



Islamabad POST

Friday, August 14, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

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Meets Norway FM

Field marshal underlines Pak role in peace

The visiting dignitary appreciated professional role played by the Pakistan Armed Forces in promoting regional peace and stability

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A high-level delegation from the Kingdom of Norway, led by Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Espen Barth Eide, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and bilateral relations between Pakistan and Kingdom of Norway were discussed. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir highlighted Pakistan's perspective on global peace and regional stability underscoring the importance of cooperation and collaborative efforts to address common security challenges. The visiting dignitary appreciated professional role played by the Pakistan Armed Forces in promoting regional peace and stability. Both sides reiterated their resolve to further strengthen bilateral ties and expand engagements in defence and security domains.

Norwegian foreign minister praises Pakistan's leadership

Addresses a joint press conference with FM Ishaq Dar

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide expressed his country's appreciation of Pakistan's mediatory role in the ongoing US-Iran conflict on Thursday, saying it was a "service to the world and, hence, also to us". Eide, who is on a two-day visit to Pakistan, expressed these views while addressing a press conference alongside Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad. "I also really want to reiterate our strong support for the very important role that Pakistan has taken in this dramatic war that started on February 28 with

the US-Israel attack on Iran," he said, recalling that Norway was one of the Western countries that was "clearest and earliest" in stating that the war was a violation of international rules. "If we stand up for international law, it has to apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time," he stressed. He said that while Norway had "significant disagreements with Iran on other issues, they also have the right to be protected as a state". Coming to Pakistan's mediatory role in the ongoing conflict, he said he realised how difficult mediation and facilitation of parleys between the two sides could be. "I know what a massive task you were taking on when you offered Islamabad not only as the venue but also as the facilitator of these talks,"

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ISLAMABAD: The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway, H.E. Mr. Espen Barth Eide calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Japan envoy greets Pak on Ind. Day



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Akamatsu Shuichi, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, has extended his heartfelt felicitations to the Government and the people of Pakistan on the occasion of the 79th Independence Day of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on August 14, 2026. In his video message, Ambassador Akamatsu said "On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I extend our warmest wishes and heartfelt congratulations on Pakistan's Independence Day."

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Joint defence agreement

Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia will form political, military mechanisms

Kuwait, Bahrain and Somalia are among the countries that have welcomed it. Iran's comments also took a rather positive tone

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia will form political and military mechanisms under a defence pact signed between the regional powers last week, Turkiye's defence ministry said on Thursday, adding the alliance would also deepen defence industry cooperation. The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement was signed last week as the Middle East grapples with fallout from the US-Israeli war on Iran, which has dragged in regional players and disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. At a weekly briefing in Ankara, the ministry said the mechanisms would include the three countries' defence ministers, foreign ministers, and military chiefs. It added that the joint military exercises were also being planned under the pact, while cooperation could include joint production and technology sharing in the defence industry.

The remarks come a day after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that he hoped more countries would join the agreement. "Our vision for it is not limited to the three countries," the Turkish leader told the London-based Asharq Al-Awsat daily. "Rather, we aspire for it to grow, and perhaps appropriate conditions will emerge one day for all countries of the region to gather under its umbrella." Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Saturday said Turkiye expected Egypt to join the pact "in the next stage", telling the Anadolu state news agency only "a few technical issues" stood in the way. Egypt has not commented on the agreement nor on the remarks by Fidan, who will visit Cairo on Thursday and Friday. Kuwait, Bahrain and Somalia are among the countries that have

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Iran calls for compensation after Hormuz oil spill

Oil spills in recent decades caused trillions of dollars in damage to Iran's coastal areas, says Baqaei

NEWS DESK

PARIS: Iran warned on Thursday of environmental degradation in the Strait of Hormuz after an oil spill reached its southern Qeshm island, calling for compensation from those responsible. Foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the slick had "degraded the waters" of the Gulf and Sea of Oman, claiming "preliminary evidence indicates a foreign bulk carrier as the source". TankerTrackers, a US-hosted website that monitors shipping movements worldwide, said however, that the spill seemed to derive from an Iranian attack on bulk carrier Minoan Pioneer in Omani waters on August 3. "The spillage then drifted across the strait over to Iran," it said. Baqaei wrote on X that such spills have in "recent decades imposed trillions of dollars in damage on Iran's coastal areas", calling for compensation. "Every party that benefits from commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz carries both a legal and a moral obligation to remediate the environmental harm inflicted," he added.

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Briefs

Russian envoy extends greetings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Albert P. Khorev has conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the people of Pakistan on the occasion of Independence Day. In his message, the Ambassador praised the courage, determination, and resilience of the Pakistani nation, noting that the country has forged its own path of development inspired by the vision of its founding fathers. He emphasized the traditionally friendly and mutually respectful relations between Russia and Pakistan, highlighting the long history of cooperation and constructive engagement across multiple fields. Ambassador Khorev expressed confidence that both nations will continue to strengthen mutual understanding and expand their partnership for the benefit of their peoples.

Eid Milad un Nabi to fall on August 26

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Rabi ul Awwal moon has not been sighted and Eid Milad un Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) will fall on August 26, Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad announced on Thursday. The announcement was made following a meeting of the Ruet-e-Hilal Committee in Islamabad, chaired by Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad. Representatives from the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the Ministry of Science and Technology and other concerned institutions also provided their technical support in the matter. After reviewing reports and testimonies from across the country, the committee confirmed that no credible evidence of moon sighting had been received.

High profile wanted terrorist killed in IBO

Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Taliban administration to dismantle terrorist sanctuaries on Afghan soil, particularly those linked to the banned TTP. Officials say those appeals have gone unheeded

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: A highly wanted terrorist commander was killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted by the Bannu police and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), the district police confirmed on Thursday. Bannu's District Police Officer (DPO) Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Furqan Bilal confirmed the terrorist's killing in a conversation with Dawn. The DPO confirmed that the terrorist was identified as a high-profile commander, Naseer Muhammad alias Gedarh, who carried a Rs6 million bounty on his head. According to a statement issued by the police, an operation is underway against terrorists in the jurisdiction of Domel Police Station under the supervision of DPO Bilal, involving both the Bannu district police and CTD teams.

The statement elaborated that the operation is being conducted in Akbar Ali Khan Kili, Sada Khel, Sadarwan and the adjoining areas, where police and CTD teams are carrying out targeted actions based on intelligence reports regarding the presence and movement of terrorists. Search and surveillance operations are also underway in the area, while security has been further tightened in various parts of the Bannu township and Domel. The police said further details of the operation and its progress would be shared after the ongoing operation was completed. There has been a resurgence in terrorism in Pakistan since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Kabul in 2021. Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Taliban administration to dismantle terrorist sanctuaries on Afghan soil, particularly those linked to the banned TTP.

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Drug baroness acquitted in 3 cases

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A sessions court on Thursday acquitted alleged drug baroness Anmol alias Pinky in three narcotics cases registered at Karachi's Gizri police station. The three cases were registered against Pinky at the Gizri police station in 2020, 2021 and 2022, and she had been declared an absconder. Additional District and Sessions Judge South Irshad Hussain heard Pinky's pleas seeking acquittal. During the hearing, her counsel contended that she had been named in the cases on the basis of statements made by the co-accused, who had

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Taliban detains two UN staffers; six NGO workers

The Taliban government's chief spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, told that he was "trying to gather details" about the recent detentions, but had "not received final clarity."; Human Rights Watch called for the release

AGENCIES

KABUL: Human Rights Watch called for the release of two UN staffers and six NGO workers in Afghanistan following a string of Taliban detentions in recent weeks. HRW said on Wednesday that six male staff working with the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF) had been "forcibly disappeared" about the recent detentions, but had "not received final clarity." The UN confirmed the detention of two of its staffers earlier this week. "UNAMA has not been informed of the charges against them and has not been permitted to visit them," Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for the UN

Secretary-General, said in a briefing on Wednesday. Fereshta Abbasi, Afghanistan Researcher at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement that the detentions of UNAMA staff threatened the UN's "ability to deliver lifesaving aid." As the UN's political mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA is involved in human rights monitoring and data gathering. Its reports have frequently been criticized by the Taliban government in the past. The detentions became public only days before the Taliban celebrate the fifth anniversary of their return to power this Saturday. Afghanistan remains reliant on international assistance that has increasingly dried up amid broader foreign aid cuts over the last few years, but aid groups have regularly blamed the Taliban for obstructing their work and hampering donor commitment to Afghanistan. Human Rights Watch said Taliban security forces raided the WCLRF office in Kabul on June 21, confiscating employees' belongings and sealing the office, before questioning staff about their activities. The organization's leadership team of six male employees was detained one month later, on July 18, after Taliban authorities

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Independence Day reminder of forefathers' sacrifices: Imtiaz

Abbasi noted that Pakistan today stands tall in the comity of nations, owing to the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Imtiaz Abbasi has said that Pakistan's Independence Day is not only a celebration of freedom but also a solemn reminder of the immensesacrifices made by the nation's forefathers. He emphasized that the day must be observed with national zeal and fervor, reflecting unity, patriotism, and a collective commitment to the country's progress. Abbasi noted that Pakistan today stands tall in the comity of nations, owing to the leadership

of Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He praised their vision and efforts in strengthening Pakistan's global standing, particularly highlighting the country's commendable role in facilitating the recent U.S.-Iran agreement. According to him, this achievement underscores Pakistan's growing influence in international diplomacy and its ability to contribute meaningfully to global peace and stability. He urged the nation to unite and extend full support to the armed forces, who remain the guardians of Pakistan's frontiers. "Our armed forces are the shield against terrorism, and it is imperative that the entire nation stands behind them so they can nip the menace in the bud," Abbasi stated. He stressed that national solidarity and unwavering support for the military are essential for ensuring internal security and safeguarding the country's sovereignty. Abbasi also called upon the business community to play a proactive role in Pakistan's progress and wellbeing. He emphasized that entrepreneurs and industrialists must contribute to economic growth by investing in local industries, creating employment opportunities, and enhancing exports. "Economic strength is the backbone of national stability, and businessmen have a vital responsibility in building a prosperous Pakistan," he added. Highlighting the importance of unity, Abbasi said that political and personal differences must be set aside in favor of national interest. He reiterated that Independence Day should serve as a day of renewal — a pledge to work collectively for Pakistan's prosperity, stability, and self-reliance. "If we combine national unity, successful diplomacy, and effective economic policies, Pakistan can further elevate its position as a strong, independent, and economically stable country in the region and beyond," he concluded.

Junaid seeks revision of PQA sports policy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chaired a Port Qasim Authority (PQA) board meeting to review its sports policy and discuss comprehensive revision in line with current national and departmental requirements. The minister directed that the revised policy focus on departmental sports, player development, coaching and training, transparent selection mechanisms, improved sports facilities, incentives for players and clearly defined institutional responsibilities. He also proposed a unified sports policy for Pakistani ports and directed to organise a talent-hunting camp at Port Qasim to identify promising players. — APP

Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan JBC to promote trade ties

ISLAMABAD: The Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan, Aibek Tilebaliev called on the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Atif Ikram Sheikh, with discussions focusing on bilateral trade and economic relations, promotion of investment, and strengthening direct business-to-business (B2B) linkages between the business communities of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan. During the meeting held at the FPCCI President Secretariat in Islamabad, both sides emphasized the need to effectively promote B2B contacts between the private sectors of the two countries to further increase the existing volume of bilateral trade. FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh welcomed the growing high-level engagement

between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, saying that there was considerable potential for enhancing trade, investment and business cooperation between the two countries, which needed to be fully exploited. Atif said that a visit of a Pakistani business delegation to Kyrgyzstan under the platform of FPCCI could play an important role in promoting bilateral trade and investment. Such visits would provide businessmen and industrialists of both countries an opportunity to understand each other's markets, investment opportunities and business requirements. The meeting also discussed in detail the establishment of a "Joint Business Council" between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan to enhance bilateral trade. Both sides agreed to expedite necessary measures

for establishing the council to further strengthen institutional linkages between the two business communities. Atif Ikram Sheikh appreciated Kyrgyzstan's efforts in leading and enhancing the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). He said that the upcoming SCO Government Summit in Kyrgyzstan was an important development, adding that the SCO platform could serve as an effective mechanism for promoting trade and economic cooperation among Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and other member states. He said that regional connectivity, trade, investment and business-to-business cooperation could be further promoted through the SCO platform, which would help boost economic activity across the region. — APP

KP govt confers 'Youth Excellence Award' on youngster

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has conferred the 'Youth Excellence Award' on Hassan Nisar of Haripur for his work with young people and efforts to promote education, skills development and opportunities for youth in the province. Born in Khanpur, Haripur, Hassan Nisar has been involved in youth and education-related initiatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His work has focused on providing young people with access to learning, technology, skills training and opportunities, particularly in areas where such facilities remain limited. The award was presented by Taj Muhammad Tarand, Adviser to the Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs, at a ceremony held at Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Hall, University of Peshawar, on the occasion of International Youth Day. The event was organised by the Directorate of Youth Affairs, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Muhammad Asif, Director Youth Affairs Abbas Khan Afridi, Deputy Director Youth Affairs Atifa Yousafzai, government officials, students, young people and entrepreneurs attended the ceremony. Hassan Nisar is the founder of Metrix Pakistan, a youth-focused organisation established in 2022. The organisation has carried out much of its work in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in underprivileged and underserved areas where young people have limited access to education, training, technology, educational resources and professional opportunities. Through Metrix Pakistan, Hassan Nisar has educated thousands of individuals through workshops, training programmes and educational activities. The programmes have covered digital marketing, blockchain, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship and other areas of technology, providing young people with practical knowledge and skills. The organisation has also taken its programmes to communities outside major urban centres, involving students and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and areas with fewer opportunities for education, skills development and professional exposure. Hassan Nisar has also worked to promote education among young people and encourage them to pursue skills and learning in emerging fields. His activities have involved students, young entrepreneurs and youth from communities with limited access to such opportunities. Speaking at the ceremony, Taj Muhammad Tarand appreciated Hassan Nisar's work with young people and said that such initiatives were contributing to the development and promotion of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Muhammad Asif and Abbas Khan Afridi also appreciated his contribution to youth-related activities and his efforts to engage young people through educational and skills-based programmes. — APP

Speakers urge self-reform, unity at DI Khan moot

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The speakers at an all-parties conference (APC) have called for self-reform, national unity and an end to religious, ethnic, linguistic and political divisions, saying the country's problems could not be resolved without individual and collective accountability. The conference was organised by the Pakistan Markazi Muslim League at a local restaurant in connection with Pakistan Independence Day. Addressing the gathering, the party's Dera division president Qamar Muhammad Ramzan said that the people should refrain from blaming others and instead examine their own conduct. "If we correct ourselves, the system will automatically improve," he said. He urged upon the people to offer prayers, avoid falsehood, respect the rights of others and fulfil their responsibilities towards the Almighty and fellow citizens as well. He said his party would provide a platform for ending various forms of hatred and division. Shia Ulema Council Pakistan's central vice president Allama Muhammad Ramzan Tauqeer said there was no room for despair and that Pakistan would remain secure. Referring to Qaid-i-Azam's principles of faith, unity and discipline, he questioned whether the nation was truly united and disciplined. He said "firm conviction" meant placing trust in Allah rather than relying on foreign powers. He also called for free education, healthcare and justice, saying the poor were bearing the brunt of a system in which

basic services had become increasingly unaffordable. Pakistan Markazi Muslim League Dera division vice president Sohail Mangat said there was a need to understand the concept of an Islamic system, which, he said, could help address the country's problems. The party's general secretary Maqsood Hussain Sandhu said millions of people had sacrificed their lives during the struggle for Pakistan and thousands of women had suffered during the partition. He stressed the need to educate the younger generation about the sacrifices of their forefathers, the ideology of Pakistan, peace and national unity. Mufti Yasin, general secretary of the party's South Waziristan chapter, described independence as a great blessing and urged people to live according to Islamic teachings. Jamaat-i-Islami district general secretary Asad Jan said the objective of Pakistan's creation was the establishment of an Islamic system. He called for following the Seerat of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and ending sectarianism. Jamaat-i-Islami Dera tehsil president Zahid Mohibullah Advocate said patriotism should be reflected in people's conduct. He criticised corruption, unemployment and the lack of peace, and called for truthfulness and accountability. PML-N leader Dr Abdullah Zafri urged the younger generation to be familiarised with the ideology of Pakistan and the sacrifices made by Muslims of the subcontinent. — APP



RAWALPINDI: A high-level delegation from the Kingdom of Norway, led by Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Espen Barth Eide, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir-DNA

Shazam seeks technology boost for NDMA

NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, along with senior officers, received the federal minister at the NDMA headquarters. During the visit, the minister was given a detailed briefing on the functioning of the NEOC and NDMA's modern disaster management framework, which uses advanced technology for early warning, preparedness, risk assessment and emergency response. Video Player Officials briefed Ms Shaza Fatima on NDMA's artificial intelligence based systems, including mechanisms for early identification of emerging hazards and development of mitigation strategies to reduce disaster risks. She was also briefed on NDMA's next generation technology initiatives and proposed systems for strengthening risk communication and ensuring timely dissemination of disaster related information to vulnerable communities. The federal minister also visited the Mobile NEOC and Safe Construction Models, where she was apprised of their role in strengthening disaster preparedness and promoting resilient infrastructure. — APP

Chinese cultural delegation praises China Window

PESHAWAR: Advisor to China Cultural Center in Pakistan, Ms. Bai Jie and Director of Pak-China Cultural & Economic Progress Welfare Organization, Chen Tiantang visited China Window in Peshawar where they highly appreciated the cultural center's sustained efforts to promote Chinese culture, strengthen Pakistan-China friendship and expand people-to-people contacts between the two countries. During the visit, the Chinese guests toured different galleries of China Window and were briefed about its cultural, educational and public diplomacy initiatives. They showed keen interest in the centre's activities, particularly its programs aimed at familiarizing Pakistani youth with Chinese culture, language, history and the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China. Bai Jie and Chen Tiantang expressed their pleasure at witnessing the wide-ranging initiatives undertaken by Chi-

na Window and praised the management for creating a vibrant platform for cultural understanding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They said such institutions could play an important role in bringing the peoples of Pakistan and China closer and transforming the strong state-to-state relationship into deeper connections at the public level. During discussions, the two sides also exchanged views on launching reciprocal cultural exchange visits between citizens of Pakistan and China. The Chinese guests warmly welcomed the proposal, describing direct interaction between ordinary citizens, professionals, students, cultural representatives and members of civil society as an effective way of promoting mutual understanding and lasting friendship. China Window offered to take the first practical step by hosting a delegation from China in Pakistan. Under the proposed initiative, a small group of Chinese citizens would be invited to visit Pa-

kistan, where China Window would arrange their accommodation, meals, local transportation and a comprehensive program of cultural, educational and recreational activities. The proposed visit would also provide the Chinese delegation with opportunities to interact with Pakistani students, academics, professionals, journalists and representatives of different sectors, while visiting historical, cultural and tourist attractions. The initiative is intended to give the guests firsthand exposure to Pakistani society, hospitality and culture. It was agreed in principle that such exchanges should not remain one-sided and that reciprocal visits of Pakistani delegations to China should also be encouraged in the future. Both sides expressed confidence that regular exchanges could further strengthen mutual trust and create new avenues of cooperation in education, culture, youth engagement and public diplomacy. — APP

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Armed Forces Day

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National Day

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Armed Forces Day

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Armed Forces Day

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Independence Day

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33 Pakistani scholars prepare for UK study

British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: “Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships are one of the clearest examples of the UK-Pakistan partnership in action. They invest in people with the talent, ambition and purpose to make a difference



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Scholars from across Pakistan will shortly travel to the UK on fully funded Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships to study at leading British universities. Selected for their leadership potential, academic strength, and commitment to creating positive change, the scholars represent Pakistan's breadth of talent and ambition. They will begin a range of Masters and postgraduate programmes across the UK, gaining skills and networks in areas important to Pakistan's future, including education, governance, health, climate action, business, and civil society.

The British High Commission Islamabad hosted a pre-departure reception to celebrate their achievement, brief them on the UK study experience, and connect them with the wider UK-Pakistan scholarship community. The reception also reflected the scale and diversity of the UK's scholarship offer in Pakistan. Recent cohorts have included scholars from across Pakistan with strong participation from women and candidates from varied professional and social backgrounds. This year's Chevening and Commonwealth scholars will study across the UK, including in Bristol, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. They will study fields such as global health, human rights, media and development, innovation

and entrepreneurship, development economics, biological robotics and diplomacy. British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE said,“Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships are one of the clearest examples of the UK-Pakistan partnership in action. They invest in people with the talent, ambition and purpose to make a difference. I hope this year's scholars use their time in the UK to build new skills, lasting networks and fresh ideas, returning ready to contribute to Pakistan's future.” For many scholars, the award marks more than the start of an academic year. It is a chance to experience life in the UK, learn alongside students from around the world, and return home with ideas that can

help address practical challenges in their communities and professions. On their return, the scholars will join nearly 2,000 Chevening alumni and more than 1,500 Commonwealth alumni in Pakistan. These alumni work across education, governance, health, climate, business and civil society, strengthening links between the UK and Pakistan. The British High Commission is also keen to build partnerships with local partners to expand scholarship opportunities for Pakistanis in priority areas. Previous partnerships have supported additional places in subjects such as heritage, climate studies, sports and business, helping more talented Pakistanis access UK education and bring new skills back to Pakistan.

Local govt reform to strengthen governance

ISLAMABAD: A high-level national debate convened by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) brought together political leaders, policymakers, technocrats and civil society representatives for a wide-ranging discussion on how Pakistan could improve governance and service delivery. The debate examined multiple reform options, including the creation of new provinces and administrative units, stronger and more empowered local governments, fiscal devolution, institutional reform and better alignment of government structures with citizens' need, said a press release issued on Thursday. The debate, titled “Should Pakistan create more administrative units?”, was attended by senior representatives of PML(N), PPP, MQM, PTI, JI and JUI(F), federal ministers,

technocrats and civil society representatives. Participants offered different perspectives on the appropriate structure and scale of governance, with some supporting the creation of new provinces or smaller administrative units, others stressing empowerment of existing tiers, and many arguing that these options should be assessed together rather than treated as mutually exclusive. A recurring theme was that any governance restructuring should be informed by constitutional requirements, public demand, fiscal sustainability, administrative capacity and its likely impact on service delivery. Participants also highlighted the need for stronger devolution of political, administrative and financial authority so that governance structures, whether existing or newly created, could

respond more effectively to citizens. Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal said administrative restructuring should ultimately be judged by whether it reduces citizens' sense of exclusion and improves service delivery. He argued that smaller administrative units could bring government closer to citizens and stressed that local governments would remain an essential part of the governance architecture regardless of the number of provinces. He also said proposals for new provinces should be backed by public support. Minister of State for Law and Justice, Barrister Aqeel Malik said citizens most frequently approach elected representatives over local service delivery issues such as roads, streets and sewerage, underscoring the need for effective local governments. He also highlighted the financial constraints affecting meaningful devolution and proposed simultaneous national, provincial and local government elections for uniform terms, with local bodies receiving constitutional protection against premature dissolution.—DNA

Capital put on coordinated security footing for celebrations

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Thursday chaired a Command Conference at the Central Police Office, reviewing security, traffic and surveillance arrangements for Independence Day celebrations and directing all police wings to ensure coordinated deployment across the federal capital. An ICT Police spokesperson told APP that all senior officers of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police attended the conference, which reviewed the overall security situation in the city and preparedness of different wings ahead of the celebrations. The meeting noted that a large number of citizens were expected to visit recreational spots, major avenues, public places and celebration venues on Independence Day, requiring comprehensive arrangements for their security, smooth traffic flow and maintenance of a peaceful environment. IGP Rizvi directed additional deployment at important locations, major roads and public gathering places, enhanced monitoring of entry and exit points and a visible police presence across different areas of Islamabad. He instructed senior officers to personally supervise security arrangements in their respective areas and ensure that police teams remained prepared to respond promptly to any situation.—APP

Dr. Joseph extends good wishes to all Pakistanis on IDay

ISLAMABAD: Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad of the Catholic Diocese of Islamabad-Rawalpindi, on the occasion of Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, extended heartfelt felicitations and sincere good wishes to the government, armed forces, national institutions, civil society and the people of Pakistan. In his message on Independence Day, Archbishop said that ensuring the protection of constitutional rights, religious freedom, equality and human dignity was essential for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. He said Independence Day reminded the nation of the sacrifices made for the creation of Pakistan and provided an opportunity to renew the commitment to peace, stability and prosperity of the country. The Archbishop paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leaders of the Pakistan Movement and all those who rendered sacrifices for the establishment of Pakistan. He said Pakistan's progress was linked with unity, faith, discipline, justice, equality, religious harmony and respect for human dignity. Arshad said that, in accordance with Quaid-e-Azam's vision, all citizens of Pakistan, irrespective of religion, caste, race, language or social background, should enjoy equal rights, opportunities, protection and dignity. He stressed that the fulfillment of this vision required ensuring constitutional rights, religious freedom, personal security and equal participation of all communities in national life. He said religious minorities, particularly Pakistani Christians, had rendered significant services in the fields of education, healthcare, defence, public administration, social welfare, humanitarian assistance and national development. “The Christian community is a loyal and responsible part of Pakistani society and will continue to play its role for the peace, stability, security and prosperity of the country,” he added. Arshad urged the government, national institutions, religious leadership, media and society to make collective efforts to eliminate hatred, discrimination, extremism, violence and religious intolerance. He called upon citizens to promote mutual respect, dialogue, compassion and national unity, while urging the youth to become responsible citizens and ambassadors of peace through education, honesty, discipline, hard work and service to the country.—APP

14 August parade to bring different performances

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad will host a public parade on August 14, at the Old Parade Ground in D-Chowk, with activities starting from 5:00 pm. Organized by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Islamabad Capital Territory Administration, the event will be open to the public and will feature music performances, cultural displays, parade units, and family entertainment. The city administration has invited residents to join the Independence Day celebrations and take part in a programme designed to bring together people from different backgrounds. The event will mark Pakistan's Independence Day with performances by artists, bands, police squads, and cultural groups. According to the event plan, the music segment will include performances by Nimra Mehra, Sahir Ali Bagga, and Khumariyan Band. The parade section will feature Islamabad Police squads, the Jhang Dance Group, dhol performers, pipe and percussion bands, and a camel band. Several activities have also been arranged for families and children.—APP

“Pakistan must be prepared for all eventualities and dangers. Everyone of you has an important role to play in strengthening the defence of the country. It is not life that matters but the courage, fortitude and determination you bring to it. I trust that you will keep up the best traditions of the Service and maintain high the honour and prestige of Pakistan as one of the greatest nations of the world.”

Quaid-e-Azam at HMPS DILAWAR
23rd January 1948

14

AUGUST

PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

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Pakistan Navy; the Guardian of maritime interests of Pakistan, commemorates the 80th Independence Day and reaffirms its resolve to defend the sovereignty of the nation.

Briefs

Gwadar schoolgirl wins essay contest in Balochistan

GWADAR: An eighth-grader from the Government Girls High School in Faqeer Colony, Gwadar secured second place in a province-level English essay writing competition, earning personal recognition from Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. Amina Dad Karim, a student at the school widely known as the China-Pak Friendship School, received her award from the Chief Minister at a ceremony in Gwadar. "Amina's remarkable performance is a shining example of the talent, potential and academic capabilities of the youth of Balochistan," Bugti said, while also praising her parents, teachers and school administration for nurturing her abilities, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. Teacher and school coordinator Naseem Baloch, a graduate of Central China Normal University in Wuhan, China, accepted the award on Amina's behalf. "It is encouraging to see our students showcase their talents on various platforms," Naseem said. "Their education creates opportunities that were once beyond their reach.—APP

Call for using WhatsApp with registered SIMs

ISLAMABAD : The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has urged WhatsApp users to ensure that their accounts are linked to properly registered SIMs to protect their chats, contacts, memories and digital identity. The authority warned that a blocked or unregistered SIM could put users' WhatsApp accounts and digital information at risk. The PTA advised users to verify that their SIMs were properly registered and linked to their WhatsApp accounts. It also asked users to visit the nearest franchise or customer service centre for biometric and SIM verification, if required. "Do not wait. Secure your WhatsApp and protect your digital identity," the authority advised. The PTA further urged citizens to follow its official social media platforms for information and guidance on digital security.—APP

Pakistan was created to protect Muslims of world

Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan is not merely a geographical territory, but an ideology, a determination and a centre of hope for millions of people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG), Zafar Bakhtawari, has said that the great objective behind the creation of Pakistan was not merely to secure an independent homeland, but also to protect Muslims across the world, support oppressed humanity, and establish a strong, sovereign and dignified Islamic state. He said that from becoming a nuclear power to the Makkah Agreement, Pakistan has taken practical steps towards fulfilling this historic responsibility. Under the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, he said, other Muslim countries would also join this journey after Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan, Insha'Allah, would emerge as a strong protector of Muslims worldwide and as a powerful, prosperous and dignified country. He expressed these views while addressing a prestigious Independence Day ceremony as Chief Guest, organized by the Professional Nursing College and Allied Health Sciences at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). The ceremony was attended by nursing students, teachers, educationists, business personalities and prominent figures from different walks of life. The event began with the hoisting of the national flag and a strong spirit of patriotism, while the hall was beautifully decorated with national flags, green and white colours and expressions of love for Pakistan. In his address, Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan is not merely a geographical territory, but an ideology, a determination and a centre of hope for millions of people. He said that today, with its strong defence capability, national unity and the determination of its talented youth, Pakistan is rapidly moving towards realizing the dreams of Qauid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah



and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. He said that Pakistan's strong defence capability and national unity have further enhanced the country's importance at the international level. Under the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan has demonstrated its capabilities in the areas of national security, defence and stability. He said that the real strength of Pakistan's development lies in its younger generation, which must play an active role in nation-building through education, research, modern knowledge, technology, hard work and character-building. He added that educated, skilled and responsible young people can strengthen Pakistan economically and help the country achieve a respected position in the world. Zafar Bakhtawari said that nursing is a sacred profession and a noble mission dedicated to the service of humanity. Nurses play an extremely impor-

tant role in the healthcare sector and, along with fulfilling their professional responsibilities, serve suffering humanity. He urged students to develop professional expertise while also making ethics, honesty and service to humanity central to their lives. He said that Pakistan needs young people who do not limit themselves to earning degrees, but use their knowledge, skills and abilities for national development. Addressing the ceremony, ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry urged students to continue their education with hard work, honesty and consistency. He said that young people are Pakistan's most valuable asset and must use their abilities for the betterment of the country and the nation. Former Sindh Education Minister Qadir Bakhsh Baloch said that the younger generation should remain aware of the sacrifices made by their forefathers and play a positive role in the development and pro-

gress of Pakistan. Zeenat Islam, Principal of the Professional Nursing College and Allied Health Sciences, welcomed the guests and said that the institution is committed not only to providing quality education and modern professional training, but also to promoting the spirit of service to humanity and patriotism among students. Kainat Ismat, Dean of Tameer-e-Millat University, also addressed the gathering and emphasized the importance of education, research, character-building and the positive development of young people. To mark Independence Day, students presented beautiful tableaux, cultural performances and patriotic songs highlighting the cultural colours of Pakistan's four provinces. Their enthusiastic performances further strengthened the atmosphere of patriotism, national unity and love for Pakistan, and were warmly appreciated by the participants.

16 shops, warehouses sealed

RAWALPINDI: Police have launched a crackdown against the illegal sale and storage of fireworks in Rawalpindi on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera, sealing 16 shops and warehouses and recovering fireworks from the premises. According to police, cases have been registered against those allegedly involved in the sale and storage of fireworks at Ganjmandi Police Station. Police said the arrested suspects would be challaned before the courts along with solid evidence collected during the investigation. CPO Hassan Mushtaq Sukhera said those involved in dangerous and potentially life-threatening activities, including the manufacture, sale or use of fireworks, would not be allowed to evade the law. He directed police to continue the crackdown and take strict action against individuals involved in the illegal fireworks trade. Police official said enforcement operations would continue across the city to prevent the sale and storage of fireworks and ensure public safety.—APP

Tree plantation campaign held

RAWALPINDI: A special tree plantation campaign was organized at Allama Iqbal Park, Rawalpindi, as part of Independence Day celebrations on the directives of Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi Managing Director Ahmed Hassan Ranjha. Students and teachers of The City School, Satellite Town Campus, actively participated in the plantation drive along with staff of the Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi and planted saplings at various locations in the park. The campaign aimed to make the city greener and more beautiful and create awareness among citizens, particularly the younger generation, about environmental protection and the importance of trees. The students expressed their commitment to protecting trees and contributing to a clean, green and healthy environment. Officials of the Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi said that organizing the plantation campaign on Independence Day reflected the collective responsibility of citizens to protect the environment alongside ensuring the development and prosperity of the country. They said various initiatives were being undertaken to promote green spaces, beautify parks and expand tree plantation activities across the city.

Gwadar Safe City project underground cables complete

GWADAR: With regard to Gwadar Safe City Project, the government of Balochistan has completed the installation of underground cabling and poles for modern security cameras at various important, sensitive and busy locations across the city of Gwadar. The installation of advanced surveillance cameras will begin in the next phase. With an estimated cost of Rs3,325.6 million, the Gwadar Safe City Project has been executed by the Ministry of Homes and Tribal Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Technology under the Government of Balochistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. In this connection, Gwadar Safe City Project Director Dr. Asif Khan Bareach met Director General Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Moin ur Rehman Khan at his office. GDA Chief Engineer Haji Syed Muhammad was also present on the occasion. During the meeting, the Safe City Project Director briefed the GDA Director General on the latest progress, ongoing construction work and the upcoming phases of the project. He said that work on the project was progressing rapidly and He further informed the meeting that construction of the main Safe City complex and the Command-and-Control Centre was also progressing at a fast pace. Once the central control centre is completed, cameras installed at various locations across the city will be connected to the central system through an integrated digital network. This will establish an effective, round-the-clock surveillance system in Gwadar using modern technology. On the occasion, GDA Director General Moin ur Rehman Khan said that Gwadar represents Pakistan's economic future and is emerging as an important centre for global investment, attracting the attention of investors and businesses from around the world. In such circumstances, he said, providing a secure environment for citizens, investors, foreign experts, businesspeople and tourists is essential. He said the Gwadar Safe City Project would not only modernise the city's security infrastructure but also play an important role in creating a conducive environment for investment, trade and development activities in Gwadar. He added that timely completion of the project was among the GDA's priorities and directed the relevant departments to further accelerate the pace of work. The Perimeter Security System, costing Rs252.350 million, has instilled a sense of heightened security coverage for Gwadar Port, allied infrastructures, buildings of Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), Gwadar Free Zone South, and Gwadar Free Zone North. The PSS is a built-in multipurpose system that detects threats, performs surveillance, and analyzes attack patterns, installed with the objective of ensuring a safe and secure environment in Gwadar Port and the adjoining Free Zone.—DNA

Painting, art competition held

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate of Electronic Media & Publications (DEMP), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Wednesday organized a painting competition mark Pakistan's 80th Independence Anniversary, held here at the Information Services Academy (ISA), Islamabad. The event featured a painting competition, visual displays and screening of a special documentary produced by DEMP, highlighting Pakistan's history, national identity, achievements and journey since independence. In her welcome remarks, Executive Director General, DEMP, Imrana Wazir, welcomed the chief guest, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, senior officers, officials, media representatives and participating students. She highlighted the significance of Independence Day as an occasion to remember the historic struggle and sacrifices that led to the creation of Pakistan. She also appreciated the participation of students in the painting competition, noting that their creative expressions reflected their perspectives, hopes and aspirations for Pakistan. Addressing the ceremony, the Federal Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, said that Marka-e-Haq and the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement are a testament to Pakistan's resilience, confidence in its sovereignty and commitment to regional peace and stability. He emphasized the responsibility of the Ministry and its attached departments in preserving Pakistan's national memory and communicating its history, culture, identity and achievements through photographs, publications, films, documentaries and exhibitions.—APP

Youth to design nation's centenary destiny: Mashhood

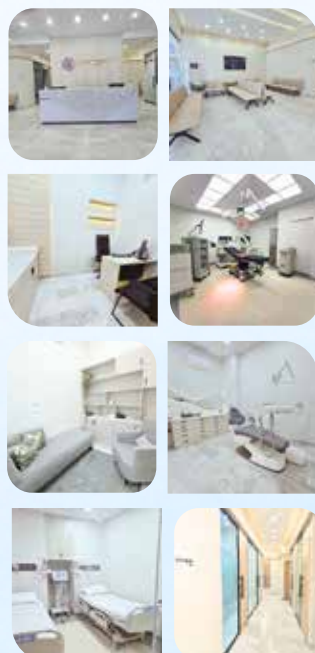
RAWALPINDI: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has announced that the youth and citizens of Pakistan will directly design the country's centenary policy roadmap under the newly launched "Vision 2047" initiative. He expressed these views while talking to media representatives during an Independence Day event organized at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) on Thursday. Giving details of PM's 'Vision 2047' initiative, Rana Mashhood explained that the policy framework for Pakistan's 100th anniversary will be finalized through inclusive public consultation. "Under this mechanism, policy proposals covering education, economy, employment and the environment have been formally invited from the public, particularly targeting the youth", he said. He further informed that a special committee has been assigned a six-month deadline to receive public submissions after which it will utilize two additional months to synthesize the feedback into a structured national strategy. Elaborating on key measures under the Prime Minister's Youth Employment policy P which has recently been launched, he announced a dedicated policy framework designed to foster grass-roots startups and SMEs, including a minimum 35 percent quota for women in the labour force and a mandatory requirement of 10 percent new company registrations annually to build an em-

powered digital generation. Rana Mashhood emphasized that Pakistan is rapidly advancing in technology, artificial intelligence (AI), Information Technology, and economic development. He remarked that after failing on direct conventional fronts, India is actively sponsoring and funding proxy groups like the BLA to create subversion and incite unrest in Kashmir, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, he stressed that the unity and potential of Pakistan's youth will effectively thwart all hostile conspiracies. Highlighting global geopolitical challenges, he highlighted that world instability and tensions between Iran and the United States prior to the 60-day ceasefire had pushed international markets into severe inflationary pressure, particularly in fuel prices. "However, through effective governance, Pakistan prevented fuel shortages and panic", he added. He further said that the diplomatic and peace-building initiatives of Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif averted a wider global conflict. He stressed that PM and Field Marshal deserve for joint nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Rana Mashhood also acknowledged the RCCI, saying that the government deeply appreciates the efforts of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the business community toward national economic stability, SME promotion, and youth empowerment.—DNA

Pak-China friendship enjoys broad political support: Gilani

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan-China friendship is an enduring and timeless bond of brotherhood, rooted in mutual trust, respect and unwavering support. "The friendship enjoys broad political support across Pakistan and represents a national consensus," he said while addressing a thematic briefing titled "Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building", arranged by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). Gilani said the Pakistan-China relationship had remained steadfast over the years and continued to grow through cooperation, shared interests and strong people-to-people ties. The seminar was attended by Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, a visiting delegation from the Party Building Research Institute of the Organisation Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), representatives of Pakistan's political parties and other prominent personalities. At the outset of the seminar, the Chairman Senate conveyed a special message from the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari. In his message, the President welcomed the distinguished CPC delegation and representatives of Pakistan's political parties, saying that Pakistan-China friendship had stood the test of time and continued to play an important role in promoting the mutual interests of the

two countries and their peoples. The President said that such exchanges provided an important opportunity for political parties to learn from each other's experiences in party development, governance and state administration, while further promoting mutual understanding. He appreciated the achievements of the Communist Party of China in leading China's development, progress and prosperity, noting that China's experience offered valuable guidance for strengthening institutional capacity and making governance more effective. In his address, Chairman Senate said that Pakistan and China were "iron brothers" and strategic partners who had consistently stood by each other through difficult times. He said that bilateral relations had evolved far beyond traditional diplomatic ties into a comprehensive partnership based on mutual trust, respect and shared interests. He emphasized that sustained political, parliamentary and institutional engagement was essential for further consolidating the foundations of bilateral relations and promoting greater people-to-people understanding. He added that political parties had a key role to play in ensuring the continuity and sustainability of national policies and strategic partnerships. Referring to China's remarkable development and transformation, Chairman Senate said that China's achievements offered valuable lessons for developing countries, particularly in the areas of governance.—APP

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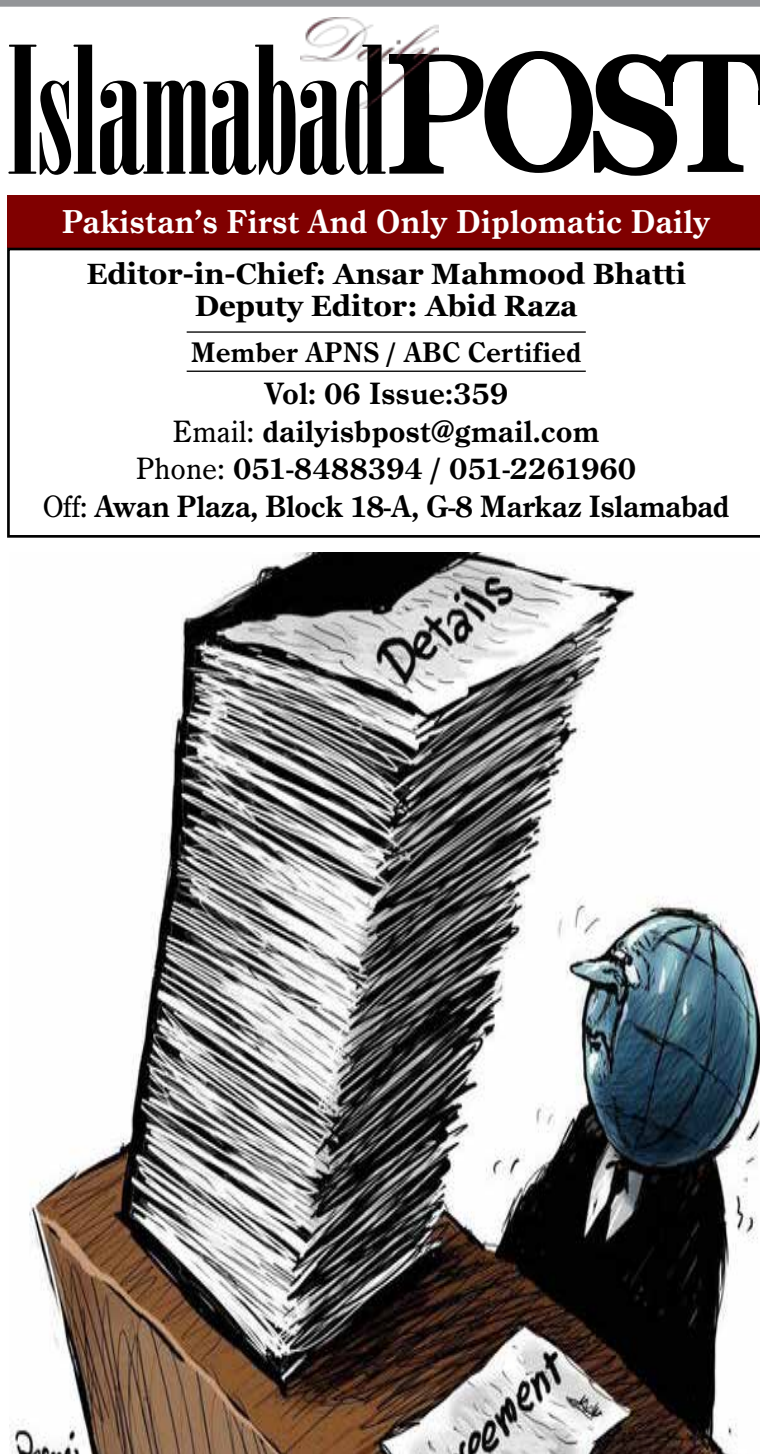
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Trump's Board of Peace facing its first real test

DR. ABDELLATIF EL-MENAWY

BENJAMIN Netanyahu's rejection of Donald Trump's latest Gaza plan has done something useful: it has stripped the Board of Peace of its ceremony and exposed the question at its core. The Israeli prime minister says there will be no withdrawal from Gaza until Hamas has been fully and verifiably disarmed. Hamas, for its part, says it will not begin surrendering its weapons while Israeli attacks continue and Israeli forces remain in place. This is often described as a dispute over sequencing. In fact, it is the conflict in miniature. Each side is being asked to surrender its principal source of leverage before it trusts the other to move. That is precisely why peace processes require more than a plan. They require an authority capable of enforcing reciprocal restraint. The future of Trump's Board of Peace will therefore be determined less by the declarations it issues than by a harder test: can it impose costs on both parties, including America's closest regional ally, when they obstruct the agreement? The board was introduced with much larger ambitions. It began as part of Trump's plan for Gaza, then expanded, in his telling, into a new instrument for resolving conflicts around the world. At its launch, it was spoken of as though speed, money and presidential will could succeed where the UN had become paralyzed. For a brief period, speculation grew that it might challenge, perhaps one day replace, the UN Security Council. Each side is being asked to surrender its principal source of leverage before it trusts the other to move. That was always a category error. The UNSC's authority comes from the UN Charter and the near-universal membership of the organization behind it. The board's limited legal role in Gaza comes from UNSC Resolution 2803, which authorizes a temporary arrangement through 2027 and requires reporting back to the council. Beyond Gaza, the board has no comparable mandate, enforcement mechanism or settled relationship with international law. It is not the UNSC's successor. In legal terms, it is closer to its contractor. Nor is the use of a small group of powerful states inherently misguided. Contact groups and ad hoc coalitions have sometimes broken diplomatic deadlocks that formal institutions could not. They work, however, when four conditions are present: a narrow objective, consent from the people most affected, a credible balance among the mediators, and a guarantor willing to enforce the bargain on friends as well as adversaries. The Board of Peace has struggled with at least three of the four. Its design is part of the problem. Membership is by invitation of the chairman. Ordinary terms last three years and may be renewed at his discretion; a contribution of more than \$1 billion removes the term limit. Trump can select and dismiss executive members, veto decisions, determine the meaning of the charter and designate his own successor. The chairman is not merely first among equals. He is the institution's proprietor. This structure has allowed membership to become an extension of Trump's



personal diplomacy. When Emmanuel Macron appeared unwilling to join, Trump threatened tariffs of 200 percent on French wine and Champagne. When Canada's Mark Carney criticized the weaponization of trade and economic dependence, Trump withdrew Canada's invitation. Admission to a body supposedly devoted to peace began to resemble a presidential favor: offered to those in good standing, withheld from those who caused offense. There is a revealing contradiction here. Trump has long criticized the UN system for entrenching the privileges of a small number of powers. Yet his alternative offers permanence in return for a billion-dollar payment and concentrates exceptional authority in one man. It does not abolish hierarchy, it privatizes it. Then came the apparent breakthrough at the end of July. Trump announced a road map under which Hamas and other armed groups would relinquish their weapons, Israeli forces would withdraw in stages, a technocratic Palestinian authority would assume governance, and an international force would oversee the transition. On paper, it addressed the essential elements of the conflict. In practice, it postponed the central question: who acts first and who guarantees that the other side follows? It would be premature to declare the board dead. Its grander incarnation, however, has already collided with reality. Netanyahu's public rejection on Sunday supplied the answer, at least for now. Israel will not accept phased reciprocity if it believes it can demand prior Palestinian disarmament while retaining military freedom of action. Hamas will not surrender the last instrument of coercive power it possesses if Israeli withdrawal remains a promise rather than a concurrent obligation. The board has drafted a bridge but neither party trusts it enough to step onto it. This is where Trump's personal control of the institution becomes both its possible strength and its fatal weakness. A conventional multilateral body would find it difficult to move Netanyahu. Trump, because of America's military, diplomatic and economic leverage over Israel, and because of his standing with the Israeli right, has more capacity than most Western leaders to do so. But using that leverage would require him to treat Israel not simply as a partner whose security concerns must be met but as a party whose violations and territorial expansion must also carry consequences. If the board speaks only of Hamas' weapons while treating Israeli attacks, restrictions on aid and movement of the ceasefire line as secondary matters, it will not be an arbiter. It will be an instrument for translating an unequal balance of power into the language of peace. No Palestinian actor could safely disarm under those conditions and no international force would wish to inherit responsibility for policing the resulting arrangement. The board should therefore be judged against a short list of visible tests: a sustained halt to Israeli strikes and Palestinian attacks, a verified freeze on changes to the lines of control, unimpeded humanitarian access, the entry of a genuinely empowered Palestinian administration, deployment of the international force and a synchronized timetable linking weapons decommissioning to Israeli withdrawal. Progress must be measured by independent verification, not presidential announcement. It would be premature to declare the board dead. Its grander incarnation, however — a Trump-led alternative to the UN and a new center of global authority — has already collided with reality. What may still survive is a more modest and potentially useful body: a temporary implementation group for Gaza, backed by American power and regional participation. But even that narrower role depends on a principle the board has not yet proved it accepts: peace requires the strong to be constrained as well as the weak. If Trump cannot use his own institution to demand compliance from Netanyahu, the board will have failed its first real test.

From Dependence to Dignity

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Western governments would benefit from recognising that their own political and economic experience is not the only model of development. The legacy of colonial rule, military intervention and unequal economic relationships continues to shape perceptions across the developing world. A more constructive relationship requires dialogue instead of lectures, partnership instead of paternalism and consistency instead of selective application of principles. Respect is earned not only through power but also through fairness. Yet criticism of the international order

THE gradual shift in global power has reopened an old debate about the relationship between the West and the Global South. For decades, the international political and economic order has largely reflected the interests of the industrialised West. The institutions governing global finance, trade and security were created in the aftermath of the Second World War, when much of Asia, Africa and Latin America had little influence over international decision-making. Although the world has changed profoundly since then, many of those institutions continue to operate on assumptions shaped by an earlier era. This imbalance remains evident. Developing countries often have limited influence over decisions that affect their economic futures, while international financial rules and lending practices continue to favour those with greater political and economic weight. Pakistan has experienced these realities repeatedly through its dependence on external financing and its engagement with international financial institutions. Calls for reform of global governance, therefore, are neither unreasonable nor new. Western governments would benefit from recognising that their own political and economic experience is not the only model of development. The legacy of colonial rule, military intervention and unequal economic relationships continues to shape perceptions across the developing world. A more constructive relationship requires dialogue instead of lectures, partnership instead of paternalism and consistency instead of selective application of principles. Respect is earned not only through power but also through fairness. Yet criticism of the international order should not become an excuse for ignoring domestic shortcomings. Historical injustices help explain many present-day inequalities, but they cannot account for every failure decades after independence. Pakistan's greatest challenges today stem as much from internal weaknesses as from external constraints. A more balanced national conversation must therefore acknowledge both realities. Pakistan's repeated economic crises illustrate this point. The country has undoubtedly faced extraordinary pressures, including geopolitical tensions, regional instability, global financial shocks and the growing impact of climate change despite contributing little to global carbon emissions. These circumstances justify demands for greater international support and more equitable climate and development financing. However, Pakistan's recurring balance-of-payments crises, narrow tax base, weak export performance, energy-sector inefficiencies and dependence on external borrowing cannot be explained solely by global conditions. They are also the product of policy failures that successive governments have struggled to address. Promises of tax reform, industrial modernization and export diversification, energy restructuring and institutional improvement have been made repeatedly, yet implementation has often been delayed or diluted. The result is a familiar cycle. Economic pressures intensify,

external assistance becomes unavoidable, reforms are introduced under financial compulsion, temporary stability returns, and the deeper structural weaknesses remain unresolved until the next crisis emerges. This pattern has become increasingly difficult to sustain. No country can claim genuine economic sovereignty while relying indefinitely on external lenders to finance essential imports and maintain macroeconomic stability. Borrowing may create temporary fiscal space, but it cannot substitute for sustained growth driven by higher productivity, competitive exports and domestic investment. National resilience ultimately depends on the strength of domestic institutions rather than the generosity of external partners. For Pakistan, governance reform is therefore not simply an international expectation; it is a national necessity. A broader and fairer tax system, efficient public institutions, transparent regulation and long-term economic planning are essential foundations for sustainable growth. International assistance can support reform, but it cannot replace political commitment at home. Perhaps the country's greatest unrealised strength lies in its people. Pakistan possesses one of the world's youngest populations, a demographic advantage that could become a powerful engine of growth. Yet such potential is realised only when education, skills and employment opportunities keep pace with demographic change. Without investment in human capital, a youthful population can become an economic burden rather than a national asset. Improving educational outcomes must therefore become a strategic priority. Schools require better standards, universities need stronger links with research and industry, and technical and vocational education deserves far greater attention than it currently receives. Investment in science, innovation and technology should extend beyond policy declarations and become a central component of economic planning. The experience of rapidly developing economies demonstrates that lasting progress depends on building domestic capabilities. Countries that successfully transformed their economic fortunes did not rely solely on favourable international conditions. They strengthened institutions, invested in education, encouraged industrial competitiveness and expanded technological capacity. Pakistan must pursue a similar path. Economic growth also requires a more productive economy. Remittances remain an important source of foreign exchange, but they cannot serve as the foundation of a long-term development strategy. Sustainable prosperity depends on competitive manufacturing, modern agriculture, reliable energy supplies, digital infrastructure and a business environment that encourages entrepreneurship and investment. Pakistan's geographical location provides significant commercial opportunities linking South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and western China. Geography alone, however, does not create prosperity. Political stability, efficient logistics, modern customs procedures and consistent commercial policies are necessary to convert strategic location into economic advantage. Regional trade, long constrained by political disputes,

deserves renewed attention if Pakistan hopes to strengthen its export base and attract greater investment. The responsibilities of reform are not confined to Pakistan. Western governments must also reconsider how they engage countries such as Pakistan. Too often, relations have been shaped primarily by security concerns, counterterrorism, Afghanistan or broader geopolitical competition. While these issues remain important, they do not define Pakistan's full potential. Pakistan should increasingly be viewed as an economic partner with significant agricultural, industrial and technological prospects rather than simply as a country requiring periodic financial support or strategic cooperation during regional crises. Long-term partnerships built on trade, investment, education and technology are likely to prove more durable than relationships driven by short-term security considerations. Western credibility also depends on greater consistency. Developing countries understandably question international norms when democratic principles, human rights or international law appear to be applied selectively according to strategic interests. Reforming global financial institutions, expanding representation for developing economies and adopting a fairer approach to climate finance would signal recognition that the distribution of global power has changed substantially over recent decades. At the same time, Pakistan and other developing countries must avoid reducing every domestic challenge to the legacy of colonialism or the shortcomings of the international system. These factors remain relevant, but they do not explain why countries with comparable histories have achieved markedly different outcomes. Domestic leadership, institutional quality and policy choices continue to shape national trajectories. Pakistan can legitimately advocate climate justice while strengthening its own disaster preparedness. It can call for reform of international financial institutions while improving fiscal discipline. It can seek greater market access while enhancing the competitiveness of its exports. Demanding fairness abroad and pursuing reform at home are complementary objectives rather than competing ones. A stronger economy would also strengthen Pakistan's diplomatic position. Effective institutions, sound public finances and an educated workforce provide governments with greater policy independence and stronger negotiating leverage internationally. Sovereignty ultimately rests not on rhetoric but on economic resilience, institutional competence and productive capacity. The West should recognise the historical inequalities embedded in the international system and support reforms that better reflect today's global realities. Pakistan, meanwhile, must recognise that international respect is sustained not by grievance alone but by performance. The country's long-term success will depend on institutions that outlast political cycles, an economy capable of producing more than it consumes, an education system that prepares future generations for a competitive world and political leadership willing to undertake reforms that have been postponed for too long.

Assistant Professor Imperial College of Business Studies Lahore muhammad.akram@imperial.edu.pk

From a nascent force to a maritime power

Ali Basit

The National Hydrographic Office completed systematic surveys of Pakistan's coastal waters, produced navigational charts and contributed to the identification and development of sites for ports and harbours. One of its notable national achievements was its contribution to Pakistans successful claim for extension of its continental shelf to 350 nautical miles

AS Pakistan celebrates its 79 th Independence Day on 14 August 2026, the historic day provides an opportunity not only to recall the struggle that brought the country into existence but also to reflect upon the role of institutions that safeguarded its sovereignty and national interests over the decades. Among these institutions, Pakistan Navy occupies a distinctive place. Born with the country in 1947 with limited resources and modest capabilities, Pakistan Navy steadily evolved into a professional, technologically capable and operationally versatile maritime force, carrying forward the vision of the Quaid-e-Azam and adapting itself to an increasingly complex maritime environment. Pakistan emerged as an

independent state in circumstances marked by enormous political, economic and security challenges. The newly established country had to build its institutions almost from scratch, while confronting an uncertain regional environment. Pakistan Navy was no exception. At independence, the Royal Indian Navy was divided between India and Pakistan, leaving Pakistan with only a small portion of the nava assets and infrastructure. Yet, from these humble beginnings, Pakistan Navy embarked upon a journey of institution-building, professional development and operational preparedness. The Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, with his characteristic foresight, understood the strategic importance of the sea to Pakistan. Addressing officers of the Pakistan Navy on 23 January 1948, he reminded them that Pakistan was still in its infancy and so was its Navy, but expressed confidence that the infant force would grow rapidly. He emphasised courage, devotion to duty, professionalism and determination as the qualities that would compensate for its limited size. His message was not merely a statement of encouragement; it was a strategic vision for a Navy that would eventually become an essential instrument of national security. The early decades tested that vision. During the 1965 war, Pakistan Navy demonstrated that effectiveness at sea depended not merely upon numbers but upon training, planning, courage and intelligent employment of available resources. Operation Dwarka reflected the Navy's ability to undertake offensive action against strategically significant targets, while the deployment of submarine Ghazi demonstrated the importance of undersea warfare in maintaining deterrence. The 1971 war provided another defining chapter in Pakistan Navy's operational history. On 9 December 1971, submarine Hangor sank the Indian Navy frigate INS Khukri and crippled INS Kirpan, an engagement that remains one of the most notable submarine actions since the Second World War. These episodes became enduring symbols of professional commitment and operational courage. Pakistan Navy's evolution, however, did not stop with wartime experience. The changing character of maritime security required Pakistan Navy to expand its role beyond conventional naval warfare. The sea has increasingly become an arena where

military security, international trade, energy flows, terrorism, piracy, trafficking, environmental concerns and economic interests intersect. For a country whose economy and strategic connectivity are closely linked with the Arabian Sea, the protection and security of maritime routes is therefore a strategic necessity. Pakistan Navy consequently advanced a broader maritime-security role and contributed to international efforts against piracy, maritime terrorism and other non-traditional threats. Its participation in multinational maritime-security mechanisms, including Combined Task Forces 150 and 151, enabled it to contribute to collective efforts for maintaining freedom of navigation and security at sea. Pakistan Navy's participation in multinational exercises and maritime partnerships also strengthened interoperability and reinforced Pakistan's commitment to a stable and peaceful maritime environment. Exercise AMAN represents another important dimension of this transformation. Initiated as a platform for bringing together regional and extra-regional navies, AMAN developed into a significant forum for maritime cooperation, information sharing, professional interaction and naval diplomacy. Its underlying message - that maritime security is a shared responsibility - become increasingly relevant as the Indian Ocean and adjoining waters acquire greater strategic and economic significance. Pakistan Navy's contribution extends beyond combat and maritime security operations. Its hydrographic and navigational services played an important role in making Pakistan waters safer for maritime trade and supporting the country's maritime development. The National Hydrographic Office completed systematic surveys of Pakistan's coastal waters, produced navigational charts and contributed to the identification and development of sites for ports and harbours. One of its notable national achievements was its contribution to Pakistan's successful claim for extension of its continental shelf to 350 nautical miles, approved by the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in 2015. The contemporary maritime environment has further increased the importance of Pakistan Navy. Protection of sea lines of communication, maritime infrastructure, ports and commercial shipping

is no longer simply a military requirement; it is directly linked with economic security. Recent developments have underscored this connection. In July 2026, Pakistan and its territorial waters were removed from the Listed Areas of the Lloyd's Market Association's Joint War Committee, a development expected to reduce war-risk insurance costs and strengthen confidence in Pakistan's maritime sector and ports. While the decision reflects wider improvements in Pakistan's maritime security environment, it also highlights the strategic value of maintaining secure and stable waters for international shipping and trade. From the limited naval force inherited in 1947 to a Navy capable of undertaking complex operations, participating in multinational maritime-security initiatives, supporting national maritime development and contributing to regional stability, the journey has been one of continuous transformation. On this Independence Day, therefore, the story of Pakistan Navy is not merely a story of ships, submarines and battles. It is a story of an institution that grew alongside Pakistan itself. It reflects the nation's determination to convert limitations into capabilities and challenges into opportunities. The vision articulated by the Quaid-e-Azam in 1948 remains relevant: strength, professionalism, courage and devotion to duty are indispensable to safeguarding peace. As Pakistan looks towards the future, its maritime interests will become even more significant. The expansion of maritime trade, development of ports, the potential of the Blue Economy and the growing strategic importance of the Indian Ocean will require sustained attention to maritime security. Pakistan Navy, therefore, has a continuing role not only in defending the nation's maritime frontiers but also in creating an environment in which Pakistan can confidently pursue its economic and strategic interests at sea. The journey that began with a nascent force in 1947 continues. Each generation has added to its capabilities and each challenge has contributed to its professional evolution. As the nation celebrates its 79th Independence Day, the growth of Pakistan Navy stands as a reminder that national strength is built over time through vision, sacrifice, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to Pakistan.

Briefs

High profile wanted terrorist...

FROM PAGE 01
Officials say those appeals have gone unheeded. On Monday, the district police, CTD and security forces conducted a joint IBO in the jurisdiction of the Miryan police station in Bannu, leading to the killing of an unidentified terrorist in an exchange of fire and the arrest of 10 suspected individuals. Last week, a captain was martyred while seven terrorists were killed during an IBO in KP's Hangu district. Separately, security forces killed a key terrorist commander identified as Jamidullah during an operation in Jani Khel area of Bannu, a security official said. According to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, an Islamabad-based think tank, violence linked to terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations intensified sharply in July, making it the deadliest month of 2026, with 112 security personnel among 205 people killed.

Taliban detains two UN...

FROM PAGE 01
summoned them to the office, supposedly to collect their confiscated belongings, the rights group said. The men's families have received no information about their whereabouts, health or any possible charges against them, Human Rights Watch said.

Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi...

FROM PAGE 01
welcomed it. Iran's comments also took a rather positive tone, stressing its stance of pursuing "security mechanisms based on co-operation between regional countries". Earlier this week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif affirmed that the defence pact was "entirely for defensive purposes", and not for any aggression.

Iran calls for compensation...

FROM PAGE 01
The spill had reached Qeshm island but had been "almost completely cleaned up by Wednesday evening", said Habib Masih, head of the environmental protection department in Iran's southern province of Hormozgan. He said about 32,000 square metres of coastal area had been affected along with waters covering 90,000 square metres. "The oil pollution on the southern coast of Qeshm is just one example of the widespread pollution that has destroyed the region's marine ecosystem over the past few decades," added Sheena Ansari, the head of Iran's Environmental Protection Organisation.

Japan envoy greets Pak on Ind. Day

FROM PAGE 01
As we look forward to the 75th anniversary of Japan-Pakistan diplomatic relations in 2027, we renew our pledge to work together as trusted partners to promote peace, progress, and stability and to further strengthen friendly relations between Japan and Pakistan." Ambassador Akamatsu reiterated a lasting friendship between the two countries, saying "Japan-Pakistan Dosti Zindabad".

Drug baroness...

FROM PAGE 01
subsequently been acquitted. "Following the acquittal of the co-accused, there can be no case for conviction for the accused (Pinky)," the lawyer said. According to one of the court orders, a copy of which is available with Dawn, Pinky was named in a 2021 case by two accused arrested for possessing narcotics, who claimed that she had supplied the drugs to them.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott hosted farewell dinner for the outgoing UN Representative Mohd Yahya. Seen in the picture are Sherry Rehman, Navid Qamar and others. – DNA

Futsal competition among international students

The event was attended by Dr. Waseem Shehzad, Director Campus, FAST University; Mr. Nauman Naseer, Director HEC; Dr. Hafiz Ghufuran, Student Advisor, International Islamic University; Adil Bin Zahid, Manager Student Affairs, FAST University; Muhammad Khalid Chaudhry, Director Sports, International Islamic University; and Syed Aoun Abbas, Manager, FAST University

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences (FAST), in collaboration with the International Islamic University Islamabad, organized a spectacular Futsal competition among international students in connection with Pakistan's Independence Day. The participating teams included students from FAST University, Thailand, Somalia, and Afghanistan. Islamabad: In connection with Pakistan's Independence Day on August 14, FAST University organized a spectacular Futsal event

in collaboration with the International Islamic University Islamabad, featuring international students, particularly those from Thailand, Somalia, and Afghanistan. The purpose of this sporting activity was to celebrate the joy of Pakistan's Independence Day together with international students, promote friendly relations among students from different countries, and highlight the message of international brotherhood, peace, and harmony through sports. The event was attended by Dr. Waseem Shehzad, Director Campus, FAST University; Mr. Nauman Naseer, Director HEC; Dr. Hafiz Ghufuran, Student Advisor, International Islamic University; Adil Bin Zahid, Manager Student

Affairs, FAST University; Muhammad Khalid Chaudhry, Director Sports, International Islamic University; and Syed Aoun Abbas, Manager, FAST University. They participated in the event and encouraged the students. A group photograph was also taken with the university administration, distinguished guests, and students. Friendly yet thrilling Futsal matches were played between the international students and FAST University students. The players displayed tremendous enthusiasm, excellent skills, and outstanding sportsmanship throughout the competition. The final was played between FAST University and the Thailand team, with both sides delivering an impres-

sive performance. The exciting contest attracted the keen attention of participants and spectators. The organizers stated that sports are a powerful means of bringing young people from different nations, cultures, and countries closer together. This activity, organized on the occasion of Independence Day, not only highlighted Pakistan's positive, peaceful, and sports-friendly image but also served as an important step toward strengthening friendly relations with international students. FAST University expressed its commitment to continuing to organize such positive, healthy, and internationally inclusive sporting activities for students in the future.

Cameroon stun Morocco on penalties to reach WAFCON final

RABAT: Cameroon won a penalty shootout 3-1 against Morocco after a scoreless draw in the other semi. Malawi beat Algeria 3-1 in the first semifinal match on Wednesday, led by Tabitha Chawinga with a pair of goals. Upstart Malawi will face Cameroon in the final of the Women's Africa Cup of Nations on Sunday. All four semifinalists qualified for next summer's Women's World Cup in Brazil. Malawi and Algeria will be making their World Cup debuts. Morocco will make its second World Cup appearance after reaching the round of 16 in 2023. Cameroon played in the 2015 and 2019 editions. Cameroon's goalkeeper shines in shootout Goalkeeper Michaely Bihina stopped three attempts by Morocco in the penalty shootout, and Myriam Maéva Nyadjou converted to send Cameroon to the final. Morocco, in the semifinals for the third time at WAFCON, dominated possession in regulation. – APP

Body of missing Pakistani climber recovered

GILGIT: The body of Pakistani climber Sohail Sakhi, who was among the 10-person expedition that went missing after the deadly Broad Peak avalanche, was recovered and shifted to the mountain's base camp, the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) said on Thursday. The avalanche struck on July 30, cutting off contact with the 10-member international expedition led by world-renowned British-Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja on Broad Peak, one of the world's highest mountains. Purja's company later confirmed there were no survivors. The bodies of seven climbers were found. However, the search for Sakhi, American climber Sarah Mallory Geis, and Nepalese climber Nawang Thindu Sherpa was suspended last week due to a risk of fresh avalanches. On Thursday, ACP member Naila Kiani said that Sakhi's body had been found. According to Naila, a team of local volunteers from Shigar, searching the area on their

own initiative, found the remains, which were subsequently confirmed as those of Sakhi. She said the volunteers – Muhammad Nadeem, Muhammad Bashir and Abuzar – first spotted the body and alerted others in the area. They, along with other volunteers, brought the body down from Camp 1 to the base camp. ACP General Secretary Ayaz Shigri told Dawn that the body had been shifted to the Broad Peak Base Camp and would be airlifted to Skardu by Pakistan Army helicopters, weather permitting. He said the bodies of two remaining climbers have not yet been recovered. Shigri said rescue efforts for the remaining climbers would resume once weather conditions improved and the area was deemed safe. He said the local volunteers located Sakhi's body at an altitude of 5,600 metres. Renowned mountaineer Nirmal Purja along with six elite Nepali guides were also part of the expedition. – DNA

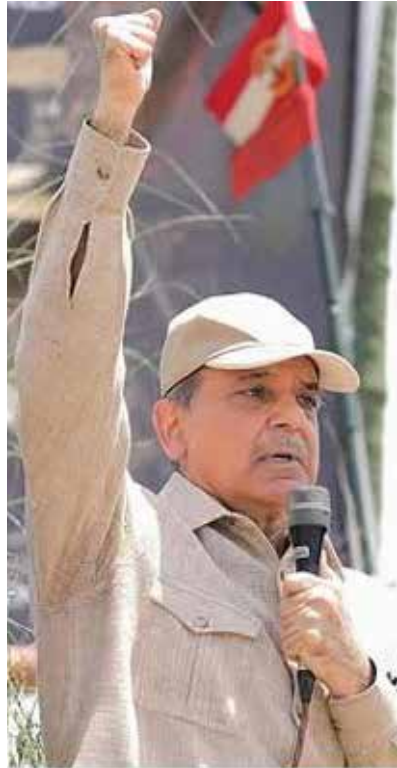
Pakistan has earned a dignified position at world stage: Raja Sajjad

He emphasized that this is the first Independence Day following the historic defense agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye

DNA



instilled fresh confidence and patriotic spirit across the country. Raja Sajjad Hussain noted that Pakistan is rapidly advancing toward its goals and earning a dignified position on the global stage. He highlighted that the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is being pursued with determination, and in the past eighteen months, Pakistan has achieved remarkable successes in various fields, strengthening its international standing. He paid tribute to Field Marshal and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, and national institutions for their effective foreign policy, which has secured Pakistan a respected place among the nations of the world. "Pakistan's diplomatic achievements must now be transformed into economic progress," he stressed. According to Hussain, Independence Day is not merely a national festival but a day of renewal – a pledge to work col-



lectively for Pakistan's prosperity, stability, and economic sovereignty. He urged the government to introduce comprehensive, business-friendly policies that would convert diplomatic successes into economic gains, encourage investment, boost industry and trade, create jobs, and expand exports, ultimately building a strong and self-reliant economy. He further emphasized that the nation must rise above political and personal differences to unite for Pakistan's greater interest. "If national unity, successful diplomacy, and effective economic policies move forward together, Pakistan can strengthen its position as a powerful, independent, and economically stable country in the region and beyond," he concluded.

Norwegian foreign minister praises...

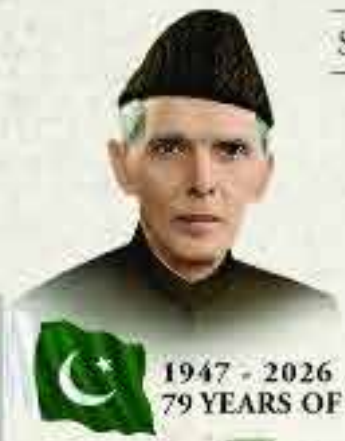
FROM PAGE 01

he said, lauding Pakistan's civilian and military leadership for their efforts. "What you have been doing is really a service to the world, and hence, also to us." The Norwegian foreign minister said Pakistan's mediation efforts also mattered to his country as it was a large shipping nation. "We share an interest in open sea lanes and the ability to trade in the high seas, and to respect the Constitution of the Oceans [...]. Whatever emerges from this tragic and unnecessary war in Gulf, we need to protect the principle of the free passage," he explained. "And I am so happy we see completely eye to eye [on this]," he remarked. The visiting minister added that his message to "anyone involved out there in the conflict is that this issue of free passage and an open strait is not an issue for the warring parties alone. It is a global issue that we have a shared interest in promoting". He said he had discussed other regional issues during the visit as well, ranging from the Kashmir issue to Afghanistan. Moreover, Eide said, he was glad to learn more about a recently signed defence pact between Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia in Makkah. "These are three countries with whom Norway has very good and close relations," he noted. At the outset of his address, Eide said he was honoured to be in Pakistan, saying the last time a Norwegian foreign minister visited Pakistan was 10 years ago. "So it was about time," he remarked. "I promised you many months ago that I would come, and today, I live up to my promise. I was looking forward to this visit, which is short but very effective." Eide said there was a "strong partnership" between Norway and Pakistan, as well as the people of the two countries. "We have a sizeable diaspora of Pakistani descent [...]. Many of them are in key positions of politics and society and are a very welcome contribution to our country; and the fact that we have so many people who know these two countries intimately is yet another argument for strengthening our economic ties," he added. The Norwegian foreign minister further said that Oslo and Islamabad were discussing strengthening economic ties "in the context of specifics" and enhancing trade ties in more structural ways. He also mentioned climate change and floods in Pakistan, saying that the two sides agreed it was a foreign policy issue.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

14 AUGUST 2026

AZAADI EDITION



“THE NATION THAT
BUILDS TOGETHER,
RISES FOREVER,”

PAKISTAN

(UNFINISHED, UNSTOPPABLE)

*Dear Pakistan,
we are not done yet.*

FREEDOM WAS THE
BEGINNING.

It began in a dream.

A dream stitched by courage,
held together by faith, and
breathed into reality by sacrifice.

On that August morning in 1947,
we claimed more than a homeland—
we claimed the right to shape our own
destiny. Since then, every generation
has written a new chapter in this
ongoing story of Pakistan.

We have stood tall in wars and
weathered storms. We have turned
deserts green, built dams that tamed
rivers, sent satellites into space, and
shown the world the strength of our
youth, our talent, and our resilience.
But let us be honest—our work is
far from complete.

Poverty still knocks on too many doors.
Ignorance still dims too many minds.
Division still weakens what we can
achieve together.

This is our call to rise again.

To build with integrity.

To achieve without limits.

To innovate, to include, to inspire.

Dear Pakistan,
we are not done yet.

The road ahead is long,
but our resolve is longer.

TOGETHER, WE WILL THRIVE.



Asif Ali Zardari

The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

On the occasion of the 79th Independence Anniversary of Pakistan, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Pakistanis at home and abroad.

14 August is a day when we remember the sacrifices that made Pakistan possible. We pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leaders and workers of the Pakistan Movement and all those who gave up their homes, security and livelihoods in the struggle for a homeland.

But independence is not only a historic achievement. It is also a responsibility that each generation must carry forward. Our task is not only to remember what earlier generations achieved, but to add to it through our own work.

The events surrounding Marka-e-Haq demonstrated that Pakistan seeks peace, but also possesses the resolve and capacity to defend its sovereignty and national interests. The lesson of strength is ultimately a lesson of responsibility. We pay tribute to the martyrs of our Armed Forces, law enforcement agencies and police, and honour the sacrifices of their families.

Pakistan's approach is clear. We believe that disputes, no matter how serious, must ultimately be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy. Pakistan will continue to support efforts that reduce tensions, protect regional stability and create conditions for cooperation.

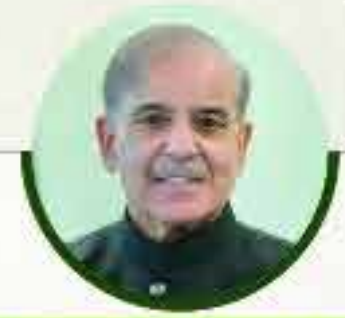
We must strengthen our economy, create greater opportunities for our young people, improve education and skills, strengthen institutions through series of governance, economic and social reforms to ensure that the benefits of development and democracy reach every part and community of the country.

We also renew our solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and reaffirm our support for their legitimate struggle for their rights.

On this Independence Day, I call upon all Pakistanis to contribute to the country's progress in whatever field they serve.

May Allah Almighty protect Pakistan, grant peace and prosperity to our people, strengthen our country and guide us towards a better future.

Pakistan Zindabad!



Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif

Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Today, on the festive occasion of Independence Day, I extend my warmest and heartfelt felicitations to all my fellow Pakistanis at home and abroad.

It is a matter of immense honour and pride for us all that the struggle for independence was led by eminent leaders like the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Mufakkir-e-Pakistan Poet of the East, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, and many other distinguished leaders. Today, as a nation, we pay our earnest tribute to the leaders, stalwarts and workers of the Pakistan Movement and to our forefathers who made determined efforts to turn the dream of a free motherland into a reality.

The cherished dream of an independent state was fulfilled owing to the statesmanship and visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the immense sacrifices of our forefathers, the unwavering resolve of the leaders of the Pakistan Movement, and the boundless grace and blessings of Allah Almighty!

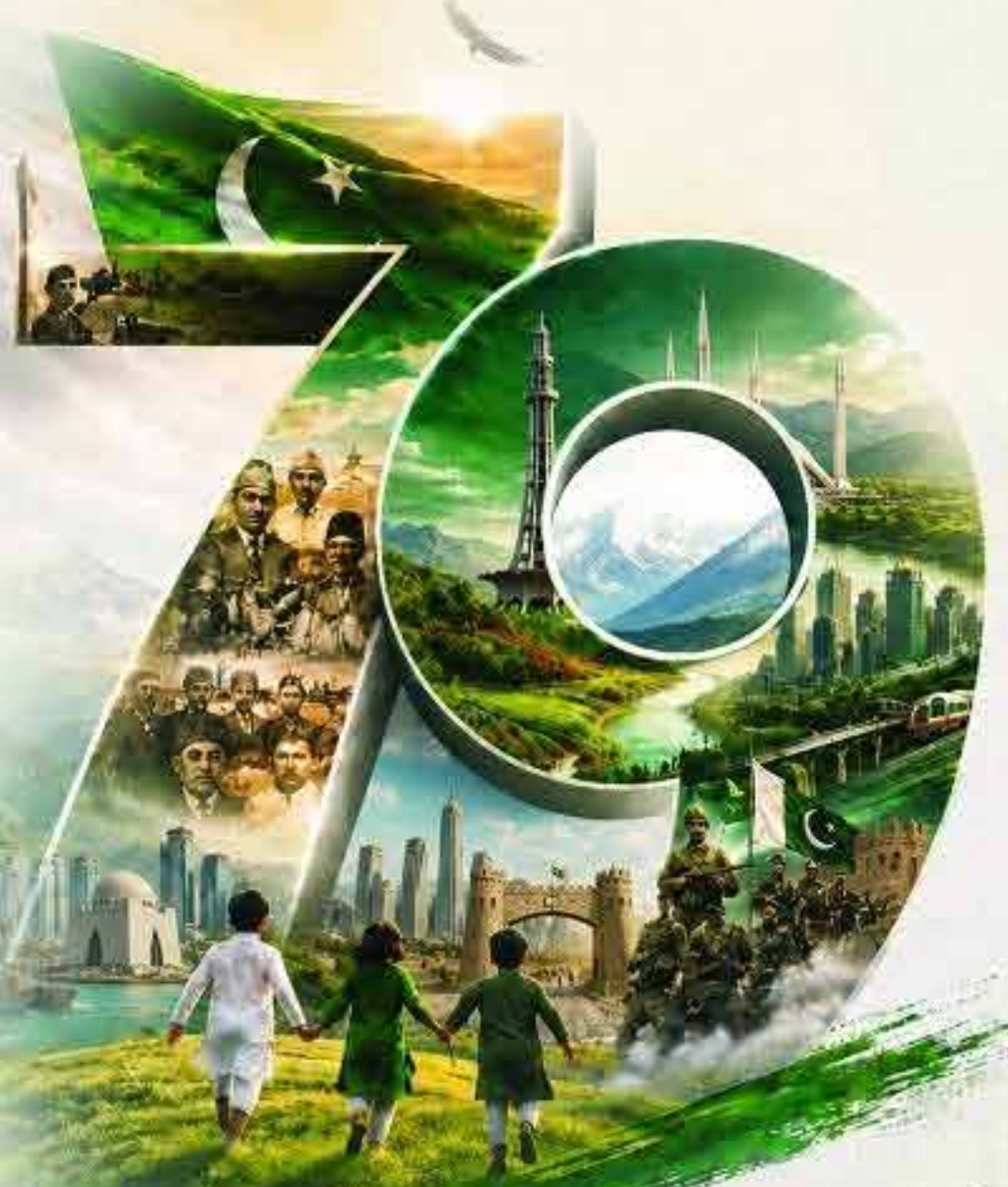
By the grace of Allah Almighty, the journey of national development and prosperity is thriving ahead towards a brighter future, despite the challenges along the way. Despite numerous difficulties, the people of Pakistan have achieved remarkable success in every sphere of life through their God-gifted talents and abilities. Our talented youth, skilled workforce, highly qualified professionals, hardworking farmers and labourers are the true guarantors of our country's bright future.

On this Independence Day, the nation also pays heartfelt tribute to all its martyrs who sacrificed their precious lives for the beloved homeland.

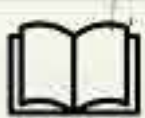
Let us, on this day, renew our national resolve to work together for the development and prosperity, peace and stability, mutual harmony and national unity. Today, I sincerely, yet again, extend the invitation to all the segments of society and especially all political parties to join hands and work constructively together for the national integrity and for the protection and advancement of our national interests.

May Allah Almighty make Pakistan a symbol of honour and dignity among the comity of nations and bless it with a glorious future adorned with continued success and progress.

Ameen!



OUR PEOPLE
Our greatest strength is an endless potential.



OUR PROGRESS
From classrooms to laboratories, we create the future.



OUR ECONOMY
Innovating today for a stronger, self-reliant tomorrow.



OUR PROMISE
Unity, faith and discipline will take us further than ever.

ONE NATION - ONE VISION - ONE PAKISTAN

14TH AUGUST 2026



AZAADI MUBARAK

پاکستان ہمیشہ زندہ باد

Briefs

Missile threat forced Trump plane switch

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: A threat that Air Force One could be targeted by a shoulder-fired missile prompted the Secret Service to secretly move President Donald Trump onto a smaller government jet during a trip to Türkiye last month, a person briefed on the matter said on Wednesday.

The threat emerged on the final day of Trump's visit to Ankara for the NATO summit amid heightened tensions with Iran, the source said. The Secret Service deemed the threat to be credible and imminent, prompting an extraordinary operation to conceal the US president's movements.

The source declined to say where the intelligence came from but said officials had little time to prepare and devised the plans at the last minute. A second source briefed on the matter said there was not a clear plan for those hostile to Trump for executing the threat, but only an intent, which is why the planes were allowed to fly. Trump and a small group of aides used a catering truck to surreptitiously switch from the big blue-and-white presidential aircraft to a smaller, nondescript C-32A jet for the flight out of Türkiye on July 8, while Air Force One departed separately carrying senior administration officials, White House staff and the travelling press corps, according to the first source.

Trump told reporters on Tuesday that he made the switch at the direction of the Secret Service, which is charged with presidential security. He flew from Ankara to a refuelling stop in Britain without incident. "I think actually the plane that I flew on was at greater risk," Trump told reporters, without providing evidence.

Centaurus bids farewell to envoys of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan who is also Prime Minister Coordinator on Tourism, lauded the efforts of Ambassador Farhadov and Ambassador Kistafin, highlighting their pivotal role in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and their respective countries



A.M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Centaurus, under the leadership of its CEO Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan and President Sardar Rashid Ilyas Khan, hosted a distinguished farewell dinner in honor of the outgoing ambassadors of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov, and Kazakhstan, Yerzhan Kistafin. Federal

Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, along with a large number of diplomats, as well as prominent members of the civil society and business fraternity, attended the farewell dinner, adding prestige and significance to the occasion. In his remarks, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan who is also Prime Minister Coordinator on Tourism, lauded the efforts of Ambassador Farhadov and Ambassador Kistafin, highlighting their pivotal



role in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and their respective countries. He noted that over the past five years, both ambassadors had worked tirelessly to enhance cooperation in trade, culture, and diplomacy, leaving behind a legacy of friendship and collaboration. Ambassador Khazar Farhadov, in his farewell speech, expressed deep gratitude to the Sardar family and the people of Pakistan. He reflected on his years in

Islamabad, recalling the warmth and hospitality he experienced, and emphasized the progress made in expanding Azerbaijan-Pakistan ties. Similarly, Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin thanked the Centaurus leadership for their support and recounted memorable moments of his diplomatic journey in Pakistan. He underscored Kazakhstan's achievements in building stronger partnerships with Pakistan, particularly in economic and cultural exchanges.

Israel sends more troops to West Bank

NEWS DESK

QUSRA: Israel's military said on Thursday it had sent more troops to a West Bank village where settlers have trapped Palestinian families inside their homes, a siege the Palestinians say is aimed at forcibly displacing them from their land. The siege began at the weekend when Jewish settlers closed off the road to the three homes in the Palestinian village of Qusra and set up a tent in their front yards, refusing to allow anyone to enter or leave. The settlers had earlier cut off their electricity and water. Israel's military says it is trying to disperse the settlers from the area, even as a video from earlier in the week showed several Israeli men in green military garb joining the settlers in a morning prayer in the tent. The military said it was taking disciplinary action against any personnel involved. A day after troops deployed tear gas in a failed

attempt to remove the settlers, the military said it had sent additional troops to Qusra "to carry out defensive missions and patrols in the area to maintain security and protect the area." The United Nations said in a statement that some 15 Palestinians including two children were "being trapped inside their homes in a state of terror, unable to attend to their basic needs and without access to water or electricity." The military has come under increasing pressure to halt rogue land seizures by settlers emboldened by the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which has spearheaded a rapid expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank. The two families under siege in the area say they have no food or medicine, and that the settlers have been damaging their property, throwing stones at their homes and shouting insulting language at them. "We appeal to government institutions and to every free and honorable person

to help us secure food and medicine," said Qusay Abu Reeda, a Palestinian-American who is trapped with his family inside one of the homes. The US Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, said the Israeli military and police "have gone at our request to remove the Israeli terrorists doing this," adding: "The actions of those doing this to this family's home is criminal." Palestinians say the Israeli military allows settlers to seize land and resources across the West Bank with impunity, including in areas where they hold Israel-issued ownership documents. Incidents of settler land seizures are especially common in areas on the outskirts of villages, like Qusra, which sits in an area under complete Israeli security control. The West Bank, territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war, is home to some three million Palestinians and 500,000 settlers. There are some 146 settlements in the West Bank, as well as 390 smaller outposts, according to the Israeli settlement watchdog group Peace Now.

Oil eases as weaker demand outlook counters Mideast supply concerns

DNA

LONDON: Oil prices eased on Thursday after gains in previous sessions, as attention turned to expectations of weaker global oil demand this year, while there was no progress on opening the vital Strait of Hormuz. Brent futures slipped 42 cents, or 0.47%, to \$88.56 a barrel. US, trimming gains made over the previous six sessions. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell 55 cents, or 0.66%, to \$82.72, after advancing over the past five sessions. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries lowered its world oil demand growth forecast for 2026 to 580,000 barrels per day in its monthly oil market report on Wednesday.

On the same day, the International Energy Agency said it expects a 1.6 million bpd contraction in consumption this year, down from a forecast of 1 million bpd last month, because of restricted fuel supplies and higher prices from the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran that have curtailed demand.

Oil prices were also under pressure from a surprise build in US commercial crude oil inventories, which posted their largest weekly gain since January 2023 last week as exports slumped, the Energy Information Administration said on Wednesday. Crude inventories rose by 17.4 million barrels to 424.4 million barrels in the week ended August 7, their highest since June 5, the EIA said, compared with analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for a 1.4 million-barrel draw.

Still, the deadlocked talks between Iran and the US to end the war in the Gulf have kept prices elevated. A senior Iranian source said on Wednesday that there had been no progress in talks to revive the interim deal agreed in June and define a time frame to implement it.

AJK police claim JAAC abducted 8 cops

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) police said on Thursday that eight highway police personnel on election duty had been "abducted" by the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC). Addressing a televised press conference, police spokesperson Khawar Ali Shaukat alleged that the JAAC attacked security forces deputed on election duty in the region. "Eight highway police officials on election duty were abducted," he said as state media shared a collage of the officials' pictures. "The personnel are in the custody of JAAC and have been subjected to brutal abuse," he said. He said that the "miscreants also threatened the families of the personnel that they would be martyred if their demands were not met". He said that recent events showed that the JAAC was not a peaceful group, but a violent one intent on challenging the state's writ and weakening institutions. "I want to make it clear that the state was not and is not weak. The state has always shown restraint," he said, adding that violent acts for the sake of rights were not above the law. He said that the people of the region, by participating in polls in the region, had made it clear that they had nothing to do with the proscribed group. He appealed to the public to disassociate themselves from the JAAC and to not get involved in acts where the state's writ was challenged. - DNA

Court orders inquiry into HIV outbreak hospital

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday directed the provincial government to constitute an inquiry committee headed by the chief secretary to investigate the HIV outbreak at the Kulsoom Bai Valika Hospital in Karachi. A two-member SHC bench, headed by Justice Adnanul Karim Memon and comprising Justice Muhammad Jaffer Raza, issued the directives. The development comes months after Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani confirmed that six of the at least 78 children infected with HIV at the Kulsoom Bai Valika Hospital had died. During the hearing today, the court directed that the committee

include two Grade-20 officers who have no direct administrative connection with the hospital or the investigation. SHC judge Justice Adnan observed that the matter concerned responsibilities relating to human life and public health. The committee will review details of patients receiving treatment and examine evidence relating to the transmission of HIV. It will also investigate whether disposable syringes or other medical equipment were reused at the hospital. The committee has been directed to examine records relating to the purchase, storage and use of auto-lock syringes at the hospital. As per the court order, the committee will also determine the roles and responsibilities of medical, nursing, technical and administrative officials and examine whether.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb calls for advancement in digital tech

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Chairperson Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA), Dr. Sohail Munir, to discuss digital transformation, digital finance and measures to improve the use of technology to enhance access to finance and support economic activity. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of ensuring that existing frameworks evolve alongside advancements in digital technology and emerging business models. The participants discussed the need for an enabling framework that recognizes electronic transactions and supports wider adoption of digital processes across trade and financial activities. The discussion covered opportunities to improve access to finance through greater use of digital platforms and more efficient processes. The Finance Minister highlighted the importance of simplifying customer onboarding, strengthening data-sharing mechanisms and improving interoperability of financial data, including greater integration between banks and capital markets.

The meeting also discussed measures to facilitate wider participation in the capital market through digital platforms and streamlined account-opening processes. The potential for stronger integration between banking and capital-market systems was highlighted as an area that could support greater investor participation and access to investment opportunities. The participants also exchanged views on improving the use and interoperability of data across government systems. The Finance Minister highlighted the potential of better-connected data to support policy formulation, planning and decision-making, including through greater use of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The meeting also covered the potential to strengthen digital infrastructure to support more efficient delivery of public and financial services. The Finance Minister highlighted the importance of ensuring that such initiatives are practical, scalable and aligned with the broader digital transformation objectives. The Finance Minister and Chairperson PDA also discussed digital assets and tokenization, including potential applications in areas such as real estate and other investment assets.

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

May this strength,
this bond of brotherhood,
forever reign,
May this garden,
this beloved homeland,
eternally remain.

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