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ISPR says Op Sindoor documentary a poor show of performance

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PTI chairman urges govt to engage in talks

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Babar Azam to miss first test match

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Imran to be shifted to hospital

Supreme Court decision reshapes political chessboard

For Khan himself, insiders indicate that he may be advised to remain in the hospital for recovery and later at home, refraining from active politics until the next elections. Meanwhile, some of his party members could be integrated into the new political setup to maintain balance and continuity

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has directed the government to transfer former Prime Minister Imran Khan from jail to Shifa International Hospital for medical treatment, following reports of deteriorating health and growing concerns over his well-being in custody.

The court issued the order after hearing a petition filed by Khan's legal team, which argued that his health required urgent medical attention and that he should be treated in a proper medical facility rather than a prison cell. The bench emphasized that every citizen, regardless of status, is entitled to medical care under the law and instructed authorities to ensure his safety and dignity during the transfer.

Government representatives assured the court that arrangements would be made promptly, and a medical board would oversee Khan's treatment. The court further directed that the board submit a detailed health report within a week to monitor his recovery and ensure transparency in the process. Supporters of Imran Khan welcomed the court's decision, calling it a step toward justice and humane treatment. Political observers, however, believe the ruling carries deeper implications for Pakistan's political landscape. The Daily Islamabad Post has consistently maintained that until Imran Khan is granted relief, political stability in the country will remain elusive.

Now, as the current government completes its third year—a period often considered the natural political lifespan of administrations in Pakistan—new alliances are expected to emerge. Sources suggest that relations between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the establishment have grown tense, prompting speculation that the establishment may seek new political alignments.

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Mixed reactions from PPP and PML-N

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The recent Supreme Court decision to shift former Prime Minister Imran Khan has triggered a wave of mixed reactions within Pakistan's major political parties, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Federal Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry stated that the government would implement the apex court's ruling "in letter and spirit," signaling compliance with judicial directives despite political reservations. Some PPP leaders have cautiously welcomed the decision, describing it as a step toward upholding the rule of law. However, the party's top leadership has yet to issue an official statement, reflecting internal divisions over the matter.

According to insiders quoted by Islamabad Post, the upper echelons of both PPP and PML-N are privately dissatisfied with the ruling. Party strategists reportedly believe that keeping Imran Khan behind bars would have weakened his political momentum, thereby reducing the threat he poses to their electoral prospects. The concern is that if Khan gains greater visibility and freedom of movement, both PPP and PML-N could suffer politically, particularly as his party continues to mobilize support across urban and youth demographics.

Continued on Page 06

Govt to take review of SC decision about Imran

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to move the Supreme Court seeking modification of its order regarding the transfer of incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan to Shifa International Hospital for medical assessment and treatment, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said on Tuesday.

In a video statement, the law minister said that they studied the SC order regarding the transfer of PTI founder to the private hospital, noting that that some points of the ruling concerned the prison authorities and Islamabad administration. Tarar said that the certain points were discussed with the jail authorities and the Islamabad administration. The authorities believe the SC order does not fall within the legal framework meant for providing facilities to a convicted person under prison laws, he added. "The authorities propose seeking a modification of the order so that Imran could instead undergo a medical assessment at a government hospital," the law minister added.

Hockey WC Pak-India clash today at 6 pm

SPORTS DESK

AMSTERDAM: India delivered a stunning performance at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, thrashing South Africa 6-1 to record their biggest-ever tournament victory. The team's attacking flair and relentless pressure overwhelmed the South Africans, marking a historic moment in their campaign. Meanwhile, Australia battled hard against Spain and managed a narrow 1-0 win, courtesy of a decisive 46th-minute strike from Blake Govers that proved enough to secure the points.

In Pool A action, New Zealand showed discipline and control, blanking Japan 2-0 to strengthen their position in the group. Elsewhere, the Netherlands impressed home fans with a commanding 3-1 triumph over Argentina, showcasing their trademark speed and tactical sharpness. The tournament is heating up with thrilling encounters and standout performances, but all eyes are now turning to the most anticipated clash of the week. On Wednesday,

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif shakes hand with Vice President Government Affairs and Public Policy of Google Mr. Wilson White at the inauguration of the office of Google Pakistan – DNA

Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Google's Pakistan office

Google vice president says PM's \$30bn IT export hub ambition aligns with its goals

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday formally inaugurated Google's office in Islamabad, calling it a "major milestone" in the country's digital transformation and its partnership with the global technology company. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, PM Shehbaz congratulated Google's team and Pakistan's technology community. He said that the opening of the office marks a "great day" and an important step towards a long-term partnership.

PM Shehbaz said that Pakistan's collaboration with Google would contribute to a field that is highly important in the modern era and help empower the country's youth through modern tools, techniques and technology. Welcoming the Google delegation led by its Vice President Wilson L. White, the premier said the partnership between Pakistan and Google would flourish further and open new avenues of cooperation in the digital sector. For his part, Google Vice President Wilson thanked the premier for hosting the company's delegation. He said Google has been

investing in Pakistan for more than a decade. Google's vice president said PM Shehbaz's ambition to make Pakistan a \$30bn IT export hub aligned closely with Google's goals. He said Google has contributed more than Rs3.9 trillion to economic activity for Pakistani businesses and households over the past ten years, supporting over 960,000 jobs. Wilson said Google is committed to supporting Pakistan's IT export ambitions through investment in Pakistani people, manufacturing and infrastructure for hardware exports, and local businesses. He said digital transformation in Pakistan could only succeed if adequate investment was made in human resources. Wilson said Google had already helped upscale more than one million Pakistanis through career certificates and by working with schools and teachers to prepare young people for the digital economy. The Google vice president announced that the company would provide free one-year subscriptions to Google Gemini for all students in Pakistan. He said the initiative would further support Pakistan's youth in acquiring modern digital skills and benefiting from emerging technologies.

Briefs

UAE accuses Iran of firing missiles

No talks in progress with Iran

NEWS DESK

ABDU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates' defence ministry says that two missiles were launched at it from Iran, according to a statement. It says that both missiles fell in water, with the first falling outside the UAE's territorial waters, and the second within. "The Ministry of Defence confirms that it is on high alert and fully prepared to deal with any threats, and to firmly confront anything aimed at undermining the security of the state, thereby ensuring the preservation of its sovereignty, security and stability, and protecting its interests and national capabilities," it adds. Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said there were no conversations taking place with Iran, and none were scheduled, adding that the naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz remained in full force and effect.

No hepatitis C test; no salary: minister

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday declared hepatitis C testing mandatory for all employees of the health department, warning that untested employees would not receive their salaries from next month. Addressing the inauguration ceremony for hepatitis C screening, Mustafa Kamal announced a nationwide expansion of screening under the Prime Minister's Programme for the Prevention of disease, urging every eligible Pakistani to undergo screening for the potentially life-threatening disease.

Big relief

PTI lauds SC order on Imran's transfer

Barrister Gohar urges govt to engage in dialogue instead of taking "short steps"

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday welcomed the Supreme Court's order to transfer jailed party founder Imran Khan to Shifa International Hospital for medical assessment and treatment, urging party workers to avoid gathering outside the medical facility. In a post on X, the Khan-founded party called on workers to fully respect the top court's directives, saying the appeal was being made in the interest of the former prime minister's health and treatment.

The statement came soon after the Supreme Court ordered Adiala jail authorities to transfer Khan to Shifa International Hospital until September 16. A three-member bench headed by Justice Shahid Waheed, comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim, issued the interim order after hearing petitions concerning the former prime minister's medical treatment and meetings with his family members. In today's order, the court ordered the constitution of

Continued on Page 06

Imran sisters meets him in jail

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Imran Khan's sister Nooreen Niazi met the incarcerated former prime minister on Tuesday after being allowed to enter Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, following a Supreme Court (SC) ruling allowing the PTI founder weekly meetings with his family. Imran — imprisoned since Aug 5, 2023, for concealing details of Toshakhana gifts — is serving a 14-year sentence at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail in a £190 million corruption case, also known as the Al-Qadir Trust case. Despite an order by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) allowing him twice-a-week meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays with his family, lawyers and other associates, Imran has been restricted from meeting visitors for several months.

Continued on Page 06

French ambassador pays farewell call on Ishaq Dar

Ambassador Galey thanked the DPM/FM and the Government of Pakistan for the support extended to him during his tenure



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar received French Ambassador Nicolas Galey for a farewell call today. DPM/FM congratulated Ambassador Galey on completion of his assignment and appreciated his contribution to further strengthening Pakistan-France relations.

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan wants peaceful resolution of all issues: Dar

Russian Envoy Meets Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Russian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Albert Khorev, called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar today. During the meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister appreciated the positive momentum in bilateral ties and emphasized the importance of continued cooperation in key areas. He stressed that sustained high-level exchanges are vital to further strengthen Pakistan-Russia relations. Regional developments also figured prominently in the discussion. Senator Dar underscored Pakistan's consistent position that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path for

Continued on Page 06

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Danial calls for respect judicial decisions

ISLAMABAD: Barrister Danial Chaudhary has stressed the need to respect and implement judicial decisions, saying all legal points arising from a verdict should be addressed promptly through the relevant forums. Talking to the media outside Parliament House, he said, "My leader and my party leadership have always respected judicial decisions, and we also honour every verdict." He said any grievances regarding the decision would be raised before the relevant forum and the matter would be taken forward in accordance with the law. Responding to a question, Chaudhary said, "The courts are making decisions under the Constitution and law with a level of independence and autonomy rarely seen in the recent past." —APP

Ceremony held to empower PWDs

SUKKUR: A colorful ceremony was organized in connection with Pakistan's 80th Independence Day to empower children with disabilities by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and the Social Welfare Department at the Auditorium Hall, Special Education Complex on Tuesday. The ceremony was held in collaboration with various NGOs including ICF, SF, NARI, WDSW, JSWA and other relevant departments. Additional Deputy Commissioner Sukkur-II, Majid Mako and Assistant Commissioner City Sukkur, Bushra Mansoor attended as chief guests. Speaking on the occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sukkur-II, Majid Mako said that he was delighted to attend the ceremony as children with disabilities were showcasing excellent performances. He said that we live in an independent country for which our elders rendered great sacrifices, therefore we all should work hard for the progress and prosperity of our homeland. He said that children with disabilities are also a valuable asset of our country. We should provide them with a conducive environment where they can celebrate happiness, actively participate in cultural activities and celebrate Independence Day with pride and joy. During the ceremony, children with disabilities presented the national anthem and various tableaux, which were highly appreciated by the participants. On the occasion of Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, an Independence Day cake was also cut at the ceremony. The ceremony was attended in large numbers by Regional Director Special Education and Rehabilitation Abdul Quddous, District Scouts Officer Fahim Memon, officers and representatives of the Social Welfare Department, children with disabilities, and various relevant departments. —APP

Home Dept stresses zero-tolerance against online hate

RAWALPINDI: On the directives of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the Punjab Home Department has intensified its consultative outreach with religious scholars across Rawalpindi and the province to preserve law and order, promote interfaith harmony, and strengthen inter-sectarian tolerance. In ongoing consultations, Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, Khawaja Salman Raffique, held a detailed meeting with a delegation of Tehreek-e-Ahle-Sunnat scholars led by Mufti Intekhab Ahmed Nouri, Chairman of the Muttahida Ulema Board Punjab. The participants conducted a comprehensive review of the overall law and order situation, strategy for promoting religious tolerance, and measures to prevent potential sectarian tensions. A spokesperson for the Home Department Punjab said that religious scholars play a fundamental role in spreading messages of peace, brotherhood, and restraint. —APP

Vietnam embassy and PAL host prison diary launch

The ceremony featured readings from the diary, critical analyses by literary experts, and a panel discussion exploring the intersection of literature, politics, and morality in Ho Chi Minh's poetry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, in collaboration with the Pakistan Academy of Letters, hosted an official book launch ceremony for President Ho Chi Minh's renowned literary work, "Prison Diary" (Nh t ky trong t), at the Sheikh Ayyaz Conference Hall in Islamabad. The event, which brought together prominent literary figures, intellectuals, diplomats, and distinguished guests from Pakistan and abroad to celebrate the timeless relevance of the historic collection of poems. Written during President Ho Chi Minh's imprisonment by the Kuomintang government in China between 1942 and 1943, "Prison Diary" comprises over 130 poems composed in classical Chinese. The work is widely regarded for its profound literary, philosophical, and humanistic values, expressed through simple yet vivid language, rich imagery, and a remarkably witty and insightful perspective on suffering, resilience, and the indomitable human spirit. In his address,



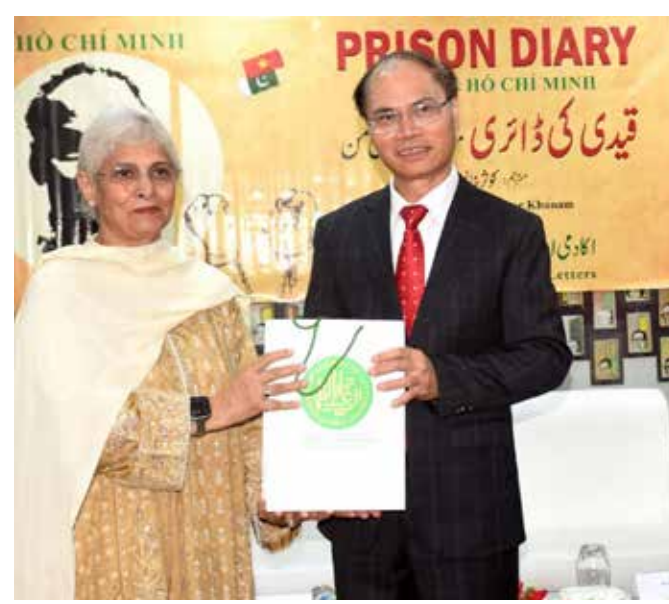
Mr. Pham Anh Tuan, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to Pakistan, underscored the significance of the work, stating: "President Ho Chi Minh's 'Prison Diary' is not only a national treasure of Viet Nam but also a profound piece of world literature that transcends borders. We are honored to co-host this

launch with the Pakistan Academy of Letters, and we believe this work will deeply resonate with Pakistani readers, scholars, and poets who cherish the values of freedom, dignity, and humanity."

Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, also shared his enthusiasm for the collaboration, describing

the diary as "a testament to the power of words to sustain hope and inspire change, even in the darkest of times." He noted that the book offers a unique window into the mind of a great revolutionary and poet.

The ceremony featured readings from the diary, critical analyses by literary experts, and a panel discussion exploring the inter-



section of literature, politics, and morality in Ho Chi Minh's poetry. A special exhibition of rare photographs and manuscripts related to the diary was also on display, offering attendees a deeper insight into the historical and cultural context of the work. Heads of mission from ASEAN countries and the Ambassador of Cuba were also in attendance, highlighting the event's signifi-

cance in fostering cultural and intellectual exchange between Viet Nam and Pakistan. The Embassy of Vietnam and the Pakistan Academy of Letters expressed their appreciation to all attendees for making the occasion a memorable literary afternoon, reinforcing the shared values of freedom, dignity, and humanity through the enduring power of literature.

Youth urged to drive towards \$1tr economy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday urged the youth to harness their energy, skills and ambition to help Pakistan achieve its national development goals, saying the country's destination was not mere stabilization but a \$1 trillion economy by 2035 under the URAAN Pakistan initiatives. Addressing the closing ceremony of the URAAN Youth Professional Development and Career (YPDC) Fellowship and Overseas Summer Scholars Programme-2026, he said the enthusiasm and passion of Pakistani youth represented the country's greatest wealth and must be channelled towards national development. The minister said Pakistan had repeatedly reached points where it was seen as a potential emerging economic success, but failed to sus-

tain the momentum due to discontinuity in reforms and development policies. Referring to the country's difficult economic situation in recent years, he said the government had made tough, painful decisions to stabilise the economy, stressing that such measures were necessary to put the country back on the path to recovery. He said the impact of these decisions was reflected in key economic indicators, with inflation declining from 38 per cent to 7 per cent and the policy rate from 23.5 per cent to 11.5 per cent over two years. He added that the stock market, after falling to around 80,000 points, had crossed 180,000, while Pakistan's sovereign rating had returned to the B category in 2026 after a decade. "These indicators show the recovery achieved as a result of difficult decisions," he said. Ahsan Iqbal, howev-

er, stressed that stabilization was not the ultimate destination, saying Pakistan must now move towards sustained growth and development. "Our destination is to turn Pakistan into a \$1 trillion economy by 2035," he said, adding that achieving this ambitious target would require empowering and equipping the country's youth with knowledge, skills, confidence and a spirit of innovation. He said the URAAN YPDC programme was aimed at preparing young Pakistanis to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the country's future. Drawing on Alla Iqbal's vision of youth as "Shaheen", the minister urged young people to remain self-reliant, ambitious and constantly in pursuit of excellence. He said Pakistan's youth had the potential to revive the country's historic tradition of excellence in knowledge, science. —APP

Clean air essential for public health: Musadik

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik on Tuesday said tackling air pollution required coordinated national efforts, effective monitoring and reforms across key sectors to ensure clean and healthy air for citizens. Addressing a stakeholder workshop on the National Clean Air Policy, the minister said air pollution was a major challenge to human health and environmental protection, making collective action at the national level imperative. He said clean air was a fundamental right of every citizen, while effective monitoring and implementation of environmental standards were essential to improve air quality. Dr Musadik Malik stressed the need for reforms in the industrial, transport and energy sectors to reduce air pollution. He said the government was taking steps to promote electric vehicles as part of efforts to improve air quality. —APP

easypaisa, 5th Pillar launch Umrah savings plan

easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital bank, has partnered with 5th Pillar Family Takaful to launch the 5th Pillar Family Takaful Umrah Savings Plan, a Shariah-compliant savings and protection solution that enables customers to plan and prepare financially for Umrah As part of the offering, an integrated partnership with 5th Pillar Travel (Private) Limited provides easypaisa users with end-to-end travel facilitation upon maturity, including visa processing, flights, accommodation, and ziarat arrangements, making the journey more convenient and seamless. This combines long-term savings with Takaful-based protection, providing customers aged 18 to 60 with a structured and disciplined way to work towards their Umrah aspirations while benefiting from the convenience of digital financial services. Available with terms starting from five years, the plan offers flexible contribution options

on an annual, half-yearly, quarterly, or monthly basis, with maturity proceeds either withdrawn in cash or utilised towards a complete Umrah package. Speaking on the collaboration, Jahanzeb Khan, President & CEO, easypaisa digital bank, said, "At easypaisa, we are committed to creating financial solutions that reflect the aspirations, values, and everyday needs of our customers. The launch of the 5th Pillar Family Takaful Umrah Savings Plan brings together Shariah-compliant savings, protection, and seamless Umrah facilitation in a single digital offering, empowering millions of Pakistanis to plan for this important spiritual journey with greater confidence and convenience." Commenting on the partnership, Nasar Qureshi, CEO, 5th Pillar Family Takaful, said, "The Umrah Savings Plan has been designed to help individuals and families achieve an important life goal through a structured,

Shariah-compliant savings framework. Our partnership with easypaisa enables us to reach customers at scale and deliver a seamless experience that combines protection, disciplined savings and travel facilitation under one ecosystem." The service offering further strengthens easypaisa's growing Islamic finance and Takaful portfolio, underscoring its commitment to delivering innovative, accessible, and Shariah-compliant solutions that help customers achieve both their financial and personal aspirations. With over 60 million registered users and as the country's first digital bank to commence commercial operations, easypaisa remains aligned with the State Bank of Pakistan's vision to drive inclusive economic growth. The company continues to expand its range of financial products and services, catering not only to its existing users but also to millions who remain unbanked or underbanked. —APP

Procurement reforms to further improve transparency: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law & Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that transparency, institutional independence and effective accountability must be ensured in the public procurement process, while public procurement reforms will further improve transparency and efficiency in the government purchasing system. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee for Disposal of Legislative Cases (CCLC) here on Tuesday. The meeting of the Cabinet Committee for Disposal of Legislative Cases (CCLC) was held at the Cabinet Division and reviewed important legislative and regulatory matters relating to various sectors. The meeting held detailed discussions on the proposed amendments to the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Ordinance, 2002, and the draft Public Procurement Rules, 2025. The Federal Minister said that the existing legal framework for public procurement requires greater clarity, responsibility and effective accountability mechanisms. He emphasized the need for an effective mechanism for independent grievance redressal and prevention of conflicts of interest in the public procurement process. He said that transparency, accountability and effective oversight in the public procurement system must be further strengthened to improve institutional confidence and efficiency in government procurement. The meeting reviewed various proposals concerning independent grievance redressal, strengthening of third-party review and oversight mechanisms, prevention of conflicts of interest and ensuring institutional independence in public procurement. The Federal Minister said that the role and powers of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority should be made more effective, while the use of centralized e-procurement platforms should be promoted. The meeting also reviewed proposed amendments to the National Tariff Commission Act, 2015 and the Safeguard Measures Ordinance, 2002. The Committee also held a detailed review of the revised rules concerning the appointment of the Director General of the National Agri-Trade and Food Safety Authority. —APP



ISLAMABAD: The Russian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Albert Khorev, called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar-DNA

DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea Independence Day

Aug 15/India Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia National Day

Rescue (Police).....	15
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Emergency Ambulance.....	1122
& Rescue Services.....	4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....

Pia Flight Info.....

Pia Cargo.....

Railway Inquiry.....

Railway Exchange.....

WASA Rawalpindi.....

CAA.....



Hospitals

CMH.....

MH.....

Cantt Hospital.....

DHQ.....

RGH.....

Holy Family.....

PIMS.....

Polyclinic.....

Shifa International.....



Departments

CDA.....

CDA.....

Met Office.....

RDA.....

TMA.....

Cantonment Board.....



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....

Potohar Town.....

Rawal Town.....

Water Tank

Islamabad.....

G-14/1 allottees meet MNA; demand initiation of uplift work

MNA Anjum Aqeel Khan assured the delegation that their grievances would be addressed within three months. He pledged to take concrete steps to resolve the matter and ensure that the allottees finally receive possession of their plots

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Allottees Welfare Association G-14 delegation met Member of National Assembly (MNA) Anjum Aqeel Khan and demanded immediate initiation of development work in sector G-14/1, along with the handing over of plots to rightful allottees. The delegation highlighted that the housing project was launched in 2004, yet despite progress in other sub-sectors of G-14, sector G-14/1 remains deprived of basic devel-

opment facilities and possession rights. They expressed deep concern that this 22-year delay has shattered the dreams of many families who invested their life savings into acquiring plots. Tragically, several original allottees have passed away during this prolonged wait, leaving their heirs still struggling to secure their legitimate rights. The representatives stressed that this is not merely a development issue but a matter of thousands of families' futures, their hard-earned investments, and their fundamental right to ownership. They pointed out that illegal

occupations, encroachments, and unauthorized constructions in G-14/1 have severely undermined the rights of genuine allottees. MNA Anjum Aqeel Khan assured the delegation that their grievances would be addressed within three months. He pledged to take concrete steps to resolve the matter and ensure that the allottees finally receive possession of their plots. This long-standing issue reflects broader challenges in Pakistan's housing sector, where delays, encroachments, and lack of timely development often

leave citizens in distress. The G-14/1 case has become symbolic of the struggle between rightful ownership and bureaucratic hurdles, underscoring the urgent need for reforms in housing project management and land allocation. The delegation's appeal serves as a reminder that housing is not just about infrastructure—it is about dignity, security, and the fulfillment of promises made to citizens. The resolution of this matter will not only restore confidence among the allottees but also set a precedent for accountability in future housing schemes.

Women's participation in digital economy highlighted

ISLAMABAD: UN Women Pakistan, in partnership with the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) and with the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA),

cation Technology (ICT) in Pakistan, a comprehensive national report mapping women's participation in Pakistan's digital economy. The dialogue brought to

ways to advance women's participation in Pakistan's rapidly evolving ICT sector. Speaking at the event, Ms. Fahmida Iqbal Khan, Deputy Country Representative, UN

in Pakistan's digital economy and where the gaps remain. The findings are a call to action for all of us. Data alone does not close gender gaps; it is what we do with



hosted the National Policy Dialogue on Advancing Women's Participation in Pakistan's Digital Economy and launched Women in Information and Communi-

ty and identify practical path-

Women Pakistan, highlighted the importance of translating evidence into coordinated action. She said, "This report gives us a clear national picture of where women stand

it, together as government, industry, and development partners, that will determine whether Pakistan's digital transformation truly includes women.—APP

Two dams to address Islamabad water needs: Talal

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry informed the National Assembly on Tuesday that two new dams would be completed within four years to help address Islamabad's growing water shortage. Responding to a calling-attention notice on water scarcity and the need for water purification and recycling plants in Islamabad Capital Territory, he said the capital needed 240 million gallons of water a day. However, only 80 million gallons were currently available. He said feasibility studies for the Shahdara and Dothara dams were being conducted through the Water

and Power Development Authority (Wapda). The minister said the two projects would be completed within three to four years. They would meet Islamabad's water needs for the next 30 to 40 years, he added. The minister said the government had amended laws to promote rainwater harvesting. Rainwater wells were also being built, while building plans would not be approved without provisions for rainwater harvesting. He said old water pipelines in Islamabad's sectors would be replaced within one and a half years. A PC-I for the project had already been prepared, he added.

The minister also expressed concern over the poor recovery of water bills. He said even residents of affluent sectors such as F-6 did not pay their monthly bill of Rs240. He said the overall water-bill recovery rate stood at only 10 per cent. He urged lawmakers to cooperate with the authorities to improve bill recovery and ensure timely payments. He also called for water conservation and said water was wasted through practices such as washing vehicles at home. He said rainwater harvesting had now been included in the standard operating procedures for approving new schemes. The minister said Islamabad had been allowed to expand in an unplanned manner. He added that most areas along Lehtir Road consisted of illegal settlements. Their sewage was contaminating water sources, he said. He said a sewage treatment plant costing between Rs30 billion and Rs40bn was being installed in the area. Another sewage treatment plant was also being.—APP

CDNS raises Islamic finance with Rs 60b targets

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set an ambitious target of Rs 60 billion for Islamic finance bonds during fiscal year 2026-27, signaling continued efforts to expand Shariah-compliant financial products and strengthen the Islamic finance market in Pakistan. The move comes after CDNS mobilized Rs 61 billion through Islamic investment products during the first 11 months of FY2025-26, exceeding its annual target of Rs 55 billion well before the end of the fiscal year. The strong performance reflects rising investor interest in Shariah-compliant investment avenues and the growing importance of Islamic finance within Pakistan's financial system. Officials said increasing demand for interest-free investment options has encouraged both individual and

institutional investors to participate in Islamic savings schemes. A senior CDNS official said the institution had placed greater emphasis on Islamic finance during the current fiscal year, with the encouraging response demonstrating growing public confidence in Shariah-compliant investment products. The official added that the continued expansion of Islamic finance could play a significant role in developing Pakistan's Islamic economy while contributing to broader and more sustainable financial growth. Islamic bonds and Shariah-compliant savings certificates have been among the key drivers of CDNS's recent success. These instruments provide investors with investment opportunities consistent with Islamic principles while also helping channel domestic savings toward economic activity.—APP

Chinese vlogger showcases Pak's tourism attractions to millions

ISLAMABAD: As part of celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), under the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), hosted renowned Chinese travel content creator Hua Yi Cun on a familiarization tour of Pakistan. The tour was organized in collaboration with the Embassy of Pakistan in China and the Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Department to promote Pakistan's diverse tourism attractions among Chinese audiences, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. During his visit, Hua explored Islamabad and the breathtaking landscapes of Gilgit-Baltistan, in-

cluding Skardu, Khaplu and Shigar, experiencing the region's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, hospitality and local cuisine. During his stay at the iconic Shangrila Resort Skardu, Hua was particularly captivated by the serenity of Shangrila Lake, while his experiences in the region offered Chinese audiences a glimpse into the cultural heritage, hospitality and distinctive tourism experiences of Gilgit-Baltistan. Through his engaging digital content, Hua showcased Pakistan's spectacular mountains, cultural diversity and travel experiences to his large following in China, providing potential visitors with a first-hand perspective of Pakistan as a tourism destina-

tion. With a combined social media following of more than 40 million, his content is expected to significantly enhance Pakistan's visibility in the Chinese tourism market and encourage more Chinese travellers to explore the country. Talking to Gwadar Pro, PTDC said it remains committed to promoting Pakistan internationally through strategic collaborations and digital tourism initiatives, particularly those that strengthen people-to-people connections between Pakistan and China. The corporation said such initiatives can help introduce Pakistan's tourism potential to new international audiences while further deepening the longstanding friendship between the two countries.—APP

China-Pak partnership deepens with sister-school agreement

ISLAMABAD: Jiangyin Tianhua Art School, an arts institution from Jiangsu, China, and the China-Pakistan Educational Cultural Institute in Islamabad, officially signed a sister-school agreement in Jiangyin, marking a step forward in bilateral educational cooperation. The signing ceremony took place during the "2026 Overseas Chinese School Leaders Jiangsu Tour," a week-long event held recently, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. The tour brought together 29 heads of overseas Chinese schools from 22 countries to explore educational collaboration opportunities across Nanjing, Jiangyin and Changzhou. Sister-school agreement signing ceremony between Jiangyin Tianhua Art School and China-Pakistan Educational Cultural Institute, photo provided by Jiangsu Education and Cultural Center for International Exchange The sister-school partnership aims to deepen mutual understanding and respect between Chinese and Pakistani educators and students. Under the agreement, the two institutions will collaborate on multiple fronts, including joint participation in international understanding education seminars and professional development activities, with both sides sharing educational resources and internationalization expertise. Students will be encouraged to form learning partnerships through email and video interactions to enhance language skills and cultural appreciation.—APP

Six standing bodies' reports presented

ISLAMABAD: Six reports of standing committees were presented before the Senate on Tuesday, highlighting key matters of national importance and providing lawmakers with detailed information for further consideration. Senator Hidayatullah Khan, Chairman, Standing Committee on National Heritage and Culture, presented report of the Committee on a Bill to amend the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) Ordinance, 2002 [The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) (Amendment) Bill, 2026]. Senator Khalida Attique on behalf of Senator Bushra Anjum Butt, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, presented report of the Committee on a Bill to amend the NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology Multan Act, 2012 [The NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology Multan (Amendment) Bill, 2026]. Senator Khalida Attique, on behalf of Senator Bushra Anjum Butt, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, presented report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the Area Study Centres Act, 1975 [The Area Study Centres (Amendment) Bill, 2026].—APP

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GB traders showcase regional potential at Kashi expo

KASHGAR: The Gilgit-Baltistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry is showcasing the region's business and trade potential at the 16th Xinjiang Kashi-Central and South Asia Commodity Fair, highlighting opportunities for stronger China-Pakistan trade and technology cooperation. The major annual international trade event officially opened on August 14, 2026, at the Kashi International Convention and Exhibition Center in Kashgar, Xinjiang, bringing together businesses and representatives from China and Central and South Asian countries, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. Former Caretaker Gilgit-Baltistan Forests Minister Hafiz Sharafuddin and Maulana Hussain Ahmed are also participating in the expo, providing the region's business community an opportunity to engage with Chinese counterparts and explore new commercial opportunities. Speaking on the occasion, Hafiz Sharafuddin described China's trade policies as beneficial for Asia and urged the Pakistani business community to make greater use of emerging trade opportunities and China's evolving commercial policies.—APP

Women leaders mentorship held

ISLAMABAD: A district-level orientation session of the Pakistan Women Leaders Mentorship Programme was held in Islamabad to introduce women from diverse political, professional, media, business, civil society, and legal backgrounds to the mentorship journey ahead. The session was organized by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) at its head office in Islamabad, following the launch of the Pakistan Women Leaders Mentorship Programme last month. The initiative is funded by the European Union (EU) and jointly implemented by UN Women Pakistan and the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA), through its partners, including SSDO in Islamabad. The orientation provided participants with an overview of the mentorship programme and its objectives, with a particular focus on strengthening women's leadership capacities, expanding professional and political networks.—APP

Briefs

Australia backs community-led climate solutions

ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Timothy Kane has said that "when communities lead, climate solutions work better. Speaking about Australian-supported initiatives in the country, the High Commissioner highlighted ongoing research in rural Sindh aimed at helping local communities build more resilient livelihoods. "From adapting farming practices to exploring new economic opportunities, these projects are designed with communities at the center," Kane said. He added that Australia remains committed to partnerships in Pakistan that "listen, learn and deliver real impact" in the face of climate challenges. The Australian government has been supporting climate resilience and sustainable agriculture programs in Sindh to help rural populations cope with changing weather patterns and strengthen food security.—APP

IESCO power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO spokesperson, in Islamabad Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended, from 7 am to 11 am, IT-Park, Scheme-II, Kund Rajgan, King Hamad, Chatta Bakhtawar, from 8 am to 12 pm, Gharia, feeders. In Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Kambeli Sadiq, feeder. In Rawalpindi City Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Fawara Chowk, DHQ, Liaquat Bagh, Iqbal Road-II, City, Sarafa Bazaar, feeders. Similarly, on Jhelum Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Karyala, Metro City, Grand City, Bolani, New Cantt Jhelum, Saeela, Nougan, feeders. In GSO Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 06:00 am to 08:00 am, Dhoke Hasoo, Ratta, C. Factory, SS Hospital, AMC, BB Shaheed, MMK/Road, Ahsan Abad, Subhan Shaheed, Railway Colony, CDL Colony, Alam Abad, Fauji Colony, NUTECH University, from 09:00 am to 04:00 pm, 132kv AWC HMC Taxila and 132KV Sangjani-Burhan, from 08:00 am to 06:00 pm, 132KV Kahuta City. Palandri, 132KV New Wah-Bahtermore along with related earth switch, and surrounding areas.—APP

HSK-aligned Chinese language certifications launched

ISLAMABAD: MicroCerts, Pakistan's national digital skills certification platform and a subsidiary of AXI Systems (SOE), inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI), a non-governmental, non-partisan think tank dedicated to strengthening Pakistan Under the partnership, PCI will provide expert academic review of four HSK-aligned Chinese language certification modules developed by MicroCerts, ahead of their nationwide rollout through the platform, said a press release on Tuesday. The MoU was signed by Imran Bhatti, Chief Executive Officer, MicroCerts, and Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director, Pakistan-China Institute, at a ceremony held at MicroCerts' office in Islamabad. MicroCerts has developed four Chinese language certification modules aligned with the HSK proficiency framework: HSK 1 (Foundation Mandarin), HSK 2 (Elementary Mandarin), HSK 3 (Intermediate Mandarin), and HSK 4 (Upper-Intermediate Mandarin). The modules are designed to provide Pakistani learners with structured, standards-aligned Mandarin language credentials.—APP



RAWALPINDI: Vehicles drive through flooded streets after heavy rainfall in the Dhoke Khabba area.

Hepatitis C screening made mandatory: Kamal

Kamal said around 11 million people in Pakistan were currently Hepatitis C positive, describing the disease as dangerous because it often remained undetected until serious complications developed. "If Hepatitis C is not diagnosed and treated in time, it can develop into liver cancer," he warned, stressing the importance of early screening and treatment

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday announced a nationwide expansion of Hepatitis C screening under the Prime Minister's Programme for the Prevention of disease, urging every eligible Pakistani to undergo screening for the potentially life-threatening disease. Talking to the media after inaugurating Hepatitis C screening for Ministry of Health officials, the minister said screening had been made mandatory for all employees of the ministry. He said measures were also being taken to make screening mandatory for employees of all federal ministries, adding that letters were being sent to all ministries in this regard.

The minister said 17 screening points had been established in Islamabad, while private hospitals would also be provided with screening kits and digital gadgets to facilitate screening. The programme would subsequently be expanded across the country. "Every Pakistani will have to undergo screening," he said, adding that screening of people aged above 12 would be prioritised. Kamal said around 11 million people in Pakistan were currently Hepatitis C positive, describing the disease as dangerous because it often remained undetected until serious complications developed. "If Hepatitis C is not diagnosed and treated

in time, it can develop into liver cancer," he warned, stressing the importance of early screening and treatment. He said medicines costing around Rs68,000 would be provided free of charge to patients under the Prime Minister's programme and urged people to avail themselves of the free screening and treatment facilities. The minister said screening would also be conducted in Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad. He said people deported and returning to Pakistan would be required to undergo screening, while all flights would also be subjected to the screening process for three months. He said the government was using gadgets provided by the Bureau of Statistics along

with census software, while the system had been connected with NADRA records to facilitate identification and tracking of individuals. Kamal said the government was considering linking Hepatitis C screening with the Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC), while screening could also be made mandatory before travelling abroad. He said Hepatitis C was primarily transmitted through infected blood and stressed that timely screening was essential to prevent its spread and reduce the disease burden. The minister appealed to citizens to undergo screening and take full advantage of the free facilities being offered under the government's programme.—APP

FATA, PATA sales tax remains below 18pc rate

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani on Tuesday informed the Senate that the sales tax rate applicable to the erstwhile FATA and PATA had been increased from 10 per cent to 12 per cent under a gradual taxation plan, but remained well below the standard 18 per cent rate applicable elsewhere. Responding to a Calling Attention Notice raised by Atta Ur Rehman about the withdrawal of exemption of taxes for the merged districts of erstwhile FATA and PATA in the Federal Budget 2026-2027, the minister said that the taxation arrangement had been introduced after extensive political consultations with representatives and stakeholders of the areas concerned. He said the process began ahead of the June 2025 budget when detailed consultations were held with representatives from FATA, PATA and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The consultation process, he said, was led by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan and also involved Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam and senior officials of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Kayani said following the consultations, it was decided last year to introduce sales tax at 10 per cent, with an understanding that the rate would subsequently be increased by two percentage points annually. Accordingly, he said, the rate had enhanced to 12 per cent following the current year's budget, while still remaining preferential compared with the standard 18 per cent

rate. The minister said business community operating in other parts of the country had raised concerns about misuse of exemptions, adding that in certain cases production and business activities originating outside the eligible areas had been shown as originating from FATA and PATA to obtain tax benefits. He said such practices amounted to abuse of the exemption regime and, in certain cases, fraud, creating an uneven playing field for businesses elsewhere in the country. Kayani reaffirmed that the welfare, prosperity and development of the people of the erstwhile FATA and PATA remained a priority for the government. Speaking on occasion, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan said representatives and prominent business figures from FATA and PATA, as well as representatives of the Peshawar Chamber and other business bodies, had participated in the consultation process. He said business representatives from other areas had strongly objected to the continuation of complete exemptions, arguing that the disparity made it difficult for them to compete. Rana Sanaullah said the exemption period had previously been extended repeatedly, including through successive one-year extensions, with the final one-year extension ending this year. Under that arrangement, he said, sales tax was initially set at 10 per cent with an understanding that it would rise by two percentage points each year.—APP

CCP to hold open hearing on real estate sector

While the CCP has undertaken enforcement actions, conducted enquiries and passed orders involving deceptive marketing practices in the real estate sector, the Commission considers wider stakeholder engagement necessary to identify broader competition concerns and understand market practices from the perspective of both consumers and businesses

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) will hold an Open Hearing on August 27 to hear stakeholders and examine competition concerns in the real estate sector, particularly false or misleading claims, hidden charges and misrepresentation of project approvals. The CCP has invited consumers, investors, developers, builders, real estate professionals, industry associations and other stakeholders to share their experiences and concerns directly with the Commission. The hearing is being held against the backdrop of complaints received by the CCP regarding deceptive and anti-competitive practices in the sector, said a release issued here on Tuesday. The Commission has observed that claims relating to project approvals, features, charges and other material information can

significantly influence investment decisions. Where consumers invest substantial amounts on the basis of false or misleading representations, the consequences can be serious. Truthful and transparent information is therefore essential for informed consumer choice and fair competition. Under Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010, deceptive marketing practices, including the dissemination of false or misleading information that may harm consumers or the business interests of other undertakings, are prohibited. While the CCP has undertaken enforcement actions, conducted enquiries and passed orders involving deceptive marketing practices in the real estate sector, the Commission considers wider stakeholder engagement necessary to identify broader competition concerns and

understand market practices from the perspective of both consumers and businesses. The hearing is being held under Section 29(c) of the Competition Act, 2010, which empowers the Commission to hold open hearings on matters affecting competition. Submissions and concerns raised by participants will be recorded and considered by the Commission in formulating its Opinion and recommendations. The hearing will be held from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2026, at the Competition Commission of Pakistan, 9th Floor, ISE Towers, Jinnah Avenue, Islamabad. Registration is mandatory and will remain open until August 25, 2026. Participants may register at advocacy@cc.gov.pk or contact 051-9100260 (Ext. 334 or Ext. 273)—APP

Minister urges youth to drive water action

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik on Tuesday called for greater youth participation in country's climate and water policy, saying young people could help bridge the gap between policy decisions and implementation on the ground. Addressing a National Youth-Led Policy Roundtable on Water Resilience and Climate Action in Pakistan, organised by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination in collaboration with WaterAid Pakistan, the minister said youth could contribute to policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and accountability. "Green skills, Climate University, startups, this is how the ministry is turning the idea of youth partnership into lived reality," Dr Malik said, highlighting initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for young Pakistanis to contribute to the country's climate agenda. He stressed the need for stronger partnerships between the government, youth, academia, research institutions and the private sector to promote evidence-based policymaking and innovation. The minister said young people's presence in communities across Pakistan positioned them to monitor implementation, identify gaps and provide evidence to policymakers. He also called for women's empowerment and the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups in climate and water policies and projects. Referring to the 18th Constitutional Amendment, Dr Malik said important areas of water management and service delivery fell within provincial jurisdiction, requiring greater provincial institutional, technical and human capacity alongside federal leadership and coordination. He said climate and water challenges differed across regions and policies must therefore respond to local needs and vulnerabilities. Indigenous and community knowledge, he added, should be used alongside scientific and technical expertise. The minister said the focus must now shift from policy commitments to "visible and measurable results" on the ground.—Federal Secretary for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Awaiz Manzoor Sumra and senior ministry officials also attended the roundtable.—APP



Islamabad: Bilal Adil, Chairman & CEO of Paragon Group of Companies, received the prestigious Excellence Award from the Governor of Istanbul in Istanbul, Türkiye, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to business and the textile industry.

IGP lauds SSP services

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi met SSP Abdul Haq Umrani and appreciated his valuable services to Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police. An ICT Police official told APP on Tuesday that during the meeting, the IGP acknowledged SSP Umrani's contribution and services rendered to the capital police. IGP Rizvi appreciated his professional commitment and conveyed his best wishes for his new responsibilities. He expressed hope that SSP Abdul Haq Umrani would continue to perform his duties with dedication and professionalism in his new assignment.—APP

Northern areas at rising GLOF risk

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), through its National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC), has issued a multi hazard alert for possible Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), flash floods, landslides and rising river flows till Aug 24, warning authorities and residents in vulnerable mountainous areas of Gilgit Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and parts of Punjab to remain on high alert amid continued monsoon rains, rapid snow and glacier melt and rising temperatures. The alert said sensitive mountainous areas of Gilgit Baltistan, KP and AJK could face sudden flooding and debris flows from Aug 18 to 23 due to glacier and snow melt, elevated temperatures and monsoon rainfall. Ghizer, Hunza, Nagar, Shigar, Gilgit, Rondu, Tangir, Darel, Diamer, Astore, Skardu, Ghanche, Kharmang, Neelum Valley and adjoining areas have been identified as particularly vulnerable. Several glacier systems and valleys, including Budsawat, Ishkoman, Hunarchi, Ter-sat Hindur, Ultar, Chanter, Gupis, Yasin, Sust, Arandu, Roshan, Haks, Chati Boi, Thalo 1 and 2, Reshun, Brep, Boni, Sardar Gol, Lasht, Pandoro Chat, Knaplu, Hisper Hopper, Gilgit, Gilmen, Batara, Shishper, Songhor, Roshan and Shimshal, have also been declared sensitive. The NEOC has separately warned of landslides and rockfalls across vulnerable mountainous areas of Gilgit Baltistan from Aug 22 to 24. In Hunza, Hassanabad, Murtazabad, Attabad, Shishkat, Shisper, Gilman, Gulmit, Gulkin, Husainabad, Passu and Khyber have been identified as landslide prone areas. In Nagar, the vulnerable locations include Hopper, Kunjokshal, Gutas, Samayar, Miachar, Pissan, Nalinapin, Ghulmet, Thol Nalot and Hesper. In Astore, Tarashing, Rupal Valley and the Tarashing Rupal Road face a heightened landslide risk. In Diamer, the Raikot to Tato corridor, Fairy Meadows Road, Thal-ichi to Jalipur route and the northern and northwestern mountain slopes of Nanga Parbat have been identified as vulnerable. The Skardu Road between RD-20 and RD-80 has also been declared particularly sensitive to landslides. The authority warned that landslides and rockfalls could block roads, disrupt traffic and sever links with vulnerable communities along mountainous roads, the Karakoram Highway and sensitive valleys. Meanwhile, monsoon rains are expected to continue in upper parts of the country from Aug 18 to 21, with thunderstorms and isolated heavy rainfall forecast in parts of Punjab. Urban flooding is possible in Narowal, Sialkot, Gujrat, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Chakwal, Mandi Bahaud-din, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Lahore.—APP

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Some believe that certain military figures assigned to sensitive positions are advocates of pushing brinkmanship to the extreme, if not displaying suicidal tendencies. Iran's handling of the Strait of Hormuz in no way suggests the feasibility of reaching realistic solutions. Iran's handling of the Strait of Hormuz in no way suggests the feasibility of reaching realistic solutions. What is on the table is not the nuclear issue alone. A settlement would define Iran's position in the region and its relationship with its "allied armies," thereby affecting the fate of the maps where these factions are stationed. Esmail Ghaani's advice to Iraqi factions not to accept the Zaidi government's policy of confining weapons to the state mirrors the advice directed at Hamas and Hezbollah. Furthermore, the Iranian army commander's announcement of a financial reward for any military personnel who kills or captures an American soldier intensifies questions about how intense the next phase will be. It is clear from the course of the US-sponsored Lebanese-Israeli negotiations that anticipation remains the dominant factor. Amid this atmosphere of waiting, Israel continues to commit unprecedented crimes in southern Lebanon. It is no longer content with assassinating individuals – it has gone as far as wiping out entire villages, rendering them uninhabitable for the foreseeable future through systematic destruction and altering their geographic features. There are those in Beirut who believe that the Netanyahu government would have replicated the Gaza scenario across the entirety of southern Lebanon were it not for the pressure exerted on it by the Trump administration. While it is true that, for half a century, southern Lebanon has hung on the ropes of confrontations that exceed its capacity, the current phase appears more dangerous than anything that has preceded it. The Lebanese economic collapse is deepening and Lebanese fragmentation is widening. The return of Hezbollah from the war it chose to enter – against the will of the majority – is inextricably linked to Iranian choices. The Lebanese dilemma is profound. The glaring imbalance in power makes reclaiming the occupied territory by force impossible, while the price demanded to exit through negotiations is rejected by Hezbollah and Iran. Consequently, keeping Lebanon hanging on the ropes of anticipation only exacerbates its deterioration and disintegration. Lebanon is not the only map left hanging. Iraq is making serious efforts to rebuild its institutions and reclaim the decision-making power over war and peace. The journey does not appear easy at all in light of the resistance from certain militias and the continuous drone attacks against targets in Kurdistan. Iraq also hangs on the ropes of the American-Iranian confrontation, amid political divisions and an economic crisis that is anything but simple. The Yemeni map is also left hanging amid the Houthis' insistence on playing regional Iranian roles in the Red Sea, the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and on Yemeni soil itself. Syria almost constitutes an exception. Thus far, President Ahmad Al-Sharaa has managed to prioritize Syria as a state over Syria as an arena, through a wide network of relationships, alliances and realistic calculations. It is a phase of anticipation heavily fraught with danger, extending from the Strait of Hormuz and its surroundings to the maps left hanging and those left anxious.

From Praetorianism to Constitutional Power

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The 27th Amendment transformed Article 243, which governs the command and control of the armed forces. The army chief became Chief of Defence Forces, while the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee was abolished. The National Strategic Command was also placed within a structure in which the army chief has an important role in the appointment process. These changes matter because institutions are not only defined by what they do; they are also defined...

PAKISTAN has lived with an uneasy civil-military relationship for most of its history. Governments have changed, constitutions have been suspended, political parties have risen and fallen, and elections have repeatedly altered the composition of parliament. Yet one feature of the political system has remained remarkably persistent: the extraordinary influence of the military over matters that, in a conventional parliamentary democracy, would normally belong to elected institutions. Classical scholarship on civil-military relations generally treats military intervention as a problem of institutional boundaries. Samuel Huntington's distinction between civilian control and military professionalism, Morris Janowitz's emphasis on the political responsibilities of the military and S.E. Finer's work on military intervention all point towards a basic question: who ultimately decides the direction of the state? Pakistan's experience has often been explained through this question. The military has intervened directly at certain moments and exercised influence indirectly at others. The current phase suggests something more consequential: a movement from informal military dominance towards a more formally recognised concentration of authority. The elevation of Field Marshal Asim Munir to the position of Chief of Defence Forces following the 27th Constitutional Amendment is central to this change. The amendment abolished the office of the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and placed the army chief concurrently at the head of the armed forces. In December 2025, Field Marshal Munir was formally notified as Pakistan's first Chief of Defence Forces. For decades, the army chief has been the most powerful figure within Pakistan's security establishment. But the constitutional structure maintained a distinction between the military establishment and the political institutions of the state. The military could exercise influence, sometimes considerable influence, but the formal constitutional order continued to place civilian government at the centre of political authority. The important question is therefore not whether the military has influence. That has never seriously been in doubt. The question is whether that influence has acquired a different legal and institutional character. The 27th Amendment transformed Article 243, which governs the command and control of the armed forces. The army chief became Chief of Defence Forces, while the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee was abolished. The National Strategic Command was also placed within a structure in which the army chief has an important role in the appointment process. These changes matter because institutions are not only defined by what they do; they are also defined by the authority attached to their offices. Earlier forms of military dominance frequently depended upon

relationships, political alliances, pressure, informal negotiations and the ability of the military establishment to shape political outcomes without necessarily appearing as the formal holder of political power. The new model is different because important elements of military authority have been written directly into the constitutional framework. Praetorianism traditionally describes a political order in which the military possesses sufficient power to intervene in politics, either directly or indirectly. Pakistan has experienced several versions of this phenomenon. Military governments under Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf represented its most visible form. But even during periods of civilian rule, the military remained a major political actor. The present arrangement does not resemble a conventional military government. Parliament continues to exist. Political parties continue to contest elections. A prime minister remains in office. Civilian ministries continue to administer the state. Yet the survival of civilian institutions does not, by itself, establish civilian supremacy. This is the central contradiction of Pakistan's hybrid political order. The country retains the appearance and many of the procedures of parliamentary government while the distribution of effective power may operate according to a different logic. The constitutional changes of 2025 substantially altered the judicial structure, including the creation of a Federal Constitutional Court and changes affecting the composition and functioning of important judicial bodies. Critics argued that these reforms could weaken judicial independence and increase executive influence over the judiciary. It would be too simple, however, to describe every judicial reform as nothing more than military control. Pakistan's judiciary has long been involved in the country's political struggles, and the relationship between courts, parliament, executive government and the military has never been straightforward. A democracy does not depend merely on the existence of parliament, courts and elections. It depends upon each institution possessing sufficient independence to restrain the others. When one institution becomes powerful enough to shape the functioning of several others, the constitutional system begins to change even if its formal structures remain intact. The issue is not the personality of Field Marshal Munir alone. Institutions built around individual authority can survive their creators. If extraordinary powers become embedded in constitutional provisions, legislation and administrative practice, they can outlive the individual who first occupies the office. Pakistan's earlier experience of military dominance was often cyclical. A military intervention would be followed by political mobilisation, constitutional adjustments, elections and eventually another period of civilian government.

The boundaries between military and civilian authority remained contested but visible. Once exceptional arrangements are incorporated into ordinary constitutional practice, future political leaders may find it increasingly difficult to restore the older balance. What begins as a response to a political crisis can gradually become an accepted feature of governance. Pakistan has witnessed this pattern before in different forms. Emergency measures justified by national security have often acquired a political life of their own. Temporary arrangements have sometimes become permanent institutions. Extraordinary authority has repeatedly been defended as necessary for stability. The lesson of history is that political systems rarely change in a single dramatic moment. More often, they change through a series of apparently practical decisions. A constitutional amendment here. A change in command structure there. A revised judicial arrangement. A new interpretation of civilian authority. An extension of institutional responsibility. Individually, each step may be defended as necessary. Collectively, they can alter the balance of the state. This is why Pakistan's present political order should not simply be described as another period of military rule. The country appears to be moving towards a form of institutionalised military influence in which civilian political institutions continue to function, but the military's position within the state is more clearly protected and defined than before. The distinction between the formal constitutional order and the actual distribution of power is therefore becoming increasingly important. The challenge for Pakistan is not to decide whether the military should have a role in national security. No serious state can function without an effective military establishment. The question is whether national security can coexist with meaningful civilian oversight. A strong military does not necessarily weaken democracy. But a political system in which civilian institutions cannot exercise independent authority over the military cannot claim a stable civil-military equilibrium. The country's future political stability will depend less on who occupies the highest offices than on whether institutions can recover a workable balance among themselves. If constitutional authority remains divided in theory but concentrated in practice, elections alone will not resolve the problem. The real test of Pakistan's democracy is therefore not whether parliament survives, whether governments complete their terms or whether elections are held. It is whether the elected state can remain the final authority over the institutions that wield coercive power. That question has been present since Pakistan's earliest years.

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Why Public Diplomacy Needs Legibility

T.M. Awan



China offers an important example. Beijing has invested billions of dollars in expanding its global media presence and international communication platforms. Yet many governments, investors, and analysts continue to ask fundamental questions about China's long-term strategic intentions. What is the future direction of the Belt and Road Initiative? How does China define its Indo-Pacific strategy? Under what circumstances might it use economic...

IN an age of artificial intelligence, information overload, and geopolitical competition, the greatest challenge for public diplomacy may no longer be persuading foreign audiences. It is becoming understandable to them. Around the world, diplomats and strategic communication experts are increasingly arguing that influence depends not simply on telling a country's story effectively, but on making that country's intentions, institutions, and policies clear and predictable. In other words, public diplomacy is gradually shifting from persuasion to legibility. For decades, public diplomacy focused primarily on convincing foreign audiences that a country's policies, values, or actions were justified. Governments invested heavily in international broadcasting, cultural exchanges, scholarships, media campaigns, and public outreach. The central question was straightforward: How do we persuade others to support us? That question is now evolving. Legibility is not about asking others to agree with your policies. It is about ensuring they understand what your country stands for, how decisions are made, what your long-term priorities are, and how you are likely to respond during periods of uncertainty or crisis. The new question is no longer, "Can we persuade them?" It is increasingly, "Do they understand us?" This distinction may appear subtle, but it has profound implications for diplomacy. Today's information environment is vastly different from the one that shaped traditional public diplomacy. Artificial intelligence can generate convincing misinformation within minutes. Social media accelerates the spread

of competing narratives, while twenty-four-hour news cycles leave little time for thoughtful analysis. At the same time, public trust in governments and traditional media has declined across much of the world. In such an environment, even the most sophisticated communication campaigns often struggle to change perceptions. What audiences increasingly value instead is consistency. Countries that communicate clearly, act predictably, and maintain coherent policies tend to enjoy greater credibility than those relying solely on persuasive messaging. Trust is earned through repeated, consistent behaviour rather than through slogans or carefully crafted public relations campaigns. China offers an important example. Beijing has invested billions of dollars in expanding its global media presence and international communication platforms. Yet many governments, investors, and analysts continue to ask fundamental questions about China's long-term strategic intentions. What is the future direction of the Belt and Road Initiative? How does China define its Indo-Pacific strategy? Under what circumstances might it use economic leverage? The challenge is not simply communication; it is reducing uncertainty. Japan illustrates a different approach. It rarely relies on highly emotional international campaigns. Instead, it has cultivated a reputation for being stable, rules-based, and institutionally consistent. Foreign governments generally understand Japan's alliance commitments, policy-making process, and economic priorities. That predictability has become one of Japan's greatest diplomatic strengths. For Pakistan, this emerging concept offers valuable lessons. Pakistan's public diplomacy has traditionally concentrated on correcting

negative perceptions, promoting tourism, attracting investment, and showcasing its rich cultural heritage. These objectives remain important. However, modern public diplomacy requires something more comprehensive. International partners increasingly seek clarity regarding Pakistan's long-term foreign policy priorities, regional connectivity strategy, economic reform agenda, counterterrorism doctrine, climate commitments, and institutional decision-making. They want to understand not only what Pakistan says today, but also what it is likely to do tomorrow. Predictability builds confidence. This is precisely where strategic communication assumes greater importance. It is no longer confined to speeches, press releases, or social media campaigns. Effective strategic communication requires alignment between policies, institutions, leadership behaviour, and public messaging. When government actions consistently reinforce official narratives, credibility grows. When actions contradict words, trust quickly erodes. The same principle applies to national reputation. A country's reputation is not built by advertising campaigns alone. It develops through consistent performance over time. Governments strengthen their credibility by honouring international commitments, maintaining policy continuity across political transitions, responding responsibly during crises, and communicating transparently with domestic and international audiences. Reputation management is therefore less about projecting a favourable image than about demonstrating reliability. Nation branding is undergoing a similar transformation. Traditional branding

sought to make countries appear attractive to tourists, investors, and foreign businesses. The newer approach asks a more fundamental question: Can international partners clearly understand who we are, what we stand for, and what they should expect from us? Reducing uncertainty is often more valuable than creating excitement. For Pakistan, strengthening legibility should become an important objective of both foreign policy and public diplomacy. This requires greater policy consistency, stronger institutional coordination, transparent communication, and a long-term national narrative that remains coherent beyond changes in political leadership. Investors seek certainty. Diplomats value predictability. International partners place greater trust in countries whose policies are understandable and consistent. As geopolitical competition increasingly extends into the information domain, influence will belong not only to countries with the loudest voices but also to those whose intentions are most clearly understood. Persuasion will always remain an important component of diplomacy, but it is no longer sufficient on its own. The next frontier of public diplomacy is not winning the information war through louder narratives. It is becoming a state whose institutions, policies, and actions are sufficiently legible that foreign governments, investors, businesses, and publics can anticipate its behaviour with confidence. In the twenty-first century, predictability is emerging as a strategic asset, and legibility may well become one of the most valuable forms of soft power.

– The writer is a media and strategic communication professional and international relations analyst. X: @TMAwanOfficial

Briefs

Supreme Court decision reshapes...

FROM PAGE 01

A possible scenario could involve a coalition between Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and a restructured Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) minus Imran Khan. For Khan himself, insiders indicate that he may be advised to remain in the hospital for recovery and later at home, refraining from active politics until the next elections. Meanwhile, some of his party members could be integrated into the new political setup to maintain balance and continuity. In this context, the Supreme Court's decision can be viewed not only as a humanitarian gesture but also as a move with potential political undertones. It may pave the way for a transitional phase in which Pakistan's political forces realign ahead of the next electoral cycle. As the government prepares to implement the court's directive, all eyes remain on how swiftly and transparently the transfer will be carried out and what it might signal for the country's evolving political equation.

Mixed reactions from PPP and PML-N

FROM PAGE 01

This ambivalence highlights the delicate balance between respecting judicial independence and safeguarding political interests. While public statements emphasize adherence to the Supreme Court's authority, behind closed doors, party leaders are weighing the potential impact on upcoming electoral contests. The decision has thus exposed fault lines within the ruling coalition, with PPP and PML-N caught between legal obligations and political calculations. Observers note that the muted response from senior leadership suggests a cautious approach, as both parties attempt to manage public perception while preparing for the challenges posed by Imran Khan's possible resurgence.

Pakistan wants peaceful resolution...

FROM PAGE 01

resolving differences and promoting regional peace and stability. The meeting comes at a time when Islamabad is actively engaging with global partners to expand economic and strategic cooperation. Analysts note that Pakistan-Russia relations have seen renewed energy in recent years, particularly in areas such as energy, trade, and defense collaboration. Observers believe that the interaction between Ambassador Khor-e and Senator Dar reflects both countries' desire to deepen ties amid shifting geopolitical dynamics. With Pakistan seeking diversified partnerships and Russia looking to strengthen its outreach in South Asia, the meeting is seen as a step toward consolidating mutual interests. Diplomatic circles in Islamabad welcomed the engagement, noting that such exchanges contribute to building trust and opening new avenues of collaboration. The emphasis on dialogue and diplomacy also aligns with Pakistan's broader foreign policy approach of promoting peace and stability in the region.

French ambassador pays...

FROM PAGE 01

DPM/FM emphasized to further expand bilateral cooperation and stressed the importance of sustained high-level exchanges, dialogue and engagement on bilateral and regional matters of mutual interest. Ambassador Galey thanked the DPM/FM and the Government of Pakistan for the support extended to him during his tenure.

Former Australia batter David Warner convicted, fined for drink-driving

Judge says Warner unlikely to reoffend but stresses dangers of drink-driving incidents

FORMER Australia batsman David Warner was convicted and fined A\$1,500 (\$1,065) for drink-driving by a Sydney court on Tuesday after being arrested in April. Warner, one of Australia's most decorated cricketers, pleaded guilty after failing a breath test on the Easter weekend when driving his family home in Sydney's eastern suburbs after a social function. The 39-year-old's blood-alcohol reading was more than twice the legal limit. Waverley Local Court heard Warner stopped his car when he saw the roadside breath-testing site and attempted to swap seats with a female passenger. "I accept Mr Warner is unlikely to re-offend," Judge Clare Farnan told the court in comments published by Australian media. "(But) regrettably, drink-driving is still a significant factor in many crashes in New South Wales." The offence was aggravated because children were in the car at the time, Farnan said. Warner, who played 112 tests and over 250 limited-overs internationals for Australia, will need to fit an interlock device in his car which will prevent it from starting if it detects alcohol in his



system. He left the court without commenting to a large media pack. Warner's management did not provide immediate comment when contacted by Reuters on Tuesday. Before Farnan's decision, Warner's lawyer told the court his client should be spared conviction because he had suffered extra punishment as a result of media coverage. "Commercial opportunities (are) being affected," Australian media quoted Awaiz Ahmad as saying. Warner works for Fox Sports Australia as a commentator and was part of the local broadcaster's team covering the recent Australia-Bangladesh test in Darwin. He is captain of Big Bash League team Sydney Thunder, which is part of a New South Wales state government campaign to deter drink-driving. Cricket New South Wales (NSW) did not comment on Warner's position as Thunder captain when contacted by Reuters on Tuesday. "Our organisation is a strong advocate of safe driving, including avoiding drink driving," Cricket NSW said in a statement. "We continue to take this incident seriously, including educating all players on the importance of safe driving." – APP

World NO 1 Belgium lose to Germany; England outclass India

Malaysia and France engaged in a back-and-forth duel in Pool B. Malaysia took early initiative, but France's penalty corner battery consistently threatened. A late equalizer by France's Timothée Clément in the 59th minute salvaged a 3-3 draw, leaving both sides tied on points in the group standings

SPORTS DESK

AMSTERDAM: The third matchday of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2026 brought high-voltage drama, unexpected upsets, and thrilling end-to-end encounters across the pools. Germany Edge Out Hosts Belgium (1-0) In one of the most anticipated clashes of the tournament, Germany pulled off a major statement victory over host nation and Pro League champions, Belgium. Operating with a compact, structured defense, the German squad

absorbed relentless Belgian pressure before Jakob Brilla converted a vital chance in the 39th minute. Despite late attacks from the host side, Germany held firm to claim top position in Pool B. England Mount Comeback to Defeat India (4-2) In Pool D, an overconfident Indian side surrendered a first-half lead to hand England a commanding victory. After England opened through Nick Bandurak, India responded with two goals via Harmanpreet Singh and Dilpreet Singh to take a 2-1 advantage into the break. However,

England dominated the second half. Goals from Stuart Rushmere, Henry Croft, and a second strike from Bandurak completed a four-goal display that leaves England atop Pool D. France and Malaysia Share Points in Six-Goal Thriller (3-3) Malaysia and France engaged in a back-and-forth duel in Pool B. Malaysia took early initiative, but France's penalty corner battery consistently threatened. A late equalizer by France's Timothée Clément in the 59th minute salvaged a 3-3 draw, leaving both sides tied on points in the

group standings. Pakistan and Wales Battle to Spirited Draw (3-3) Pakistan staged a spirited final-quarter comeback against Wales in a thrilling Pool D clash. Abdul Rehman gave Pakistan an early lead in the 3rd minute, but quickfire goals from Gareth Furlong and Rhys Bradshaw put Wales ahead 2-1 before halftime. Pakistan stormed back in the fourth quarter with strikes from Sufyan Khan (49') and Hannan Shahid (51') to retake a 3-2 lead. However, Furlong converted a 53rd-minute penalty stroke to ensure both teams shared the points.

24 killed in Niger

JOS: Attackers wielding guns and machetes killed at least two dozen people in central Nigeria's Plateau state, survivors told AFP on Tuesday, the latest flare-up in a state plagued by recurring communal violence. Muslim ethnic Fulani nomadic herders have long clashed with settled farmers in Plateau, many of whom are Christian, over access to land and resources. "We were sleeping, we heard some noises, some people in our neighborhood were screaming," Mathew Joseph, of Bin-Per village, in Mangu local government area, told AFP of the Monday night attack. "I looked through the window and saw some armed men approaching our house. Before they arrived we managed to escape," he said. He said that 24 people had been killed, the same toll given by resident Muftwan Yamput, who said his neighbors were slain. "We survived by the whisker, but my neighbors were attacked, two people killed in their house," he told AFP. Local Red Cross field officer Biplang Moses confirmed the incident without specifying a toll. Police did not respond to a request for comment. Land used by farmers and herders in central Nigeria's Middle Belt region is coming under stress from climate change and human expansion, sparking deadly competition for increasingly limited space. Land grabbing over mineral and mining resources, political and economic tensions between locals and those considered outsiders, as well as an influx of hard-line Muslim and Christian preachers, have heightened divisions in recent decades. When violence flares, weak policing can mean reprisal attacks follow which often occur across communal lines. The killings in Bin-Per come after two herders in the area were killed last week. Those killings were followed by a suspected reprisal on the nearby village of Maitimbe in which multiple houses were burned down. – APP

Imran sisters meets him in jail

FROM PAGE 01

On Tuesday, however, Noreen Niazi was allowed to proceed to the jail and meet with Imran for the first time this year, being sent by the police to Gate no. 5 upon her arrival. Jail sources said that the two met in the jail's conference room, where they discussed his health and other issues. Noreen also informed the ex-premier about the SC's earlier order to have him taken to Shifa International Hospital for a medical checkup, they added. Meanwhile, the ex-premier's other sisters – Aleema Khanum and Dr Uzma Khanum – and his cousin Qasim Zaman were stopped at Dahgal Naka, a security checkpoint and road intersection located on Adiala Road, and were barred from proceeding to the jail. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's senior provincial minister Meena Khan and PTI members Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry and Shahid Khattak were also present at the Factory checkpoint, where a heavy police contingent was deployed. Imran's wife Bushra Bibi also met with her family today in a conference room in the jail. Her health and legal matters were discussed during the meeting, which lasted 40 minutes and included her children Musa and Mubashara Maneka and sister-in-law Mehrunnisa. Speaking to the media at the checkpoint, Aleema highlighted that the SC's earlier ruling to send the PTI founder for a hospital checkup came after eight months of demands from the party.

Serena and Venus Williams return to doubles and lose close match in Cincinnati

MASON: Serena and Venus Williams played their first doubles match together since the 2022 U.S. Open and lost a thriller, 2-6, 6-1 (10-8) to Marta Kostyuk and Peyton Stearns on Monday night at the Cincinnati Open. The sisters nearly recovered from a 6-0 deficit in the match tiebreaker before a double-fault by Venus Williams ended their first doubles appearance in a non-Grand Slam event since the Italian Open in 2016. "I thought it was fun," Serena said. "I thought it was special. We kicked off a little rust in the middle of the match and just, you know (were) starting to feel it. I didn't come out here to win this tournament. Winning is obviously great. But in this position just, you know, having fun. It was really cool to be able to do this again." Serena had been off the tour since 2022 before returning this summer at age 44. The sisters planned to play together at Wimbledon but had to withdraw after Serena injured her knee while losing her singles match. They entered Cincinnati as a wild card. "Eventually we would find our way to each other," the 46-year-old Venus said about the decision to play doubles again. "It's our first time playing together in forever. It was great for us to get out there and do it." Kostyuk and Stearns, both 24, are playing in their first tournament together. Kostyuk is from Ukraine.

Stearns grew up in the Cincinnati suburb of Mason, where the tournament is played every year. "I kind of expected it but it stung a little bit that this is my hometown," Stearns said about the pro-Williams sisters crowd. "I won't hold it against anyone. The crowd was going for them but we used it to our advantage and flipped the script." After dropping the first set, the Williams sisters rolled in the second to force a match tiebreaker. Kostyuk and Stearns went ahead 6-0, but consecutive double-faults by Kostyuk helped the Williamses get within 8-7. It was 9-8 after Serena powerfully put away an overhead before Venus double-faulted. "The crowd got the show," Kostyuk said. "They probably couldn't ask for anything better. At the end a tie-break is a lottery. You never know which way it's going to go." Venus and Serena have won 14 Grand Slam doubles titles and 22 total. Serena won one with Alexandra Stevenson in 2002 at Leipzig. All of Venus' doubles titles have been with her sister. They also have won 23 Olympic gold medals together. Serena has won 23 singles Grand Slam titles. Venus has won seven. Swiatek rallied for 3-set win and other results In other results Monday, defending Cincinnati champion Iga Swiatek rallied from a set down to win her eighth consecutive match, beating Maria Sakkari, 4-6, 6-1, 6-1. – APP

New Provinces - Convenience or a Burden on the National Treasury?



TANVEER HUSSAIN

THE slogan of creating new provinces may sound appealing at first. If the country has more provinces, people living in remote areas would not have to travel to the existing provincial capitals for government-related matters; instead, they could visit nearby administrative centres, which would be relatively easier and less expensive. This could certainly bring several benefits, including improved administration, greater public access to government services, and better development opportunities for less-developed areas. Smaller provinces could also focus more closely on understanding and resolving local problems. However, an important question remains: can a country like Pakistan, which is already facing serious economic difficulties, afford the admin-

istrative and financial burden of creating new provinces? In Pakistan, unfortunately, power and authority are often associated with lavish protocols, excessive government expenditure and unnecessary use of public resources. If four provinces were replaced by 20 or 30 provinces, it would not simply mean drawing new boundaries on the map. It would require the establishment of a huge new administrative structure. Every new province would require a Governor, Chief Minister, Provincial Assembly, ministers, advisers, various departments, a secretariat, official residences, offices, vehicles and a large number of new employees. Each province would also require a High Court, various government institutions and a complete provincial bureaucracy. All of this would place an additional burden on already limited national resources. The issue would not be limited to salaries and offices. In our system, a senior government position often comes with an entire package of protocol and privileges. After the creation of new provincial governments, new official vehicles, residences, security arrangements, staff and other facilities would be required for ministers and senior officials. Roads would be closed and traffic stopped for VIP movements, while ordinary citizens would be left waiting in long lines of vehicles under the hot sun. If such a situation were to exist in 20 or 30 provinces

instead of four, what is intended as administrative convenience could instead create further difficulties for the public. The second important question is the distribution of resources. Even among the existing four provinces, there are disagreements over the distribution of national resources, the NFC Award, employment opportunities, development funds and other matters. After the creation of new provinces, this distribution could become even more complicated. Every province would demand a greater share of resources, presenting different claims based on population, area, revenue generation, natural resources and development needs. Similarly, the issue of the distribution of river water could become more complicated. If provincial boundaries were redrawn in areas involving rivers, dams, canals or natural resources, new disputes could emerge. Politically, a greater number of provinces would not necessarily guarantee greater stability. If different political parties formed governments in different provinces, disagreements between the Centre and the provinces could increase. One province might accuse another of receiving an unfair share of resources or water. Political tensions between the federal and provincial governments could also affect administrative affairs. In this way, a system designed to bring government closer

to the people could become even more complicated because of political conflicts. However, this does not mean that the need for new provinces should be completely rejected. The deprivation of certain regions and their distance from administrative centres are genuine issues in Pakistan. Demands for new provinces or administrative units have emerged from time to time in areas such as South Punjab, Hazara, Bahawalpur, interior Sindh, Balochistan and other regions. If people in a particular area have to travel hundreds of kilometres to access basic facilities, education, healthcare, employment opportunities and government institutions, there is certainly a need to address the problem. Perhaps the real need is to transfer powers to the grassroots level before increasing the number of provinces. A strong local government system, empowered district administrations, improved local governance and digital government services can enable citizens to access many services close to their homes rather than travelling to provincial or federal capitals. Instead of creating a new assembly and new ministries for every administrative requirement, the government could make the existing system more effective and achieve greater benefits at a much lower cost. Therefore, the issue of new provinces should not be treated mere-

ly as a political slogan; rather, it should be considered a serious matter of national policy. Before creating a new province, a comprehensive assessment should be made of its economic resources, population, administrative requirements, revenue generation, water resources, natural resources, infrastructure and future expenditures. It should also be determined whether the proposed province would have sufficient capacity to meet its own administrative expenses and how much additional burden it would place on the national treasury every year. At present, Pakistan needs better governance, lower expenditure and more effective administration rather than more governments, greater protocol and additional privileges. If new provinces genuinely become a means of providing people with greater convenience, development and justice, they should certainly be considered. However, if their creation merely results in new positions, new assemblies, new vehicles, new offices and additional privileges, they could become another burden on the national treasury rather than serving the national interest. Therefore, before increasing the number of provinces, Pakistan should first focus on improving the quality of governance and bringing administrative powers closer to the people. The real solution may not be more provinces, but better administration.

Pak-India clash today at 6 pm

FROM PAGE 01

August 19, Pakistan will face arch-rivals India at 6 PM Pakistan Standard Time in what promises to be a fiery showdown. The rivalry between these two hockey giants is legendary, and fans across the region are bracing for an electrifying contest that could define the tournament's momentum.

PTI lauds SC order on Imran's transfer

FROM PAGE 01

a medical board to assess and treat Khan. It also ordered that Dr Uzma and the former premier's personal physician be present during his medical assessment and treatment, with his family to bear the expenses. Authorities were directed to transfer the ex-premier to the hospital under tight security and complete the necessary arrangements within a few days. The court, however, warned that any violation of its directions could result in the withdrawal of facilities being provided to the PTI founder. Khan, 73, has remained in prison since August 2023 following convictions he and his party describe as politically motivated. Since his ouster in April 2022 following a no-confidence vote, he has faced multiple legal cases, including allegations of state gifts and an unlawful marriage case. The PTI said that the Supreme Court's order had strengthened the fundamental demand for Khan to receive the best possible medical facilities. "We consider this Supreme Court order an important step towards protecting Imran Khan's fundamental right to health and human dignity," the PTI said of today's court order. It also expressed hope that the relevant authorities would implement the court orders and ensure the provision of the best possible medical facilities to Khan. The PTI said that the Supreme Court's order had strengthened the fundamental demand for Khan to receive the best possible medical facilities.

Babar Azam to miss first test

"It's not broken, there is a little bit of swelling on the finger. 'Hopefully he will be available for the second Test match'"

LAHORE: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has been ruled out of the first Test against England at Headingley starting Wednesday, with Salman Ali Agha taking over as skipper. Azam has been unable to overcome an injury to his right hand after being struck by England Under-19 pacer Manny Lumsden during Pakistan's warm-up game last week against a County Select XI. He promptly retired hurt in what a team spokesman said was a "precautionary measure". It is the same hand he was struck on during the second Test against the West Indies earlier this month. Azam batted briefly in the Headingley nets on Monday but, while he has been cleared of a broken middle finger, he has not been passed fit to lead the side in the first of a three-Test series. "Babar Azam is not available, Salman will be captain for the first Test," Pakistan coach Sarfaraz Ahmed told reporters at Headingley on Tuesday. "It's not broken, there is a little bit of swelling on the finger. 'Hopefully he will be available for the second Test match.'" Azam's absence is a major blow to Pakistan as they begin their quest to win a Test series in England for the first time in 30 years given he is also one of their leading batsmen, with nine Test hundreds and a career average of 43.68. Saul Shakeel is in line to replace the 31-year-old Azam in the team after missing the recent two-match series in the West Indies, which ended in a 1-1 draw. – APP

Briefs

SECP okays
Naya
Nazimabad
Apartment

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's primary capital market continues to gain momentum as the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has approved the Offer for Sale prospectus of Naya Nazimabad Apartments REIT (NNAR) for listing on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). The Naya Nazimabad offering marks the 13th public offering approved in 2026, reflecting strong primary-market momentum, with businesses across manufacturing, technology, energy, food, agriculture and real estate increasingly turning to the stock exchange to raise growth capital. The offering comprises 44.06 million units, representing 15% of the REIT Scheme's total units, said a press release issued by the SECP on Tuesday. The offering will be conducted through the book-building mechanism, with 75% allocated to institutional investors and high-net-worth individuals and 25% to retail investors. NNAR is a closed-end Developmental REIT established under the Real Estate Investment Trust Regulations, 2022. The scheme is developing the acquired real estate into commercial, retail and residential units, with returns to unit holders generated through the sale of completed properties. Pakistan now has 29 registered REIT schemes, with six listed on PSX. NNAR will become the seventh listed REIT, further expanding regulated real estate investment opportunities.—APP

PSX sheds
over 2,546
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 2,546.94 points, a negative change of 1.41 percent, to close at 177,955.51 points against 180,502.45 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 1.039 billion shares, compared to 1.048 billion shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value increased to Rs50,741 billion from Rs48,325 billion. Market capitalisation declined to Rs19,906 trillion from Rs20,199 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 494 companies that traded in the ready market, 104 posted gains, 368 suffered losses, while 22 remained unchanged, reflecting a bearish trend across the market. Chergycio PK led the volume chart with 231.461 million shares, followed by Hascol Petrol with 50.310 million shares and Sui South Gas with 45.472 million shares. Among the top gainers, Hoechst Pakistan Limited surged by Rs69.54 to close at Rs3,999.99, while Buxly Paints Limited advanced by Rs36.96 to settle at Rs406.60.—APP

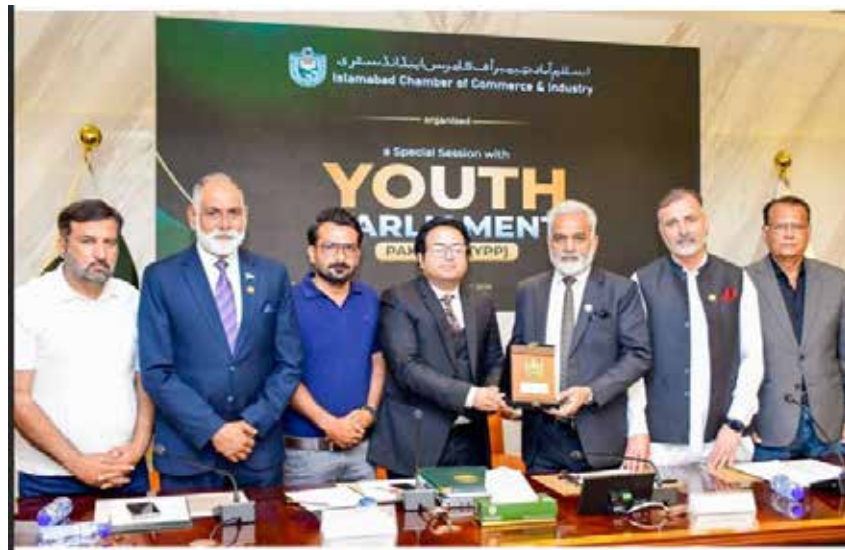
Rupee gains
01 paisa
against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.61, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.62. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 278.00 and Rs 278.65, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 1.22 and closed at Rs 321.21 against the previous day's closing of Rs 322.43, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.73, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 1.27 and closed at Rs 375.45 compared to the previous day's Rs 376.72. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant at Rs 75.59 and Rs 73.94, respectively.—APP

Irfan for equipping youth with practical knowledge

He said that sustained interaction between Youth Parliament and ICCI could provide participants with valuable exposure to economic institutions, the business environment and the practical aspects of Pakistan's development process.

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Chaudhry Muhammad Irfan has stressed the need to equip Pakistan's youth with practical knowledge of governance, institutional procedures, communication skills and political leadership so that they can play a more effective role in the country's socio-economic development. Speaking at an interactive session with a delegation of Youth Parliament Pakistan (YPP), led by Osama Nadeem Qureshi, Chairman Youth Parliament, at Chamber House on Tuesday, Chaudhry Muhammad Irfan said that young people could not be expected to contribute effectively to national development unless they were familiar with the working of public institutions and equipped with the skills required to communicate, engage and resolve issues through proper channels. He appreciated the Youth Parliament initiative aimed at developing informed, confident and responsible future leaders and assured that ICCI would extend its support to such constructive youth-oriented initiatives. Chairman Youth Parliament Pakistan Osama Nadeem Qureshi said that Youth Parliament Pakistan, a project of the Institute of Political Trainings Pakistan, was working to promote political awareness, leadership development and practical training among young people with a focus on communication skills, departmental visits, and political and leadership training to bridge



the gap between academic education and practical understanding of governance and institutions. He emphasised that young people must understand how government departments function, what procedures they follow and how citizens can approach them through the proper channels. ICCI Executive Member Muhammad Zulqurnain Abbasi appreciated the initiative and emphasised the importance of connecting young people with institutions and business organisations. He said that sustained interaction between

Youth Parliament and ICCI could provide participants with valuable exposure to economic institutions, the business environment and the practical aspects of Pakistan's development process. He stressed that greater awareness of institutional mechanisms would enable youth to engage more confidently with public and private sector organisations. It was proposed that an inauguration ceremony for the political training programme be organised within the next three to four weeks, bringing together around 100 to 150

UN says only 3% of Gaza cropland accessible

ROME: Just three percent of the cropland in Gaza remains accessible and undamaged, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization warned Tuesday, citing an analysis of satellite images. The report found that since October 2025, when a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took hold, the area of accessible and undamaged cropland had fallen to 448 hectares from 601 hectares, a reduction of 25.5 percent. Another 3,643 hectares of cropland are accessible but too damaged to be farmed without rehabilitation, the FAO said. "Without urgent action to restore safe access and provide farmers with the support they need, opportunities to restore local food production will continue to diminish," said Rein Paulsen, director of the agency's Office of Emergencies and Resilience. Restrictions on the import of agricultural goods are also hampering recovery, with livestock farmers struggling to obtain animal feed and veterinary supplies. Greenhouse availability has also declined, dropping 17.3 percent since October 2025 to 224 hectares that are accessible and undamaged. The FAO said the reduced access could be explained mainly by the westward expansion of the so-called "Yellow Line" that separates the ceasefire zone from the area controlled by the Israeli military. The Palestinian militant group Hamas launched an attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, that resulted in the deaths of 1,221 people, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures. Militants also took 251 hostages to Gaza. Israel's retaliatory military campaign in Gaza has killed more than 73,000 people, according to the territory's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations. A ceasefire took hold in October 2025 but progress on permanently ending the war has stalled, and Israeli forces currently control nearly 70 percent of the territory. Before October 2023 agriculture accounted for about 10 percent of Gaza's economy and supported the livelihoods of more than 560,000 people, according to the FAO.—APP

Hormuz
agreement crucial
for US-Iran talks
to resume

DOHA: Qatar, a key mediator in the stalled US-Iran talks, said Tuesday that an agreement between Iran and Oman over the Strait of Hormuz would make it easier to resume negotiations to end the Middle East war. After war broke out between the United States and Iran in late February, Tehran effectively shut the strait, which normally carries one fifth of the world's LNG and oil during peacetime. Iran and Oman, both coastal states bordering the strait, have for weeks been discussing the future of navigation through the waterway, with Tehran saying the geographical coordinates of the route envisaged by both countries "have been agreed upon." "We are also awaiting an agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and Iran regarding the Strait, which would enable us to return to the framework of negotiations," Qatari foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al Ansari told reporters. "The agreement over the Strait of Hormuz would make it much easier for us to resume the talks between the United States and Iran," he added. A memorandum of understanding signed between the two sides in June effectively collapsed over management of the strait. Earlier on Tuesday, Iran's top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said the strategic waterway will not be opened until the United States meets Tehran's demands, including lifting a naval blockade. On Monday, Iran said that talks were "continuing in a serious manner" and views were being exchanged on the text of a "joint statement." Tehran has been requiring vessels to seek permission and pay transit service fees — a move opposed by Washington and several regional countries. It has been hitting vessels that try to transit the strait without requesting permission. US President Donald Trump threatened to bomb Oman if it "gets in the way" of a deal with Iran on Hormuz, and called for Tehran to surrender in a war that has become a growing political burden at home.—APP

Jordan
tourism
income rises
25% in July

JEDDAH: Jordan's tourism income surged 24.9 percent in July to \$926.2 million, narrowing the year-to-date decline to 0.2 percent, with total tourism income reaching \$4.42 billion, according to official data. The recovery, however, remained uneven across visitor markets, with tourism income from Arab nationalities increasing 12.8 percent during the first seven months and income from Asian nationalities rising 3.9 percent, the Jordan News Agency, or Petra, reported, citing preliminary data from the Central Bank of Jordan. The figures come as tourism across the wider Middle East was hit by regional conflict. International tourist arrivals in the region fell 14 percent in the first quarter of 2026, although Egypt bucked the trend with arrivals increasing 16 percent, according to UN Tourism's World Tourism Barometer published in June. Petra added: "During the first seven months of the year, tourism income from Jordanians residing abroad fell by 8.9 percent, while income from US nationals declined by 20.6 percent, European nationalities by 24.7 percent, and other nationalities by 39.7 percent."—Agencies

Unified stand urged
against Israel over
Gaza peace roadmap

CAIRO: Arab League Secretary-General Nabil Fahmy on Monday called for a unified international stance against Israel over what he described as attempts to derail the Gaza peace roadmap. Fahmy welcomed a statement issued on Sunday by eight Arab and Islamic countries condemning Israel's rejection of US President Donald Trump's plan to end the conflict in Gaza. He said the position adopted by Israel and its prime minister reflected a clear intention to obstruct mediation efforts and entrench the status quo in the Gaza Strip. Fahmy condemned Israel's continuing military operations in the Palestinian territories, accusing it of carrying out daily killings, expanding the areas under its control and obstructing efforts to address the humanitarian crisis facing more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza since 2023. He said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to be driven by domestic political considerations, adding that his public positions demonstrated a disregard for the international consensus reflected in the peace plan and UN Security Council Resolution 2803. Fahmy said Hamas had agreed to the proposed arrangements while Israel had failed to meet its obligations, arguing that this placed responsibility for the deadlock on the Israeli government. He added that the international community, particularly the US as a sponsor of the agreement since last October, had both a political and moral responsibility to pressure the party obstructing its implementation. Such pressure was necessary, he said, to ensure an immediate move toward the second phase of the peace roadmap. Fahmy accused Israel of seeking to impose its will not only on the Palestinians but on the wider international community. He said Israel appeared to envision agreements in which obligations were imposed on only one party while it bore no responsibility to halt the fighting or withdraw from occupied areas of the Gaza Strip. "This is illogical," he said. Fahmy urged countries that continue to support a two-state solution as the only viable means of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to adopt a clear and unified position toward the Israeli government. He said such a stance was particularly important given Netanyahu's public rejection of the establishment of a Palestinian state, arguing that Israel should understand that disregarding international efforts would have consequences. Foreign ministers from eight Arab and Islamic countries on Sunday condemned Israel's rejection of Trump's Gaza plan, warning that the stance threatened international efforts to end the conflict. They called for the immediate and full implementation of the roadmap, saying it was necessary to address Gaza's severe humanitarian crisis, restore security and stability, and begin reconstruction and recovery. Ambassador Rakha Ahmed Hassan, a former assistant Egyptian foreign minister, told Arab News that Israel had repeatedly disregarded international humanitarian law and the international community. He cited an incident at the UN in which Israel's representative tore up a copy of the UN Charter, criticizing what he described as the absence of an effective international response. Hassan said Hamas had accepted the terms of the peace plan while Israel continued to reject the roadmap.—APP

Somali
pirates seize
cargo ship

NAIROBI: Pirates have seized a cargo ship off the coast of Somalia, monitors reported on Monday, in the latest incident since a resurgence of maritime attacks around the Horn of Africa. Eight people boarded and took control of the merchant ship near Marraye in Somalia, according to alerts by UK Maritime Trade Operations and the EU's Maritime Security Center Indian Ocean (MSCIO), without naming the vessel. "The crew is reported safe at this time," the MSCIO said. Piracy was rampant off the coast of Somalia in the 2000s and peaked in 2011, after which it was significantly reduced by international naval deployments and new tactics by commercial shipping. But Somali pirates have again been active this year. In April and May, three tankers containing oil and fertilizer were seized and are being held off the Somali coast, while a chemical tanker was seized in Yemeni waters and brought to the Somali coast in July. The attacks add to the risks for shipping in the Red Sea, which has become a more important supply route since Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula.—APP

LCCI helps
reopen sealed
factory in
Saggian

LAHORE: Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol here Tuesday visited the Saggian Industrial Area and met with industrialists to discuss industrial issues and hurdles affecting business activities. During the meeting, industrialists particularly thanked the LCCI President for his effective and continuous efforts which led to reopening of a factory sealed under the Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA). President Saggian Industries Muhammad Amin, Ali Shiraaz, Maqsood, Manzoor, Islam, Atif, Nasir and Amir, along with other industrialists, LCCI Executive Committee Member Rana Shoban Akhtar, Rameez Diwan and other LCCI office-bearers and members also attended the meeting. The industrialists said that the sealing of the factory had not only affected industrial activities but also created serious concerns about business and employment of people associated with the unit. They said that in these circumstances, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol took immediate notice of the issue and effectively raised the industrialists' concerns with the relevant authorities. They said that the LCCI President established effective communication with the concerned departments for the reopening of the factory sealed under RUDA and strongly represented the industrialists' position. As a result of these efforts, the factory was successfully reopened. The industrialists termed the reopening an important relief for the business community, saying that it had not only restored industrial activity but also helped protect the jobs and livelihoods of people associated with the factory. Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that instead of unnecessarily closing or sealing industrial units, issues should be resolved through dialogue and mutual consultation. He said that the closure of an industrial unit does not affect only one business; it also impacts workers, employees, suppliers and other people associated with that business. He said that the Lahore Chamber remains in continuous contact with the relevant institutions to resolve genuine issues faced by industrialists and that whenever unnecessary hurdles are created for business activities, the voice of the business community will be raised effectively. He emphasized that facilitating industries and creating a business-friendly environment are essential for economic growth, employment generation and investment in the country. Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that the Lahore Chamber's objective is not merely to highlight the problems faced by industrialists but also to take effective steps for their practical resolution.—APP

Dr. Mansoor honoured with Tamgha-i-Imtiaz

In Canada, Dr. Memon established a Cardiac Diagnostics Center and a family medical practice in Mississauga. His dedication to youth and professional development is demonstrated through his mentorship of 26 Pakistani medical graduates into Canadian residency programs

TORONTO / ISLAMABAD: In recognition of his exceptional services to Pakistan across healthcare, academics, philanthropy, and cultural diplomacy, Dr. Mansoor Memon was formally conferred the prestigious civil award Tamgha-i-Imtiaz. The presentation took place during the official Flag Hoisting Ceremony organized by the Consulate General of Pakistan in Toronto to mark Pakistan's Independence Day. The official citation from the Cabinet Division, Government of Pakistan, highlights Dr. Memon as an embodiment of professional excellence and humanitarian commitment. An alumnus of the Aga Khan University of Health Sciences, Dr. Memon is internationally recognized for his expertise in resuscitative science, having served with distinction across Canada, the GCC, and the Middle East. Beyond his clinical practice, he has played a pivotal role in strengthening ties between Canada and Pakistan through active engagement with parliamentari-



ans, policy makers, and diaspora organizations. In Canada, Dr. Memon established a Cardiac Diagnostics Center and a family medical practice in Mississauga. His dedication to youth and professional development is demonstrated through his mentorship of 26 Pakistani medical graduates into Canadian residency programs. His humanitarian work extends globally, including efforts to secure the release of Pakistani prisoners and raising awareness for Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos. Actively engaging with Canadian parliamentarians and law makers, being a global bridge, certainly Facilitated in extraordinary diplomatic relationships between Pakistan and Canada. The conferment was formally announced by the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Independence Day, with the official presentation held in Canada before prominent diplomats, Canadian parliamentarians, civic leaders, and community members.—APP

Briefs

Arab League
chief for
unified stand
against Israel

DNA

CAIRO: Arab League Secretary-General Nabil Fahmy on Monday called for a unified international stance against Israel over what he described as attempts to derail the Gaza peace roadmap. Fahmy welcomed a statement issued on Sunday by eight Arab and Islamic countries condemning Israel's rejection of US President Donald Trump's plan to end the conflict in Gaza. He said the position adopted by Israel and its prime minister reflected a clear intention to obstruct mediation efforts and entrench the status quo in the Gaza Strip. Fahmy condemned Israel's continuing military operations in the Palestinian territories, accusing it of carrying out daily killings, expanding the areas under its control and obstructing efforts to address the humanitarian crisis facing more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza since 2023. He said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to be driven by domestic political considerations, adding that his public positions demonstrated a disregard for the international consensus reflected in the peace plan and UN Security Council Resolution 2803. Fahmy said Hamas had agreed to the proposed arrangements while Israel had failed to meet its obligations, arguing that this placed responsibility for the deadlock on the Israeli government. He added that the international community, particularly the US as a sponsor of the agreement since last October, had both a political and moral responsibility to pressure the party obstructing its implementation. Such pressure was necessary, he said, to ensure an immediate move toward the second phase of the peace roadmap. Fahmy accused Israel of seeking to impose its will not only on the Palestinians but on the wider international community. He said Israel appeared to envision agreements in which obligations were imposed on only one party while it bore no responsibility to halt the fighting or withdraw from occupied areas of the Gaza Strip. "This is illogical," he said. Fahmy urged countries that continue to support a two-state solution as the only viable means of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to adopt a clear and unified position toward the Israeli government.

Syria
sentences
detained
Assad cousin
to death

DAMASCUS: A Syrian court on Tuesday handed a death sentence to Wassim Assad who appeared in the dock, a cousin of longtime ruler Bashar Assad who was himself sentenced to death in absentia last week. The 46-year-old relative of Assad was convicted over atrocities committed under the autocrat's rule during the country's nearly 14-year civil war. Judge Fakhr Al-Din Al-Aryan said Assad's cousin was convicted of multiple murders and "murder accompanied by torture and brutality... classified as crimes against humanity and war crimes," adding that "he is therefore sentenced to death." Syria in April began proceedings against Bashar Assad and other officials accused of atrocities during the country's civil war, which erupted with the brutal repression of pro-democracy protesters by the former authorities. More than half a million people were subsequently killed and millions displaced, while tens of thousands disappeared. The court found that Wassim Assad had formed two armed groups loyal to the former authorities that took part in deadly attacks near capital Damascus. It also convicted him of inciting civil war and sectarian fighting, as well as deprivation of liberty and torture. — APP

Indonesia's 81st Independence
Day celebrated in Islamabad

Adding to the significance of the occasion, the Prime Minister of Pakistan will visit Indonesia on August 19, 2026. Analysts believe this visit will further strengthen bilateral relations, paving the way for enhanced cooperation in trade, culture, and diplomacy

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad hosted a flag-hoisting ceremony to mark Indonesia's 81st Independence Day. The event began with the traditional flag hoisting, symbolizing Indonesia's resilience and struggle for freedom. Following the formal proceedings, guests enjoyed cultural and popular performances that highlighted Indonesia's rich heritage and diversity. The ceremony was attended by diplomats, government officials, media representatives, and members of Pakistani civil society. Guests observed formal attire, reflecting the dignity of the occasion. The participation of prominent figures underscored the strong bilateral ties between Pakistan and Indonesia. Indonesia's Independence Day, celebrated annually on August 17, commemorates the country's declaration of independence in 1945. This year's 81st anniversary was marked with enthusiasm both in Indonesia and across its diplomatic missions worldwide. The Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad has consistently organized cultural programs to strengthen people-to-people connections between the two nations. Such events are seen as opportunities to deepen mutual understanding and cooperation. Observers note that diplomatic gatherings like these not only celebrate national milestones but also reaffirm friendship and open new avenues of collaboration. The presence of senior journalists such as Ansar M Bhatti highlighted the role of media in promoting cultural diplomacy and fostering international goodwill. Adding to the significance of the occasion, the Prime Minister of Pakistan will visit Indonesia soon. Analysts believe this visit will further strengthen bilateral relations, paving the way for enhanced cooperation in trade, culture, and diplomacy. With Pakistan's government completing three years in office—a period often seen as a natural political



cycle—new alliances and partnerships are expected to emerge. In this context, the Pakistan-Indonesia relationship is poised to grow stronger, benefiting both nations. The Independence Day celebrations, coupled with the up-

coming high-level visit, signal a renewed chapter in Pakistan-Indonesia ties. Both countries are expected to explore fresh opportunities for collaboration, ensuring that their partnership continues to flourish in the years ahead.

Erdogan calls on
Trump to prioritise
diplomacyErdogan and Trump discuss Iran,
Gaza, bilateral ties and regional
security during their latest phone call

ANKARA: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has called on Donald Trump in a phone call to keep diplomacy with Iran alive, as stalled negotiations and rising tensions threaten to further deepen the regional conflict, the Turkish presidency said on Tuesday. Turkey, which has NATO's second-largest army and borders Iran, has repeatedly called for an end to the war. It has maintained close contact with the United States, Iran, and mediators such as Pakistan and Qatar, while also acting as an intermediary between the parties. "Erdogan stated that it is of great importance to make the utmost of diplomacy regarding the tensions between Iran and the United States, that we hope the talks will continue, and that Turkey will continue to support peace efforts," the presidency said in a statement. — DNA

ISPR tears apart 'Bollywood-style'
Op Sindoor documentary

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's armed forces have rejected India's portrayal of Operation Sindoor as a military success, accusing New Delhi of using an overly theatrical documentary to rewrite the outcome of the engagement and distort the reality of its misadventure. In a statement issued on Monday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said India had refused to face the "harsh reality" more than a year after Marka-e-Haq and had instead sought to "colour history in her preferred hues". "More than a year after Marka-e-Haq, India refuses to face the harsh reality. Instead of conceding defeat in a failed venture, India has decided to colour history in her preferred hues," ISPR said. Indian content creators, it added, had produced a "highly dramatised, coloured and factually inaccurate account" of so-called Operation Sindoor, packaged as a documentary featuring senior political and military leadership. "For its lack of nuance and seriousness, the documentary can be characterised as a tragedy and a comedy at the same time," the military's media wing said, adding that selectively edited interviews, emotional narration and cinematic Bollywood-style reconstruction had been used to alter established facts and rewrite the operational outcome. The documentary's account, it said, contained "fundamental contradictions", exposing a belated attempt to manufacture a domestically palatable version of events. The documentary attempts to establish a deliberate linkage between an address by Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff on 16 April 2025 and the Pahalgam incident of 22 April 2025, "conjuring a conspiracy theory out of nothing", ISPR said. India subsequently claimed that the three alleged perpetrators of Pahalgam were identified and eliminated on 28 July 2025, 82 days after so-called Operation Sindoor, yet the documentary presents the operation as the punish-

ment for those responsible for Pahalgam. "If the alleged perpetrators were eliminated on 28 July, India must explain who it claims to have punished on 7 May 2025," ISPR said. The claim of "100% mission success" was equally detached from the operational record, the military's media wing said. During Marka-e-Haq, Pakistan's Armed Forces successfully thwarted Indian aggression and shot down 8 military aircraft, it said. Pakistan subsequently conducted Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, employing Fatah precision-guided rockets & missiles, PAF precision munitions, long-range loitering munitions and precision artillery against 26 military targets, including facilities used to target Pakistani citizens, and entities involved in fomenting terrorism against Pakistan, ISPR said. The documentary itself further undermines its claim of clear Indian dominance, the military's media wing said, noting that Indian military leadership acknowledges extensive Pakistani missile, drone and air activity, sustained engagements along the Line of Control and the activation of Indian air-defence systems. "Such admissions are difficult to reconcile with its repeated portrayal of Pakistan being decisively defeated," ISPR added. The documentary's account of the cessation of hostilities was no less revealing, the military's media wing said. Its own narration confirms that hostilities ended through communication between the two DGMOs and an agreed cessation of military action. "This alone contradicts the attempt to portray Op Sindoor as a unilateral Indian military triumph," ISPR said. "A cessation of hostilities, facilitated by the US, cannot subsequently be repurposed as evidence of unconditional victory." The documentary also contradicts itself on escalation dynamics, repeatedly emphasising surprise, precision, deep strikes and escalation dominance while simultaneously claiming that India deliberately limited the conflict and provided Pakistan an "exit window".

White House
attacks CNN
reporter for
question on
Trump aide

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The White House on Monday lashed out at a CNN reporter after she asked a question about President Donald Trump's relationship with an aide, in the latest in a series of attacks on female journalists. During an event in the Oval Office, reporter Kristen Holmes asked Trump, 80, to respond to comments by a Democratic lawmaker about the president's executive assistant Natalie Harp, 35. "Someday, your children will come across your disgusting and inhumane question," the White House's "Rapid Response" team said in an X post directed at Holmes and linking to a video of Trump's response. The Republican leader later berated Holmes as "very disrespectful" as she asked a question on North Korea. The event was to honor a teenage lifeguard who saved a child from swells, but the president opened the floor to questions on unrelated issues, as he regularly does. "You're a loud, boisterous person, you're fake news, be quiet," Trump said to Holmes. CNN said the attacks on Holmes were "beneath the office." "We stand firmly behind Kristen and reject these attacks in the strongest possible terms," it said in a statement. Natalie Harp has been the subject of recent Internet commentary after it emerged she was one of the few aides with Trump during a secret Air Force One swap in July.

Philippine
student killed
in rare school
shooting

MANILA: A grade 10 student was shot dead at a high school in the southern Philippines on Tuesday before the alleged killer took his own life, police said. The school shooting, the country's second in as many months, took place at Ateneo de Zamboanga University, a Catholic private institution in western Mindanao. Regional police said a ninth-grade student had brought a "pistol and rifle inside the school campus" and opened fire in a classroom, killing one person before turning the gun on himself. "The investigation is ongoing... We are still trying to identify the motive," police spokeswoman Shella Chang told AFP, adding the crime scene was now being processed. It was not immediately clear how many had been injured. In a video circulated by local media that was seemingly live-streamed on Facebook, the barrel of a gun can be seen moving down a hallway in the style of a first-person shooter video game before being pointed into a classroom and fired. — APP

Trump plan: Two Gaza working
groups to address disarmament

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: A Peace Council official told Asharq on Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and council members held "in-depth and constructive" discussions on moving toward the full implementation of Trump's plan for Gaza. They agreed to establish two working groups, one focused on disarmament and demilitarisation and the other on public health issues. The official said the discussions concluded with an agreement that Israeli forces would not redeploy in Gaza until Hamas had been fully disarmed and the entire territory demilitarised, including the removal of light and heavy weapons and tunnels. All weapons collected will be dismantled and rendered permanently unusable, the official said, adding that Israel would retain what he described as its "full right to self-defence," including taking action if Hamas resorts to violence or attempts to rearm. According to the official, the Peace Council told Netanyahu that Hamas had committed to fully disarming and immediately halting all military activity in Gaza, including rearmament and tunnel construction. Netanyahu, in turn, confirmed that Israel would fulfil its outstanding commitments after the United States helped secure the release of all remaining hostages, both living and deceased, the official said. **Security and public health:** The official said the two sides agreed to immediately establish two joint working groups. The first will handle security, disarmament and the demilitarisation of Gaza, while the second will focus on sanitation, clean water and other public health issues affecting residents of the territory. Israel and the Peace Council insist that Gaza's demilitarisation be completed "fully and rapidly," the

official said, adding that, with Trump's support, the two sides share the goal of creating a demilitarised and de-idealised territory that poses no threat to Israel and where residents can live in dignity, peace and prosperity. According to sources who spoke to Reuters and the Associated Press, Netanyahu's meeting with Trump envoy Jared Kushner lasted several hours and was attended by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Peace Council's senior representative for Gaza, Nickolay Mladenov. **Direct meeting with Hamas in Cairo:** The Jerusalem meeting followed a meeting between Kushner and Hamas political bureau chief Khalil Al-Hayya in Cairo on Sunday, attended by Mladenov, Blair and officials from Egypt, Qatar and Turkey. It was Kushner's second known meeting with Hamas representatives, following talks with Hamas officials alongside US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff in October 2025 that contributed to the ceasefire and hostage-release agreement, according to Reuters. Axios quoted a source familiar with the talks as saying Hamas leaders reaffirmed their commitment to disarm and demilitarise Gaza, while Kushner called on them to take concrete steps. The requested steps include handing administration of the territory to a Palestinian technocratic government, ensuring Hamas has no future role in governing Gaza, and relinquishing its weapons and military infrastructure, the source said. Hamas said in a statement following the meeting that it had agreed to the roadmap for the second phase, which includes a permanent ceasefire, a full Israeli withdrawal, continued humanitarian aid and the start of reconstruction. **Dispute over sequencing:** Trump said in July that Hamas had agreed to gradually disarm under a 15-point roadmap proposed by the Peace Council to implement his broader 20-point plan. The roadmap calls for Hamas' disarmament to take place alongside a gradual Israeli military withdrawal.





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Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Alisher Tukhtaev and Chief Editor Daily Islamabad POST/DNA Ansar Mahmood Bhatti exchanged documents.



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