional frameworks. Ms. Baker reaffirmed U.S. support for Pakistan's economic reform agenda and appreciated the Government's efforts to stabilize the economy amid challenging circumstances. She expressed continued U.S. interest in strengthening bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation, particularly through greater participation of U.S. companies in key sectors of the Pakistani economy.

Greece battles new fire near Athens driven by winds

MANILA: The United States is not disengaging from Asia and is instead "digging in" to maintain a favorable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, but wants its partners to shoulder more responsibility for their defense, a senior Pentagon official said on Monday. Seeking to counter concerns about Washington's reliability, Elbridge Colby, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, reiterated the US interest in the region as he called for greater burden-sharing and "partnership, not dependency." "America is definitely not disengaging from Asia," Colby said in a speech in Manila. "We are not leaving; in fact, we are digging in, to ensure a favorable balance of power where it matters most." The Philippines, the United States' oldest treaty ally in Asia, is the first stop on a Southeast Asian trip that also will take Colby to Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia. Colby said maintaining a favorable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific required a "posture of deterrence by denial along the First Island Chain" and pointed to what he said was a growing US military commitment in the region. The First Island Chain refers to an area stretching from Japan down to Taiwan, the Philippines and Borneo. The strategy could not rest on American forces alone, he said, arguing that allies should invest more in their security. "When we ask our allies and partners to step up, to invest more in their own defense, and to take responsibility for their own sovereign security, we are not signaling abandonment," Colby said. — APP

US seeks 'partners, not protectorate

The strategy could not rest on American forces alone

MANILA: The United States is not disengaging from Asia and is instead "digging in" to maintain a favorable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, but wants its partners to shoulder more responsibility for their defense, a senior Pentagon official said on Monday. Seeking to counter concerns about Washington's reliability, Elbridge Colby, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, reiterated the US interest in the region as he called for greater burden-sharing and "partnership, not dependency." "America is definitely not disengaging from Asia," Colby said in a speech in Manila. "We are not leaving; in fact, we are digging in, to ensure a favorable balance of power where it matters most." The Philippines, the United States' oldest treaty ally in Asia, is the first stop on a Southeast Asian trip that also

will take Colby to Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia. Colby said maintaining a favorable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific required a "posture of deterrence by denial along the First Island Chain" and pointed to what he said was a growing US military commitment in the region. The First Island Chain refers to an area stretching from Japan down to Taiwan, the Philippines and Borneo. The strategy could not rest on American forces alone, he said, arguing that allies should invest more in their security. "When we ask our allies and partners to step up, to invest more in their own defense, and to take responsibility for their own sovereign security, we are not signaling abandonment," Colby said. "We are looking for partners, not protectorates." "When our partners are strong, deterrence is strong," he added. — APP

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