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14 Newborns Burnt Alive at PIMS

A national tragedy exposes systemic negligence; apathy

Reports suggest that PIMS has become a den of corruption, with billions of rupees allegedly squandered. The Prime Minister's removal of the Health Secretary is seen as mere eyewash, as such officials often resurface in prestigious positions later

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: A heartbreaking tragedy unfolded at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Islamabad, where 14 newborn babies reportedly lost their lives in a devastating incident. Initial reports suggested the cause was an air-conditioning compressor blast, but subsequent accounts point toward a larger explosion, possibly triggered by a gas leak. The incident has shaken the nation, exposing the deep-rooted apathy and negligence within the healthcare system. Eyewitnesses and insiders revealed that emergency exit doors were recently opened, yet no staff was present on duty to manage the crisis. This negligence highlights not just the failure of PIMS but reflects the grim reality of government hospitals across the country, where patients are often treated worse than animals. PIMS, which claims to be a "state-of-the-art" hospital, exists largely on paper. In reality, the institution is in shambles. Appointments are made reportedly in violation of merit, with favoritism and nepotism dominating key positions. Facilities are virtually nonexistent

— even securing a bed requires the recommendation of a minister or health secretary. Patients are often seen lying in open grounds due to lack of space, while VIP culture continues to reign supreme. The tragedy has sparked outrage, but as history shows, such incidents generate a few days of media hype before fading into oblivion. There is rarely retrospection or accountability. Everyone scores political points, yet no one addresses the root causes. Government hospitals remain neglected because the ruling elite and top officials prefer to seek treatment abroad, leaving ordinary citizens at the mercy of a collapsing system. Reports suggest that PIMS has become a den of corruption, with billions of rupees allegedly squandered. The Prime Minister's removal of the Health Secretary is seen as mere eyewash, as such officials often resurface in prestigious positions later. Ironically, those responsible for the tragedy have been included in the inquiry committee a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black. The inquiry commission must be headed by at least the sitting judge of the High Court, if not a judge of the Supreme Court. This heartbreaking event is not an isolated failure of PIMS alone. It reflects the broader decay of government hospitals across Pakistan, where merit is routinely violated, nepotism dominates appointments, and patients are treated with indignity. The tragedy also underscores the wider collapse of governance in Islamabad. The capital city itself has become a den of crime, where daylight robberies are now routine. Ordinary citizens feel unsafe, while police remain busy protecting VIPs. This dual failure — in healthcare and law enforcement — paints a grim picture of systemic apathy. This incident is not just a tragedy but a stark reminder of systemic decay. Without real change, Pakistan's hospitals and institutions will remain symbols of neglect, corruption, and indifference.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Maliki called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

Forces kill 11 terrorists in KP areas

DNA

PESHAWAR: Security forces killed 11 terrorists during intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, state-run Radio Pakistan reported on Thursday, citing security sources. According to the state broadcaster, the terrorists belonged to Fitna al Khawarij and Fitna al Hindustan. The state uses the term Fitna al Khawarij for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and refers to designated Balochistan-based groups as Fitna al Hindustan to highlight India's role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan. "In Bannu, security forces conducted an IBO against Fitna al Khawarij, killing two terrorists and recovering weapons and ammunition," Radio Pakistan reported.

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PIMS lacked fire safety NOC

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pims hospital lacked a fire safety NOC, while the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority itself had inadequate fire safety arrangements, sources told on Thursday. Fourteen infants died after a fire broke out in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) on Wednesday morning. The nursery housed 15 newborns at the time, according to Pims officials, with only one infant rescued. The sources said the authority, which issues licences to hospitals, laboratories and clinics, renews

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Brotherly connection

Shehbaz says ties with Saudi Arabia excellent, cordial

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pays farewell call on the Prime Minister

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, H.E. Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, paid a farewell call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House, Islamabad, after completion of his official tenure in Pakistan. The Prime Minister congratulated the Saudi Ambassador on the successful completion of his official assignment. He lauded the outgoing Ambassador for his outstanding contribution towards further strengthening the deep-rooted fraternal and strategic ties between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Prime Minister conveyed his warmest regards and best wishes for the health and well-being of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques,

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Pak set to assume SCO chair

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to assume the chairmanship of the organisation of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation for a one-year term following the two day SCO Council of Heads of State Summit commencing in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Monday. At his weekly news briefing in Islamabad today, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif will be visiting Bishkek to participate in the SCO Council of Heads of State Summit

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Imran sister moves SC for early hearing

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Uzma Khan, sister of incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan, has filed a fresh plea before the Supreme Court, seeking an urgent hearing of a contempt petition concerning his transfer to hospital. The plea came after the top court scheduled the contempt petition for hearing on September 16 before a three-member bench comprising Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Naeem Akhtar Af-

ghan and Justice Shakil Ahmed. In her application, Uzma said Imran's health was deteriorating in jail and described the matter concerning his health and life as extremely important. She contended that the Supreme Court's August 18 order was deliberately not implemented in its true spirit and that Imran was taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) in violation of the court's directions for his transfer to Shifa International Hospital.

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Briefs

Dar meets UK state minister Doughty

DNA

LONDON: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met UK Minister of State Stephen Doughty in London. Discussions centred on Pakistan-UK bilateral relations and cooperation in key areas of mutual interest. The Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister welcomed the positive momentum in bilateral ties and stressed the importance of sustained engagement to further strengthen political, economic and institutional linkages between the two countries. The two sides discussed ways to enhance trade and investment, expand cooperation in emerging sectors, strengthen climate cooperation and promote cultural exchanges. The Deputy Prime Minister highlighted the important contribution of the Pakistani diaspora in the United Kingdom, describing it as a vital bridge between the two countries.

Butcher of Bosnia is dead

DNA

BELGRADE: Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb military chief dubbed the "Butcher of Bosnia" for his role in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, has died, Serbian state broadcaster RTS reported on Thursday. Mladic, who had suffered several strokes in recent months, was serving a life sentence in The Hague for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity after overseeing the Srebrenica slaughter, Europe's worst act of bloodshed since World War II. Serbian state officials and Mladic's family had appealed for his release due to his failing health, but those calls were rejected by the Hague tribunal.

US-Iran standoff

Qatar PM visits Tehran to pursue mediation efforts

The visit comes as the war nears its sixth month with fighting largely paused but no diplomatic breakthrough in sight

NEWS DESK

CAIRO/DUBAI: Qatar's prime minister visited Tehran on Thursday in a bid to relaunch diplomacy after the US and Iran traded recriminations over Washington's promise to increase economic pressure, a move one Iranian official described as "all-out economic war." A Gulf neighbor of Iran and a US ally, Qatar has served as a back-channel negotiator for the warring parties and played a direct role in securing a June ceasefire that briefly led to a cessation of hostilities. Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who is also his country's foreign minister, met Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, according to Iran's foreign ministry channel on Telegram. The visit comes as the war nears its sixth month with fighting largely paused but no diplomatic breakthrough in sight. Both sides are at odds over control of the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for global oil supplies that Tehran has used as leverage.

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All options open with Iran: White House

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States and Iran are not currently in talks to end the war as Washington focuses on pressuring Tehran economically, but all options remain "on the table," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in an interview with Fox News on Thursday. "What President Trump's number one goal has been and will always be is to ensure that Iran can never obtain a nuclear weapon. Period. And so we've had Operation Epic Fury to destroy their military. Now we have Operation Economic Outcast to destroy their economy," Leavitt told the "Fox & Friends" program. "No negotiations are happening right now, and this will continue until the president

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CDF Munir visited Iran as part of Pakistan's mediation efforts

Afghan dialogue linked with verifiable anti-terror action; Makkah Agreement open to states with common security interests: FO

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Addressing a weekly press briefing on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi termed the reports "misleading and factually incorrect", stating that the CDF's Iran visit was undertaken "purely in the context and backdrop of Pakistan's ongoing role as mediator". The spokesperson said CDF Munir visited Tehran on August 24 as part of Pakistan's continuing diplomatic efforts to facilitate an end to the US-Iran conflict and renewed efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. "The discussion during the visit focused on regional de-escalation, breaking the military stalemate and exploring a negotiated settlement to restore regional peace and stability," he added. Andrabi said Pakistan remained engaged alongside its brotherly countries in sincere concerted efforts towards resolving the crisis in the Middle East and the Gulf and "with respect to the standoff between the US and Iran". "The visit underscored Islamabad's sincere and constructive role in bridging differences between Washington and Tehran," he said, adding that the Iranian leadership also appreciated Pakistan's efforts towards de-escalation and regional peace. While responding to a question about the Afghan interim government interior minister's proposal

for a bilateral mechanism to address issues, the Foreign Office spokesperson said that Pakistan was ready to engage Afghanistan in a state-level dialogue to address bilateral issues. However, the FO spokesperson said any such process will depend on Kabul taking concrete and verifiable measures to prevent its territory from being used for terrorism against Pakistan. "Pakistan notes the proposal by the interim Afghan government's interior minister for a bilateral mechanism to address issues. For any dialogue to take place, the Afghan side must ensure that its soil is not used against Pakistan," the spokesperson said. Andrabi further said that Pakistan wanted effective border management and verifiable counterterrorism measures from Afghanistan. "Pakistan is ready for institutional engagement with Afghanistan, provided that it results in verifiable counterterrorism measures," the spokesperson said. The Foreign Office also called on the Afghan interim government to fulfil its international obligations, including those under the Doha framework. He further said Afghanistan must prevent India-backed banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) from using its territory. "Afghan soil must be prevented from being used by anti-Pakistan elements, including the TTP and BLA," the spokesperson said.



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Rs3.2m work visa fraud uncovered

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) Rawalpindi has arrested a suspect accused of collecting Rs3.2 million from seven people on the promise of arranging work visas, but allegedly neither providing the visas nor returning the money. An FIA official told APP on Thursday that the accused, identified as Umar Raza Naeem, was arrested after the agency registered FIR No. 208/2026 against him in the work visa fraud case. The investigation established that the accused allegedly received Rs3.2 million for arranging work visas for seven acquaintances of the complainant. However, the official said, the accused failed to provide the promised visas and also did not return the amount received from them. The suspect was arrested during a raid conducted at around 6:30 a.m. by an FIA team comprising Inspector Amal Hashim and Sub-Inspector Umar. The FIA Islamabad Zone reiterated its commitment to bringing elements involved in visa fraud and human trafficking to justice and continuing action against those exploiting people seeking employment opportunities abroad.—APP

CTPL launches pilot project for rehabilitation of beggars

LAHORE: City Traffic Police Lahore (CTPL) launched a pilot project for the rehabilitation of beggars, providing them with vocational training and opportunities for dignified employment and self-employment. According to a spokesperson on Thursday, Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Syed Abdul Rahim Shirazi said that screening of the first 10 families for the pilot project had been completed. In collaboration with the Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC), selected individuals would be provided vocational training, employment opportunities and facilities to establish small businesses. The PSIC would provide easy loans of Rs500,000 each to selected deserving individuals for setting up their businesses. He said that "Jhuggi Schools" would also be established in settlements across Lahore to facilitate the rehabilitation and education of children living in makeshift settlements. The CTO said Traffic Police was also working with welfare organizations and establishing contacts with various institutions to impart skills to women and children belonging to deserving and vulnerable families. In collaboration with welfare organizations, beauty courses and stitching and embroidery training would also be provided to transgender beggars and women. "With the support of Alkhidmat Foundation volunteers, the process of mapping, research and profiling of more beggars is also under way," he added. Shirazi said that the project aimed to free deserving people from begging and help them move towards a dignified and self-reliant life. The CTO said Traffic Police had taken action against more than 4,500 beggars during the current year, he added.—APP

Nepal envoy calls for restoration of direct Pak-Nepal flights

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Ambassador of Nepal Rita Dhital stressed the need for direct air connectivity, frequent exchange of trade delegations, single-country exhibitions and business-to-business matchmaking to strengthen trade, investment and tourism relations between Pakistan and Nepal. She said direct air links would facilitate business travel, tourism and people-to-people contacts, recalling that Nepal Airlines had previously operated flights to Karachi, while Pakistan International Airlines had operated flights from Islamabad to Kathmandu until 2011. She also invited Pakistani business leaders to explore investment opportunities in Nepal in tourism and hospitality, hydro-power and clean energy, and information technology. The Ambassador was speaking at an interactive session at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where she met with LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations. LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol welcomed Ambassador Rita Dhital to the Chamber and said Pakistan and Nepal enjoy excellent diplomatic relations and have maintained friendly ties since 1960. He noted both countries are members of SAARC and that LCCI has always supported regional peace and stronger trade and economic relations among SAARC countries. Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, Executive Committee Members Firdous Nisar, Abdul Majeed, Imran Saleemi, Rana Shouban Akhtar and Nadeem Ansari, along with Mujahid Ur Rehman, Hamid Ullah Khan and other business representatives, were also present. President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol appreciated the Ambassador for maintaining good liaison with LCCI and said the Chamber looked forward to developing stronger working relations with the Embassy of Nepal and discussing matters of mutual interest. He said the bilateral trade volume, averaging just over US\$4 million, did not match the excellent relations between Pakistan and Nepal. According to State Bank of Pakistan trade data, Pakistan's exports to Nepal during 2025-26 were around US\$1.4 million, while imports from Nepal stood at around US\$2.8 million. He said Pakistan's major exports to Nepal included surgical instruments, pharmaceutical products, articles of apparel and spices, while imports from Nepal included plants used for perfumery, cardamom, opium fibre and orthopedic appliances. President Saigol also emphasized the potential for cooperation in tourism and hospitality. He said Nepal was home to Mount Everest while Pakistan had K2, adding that joint ventures in hospitality and ecotourism could help attract international tourists to a South Asian adventure tourism corridor. Speaking further, Ambassador Rita Dhital said Nepal and Pakistan shared decades of warm and friendly relations built on mutual trust, mutual respect and common aspirations



for development. However, she said economic and commercial ties did not yet reflect the true potential of their political and diplomatic relationship. She recalled that Nepal and Pakistan signed a trade agreement in 1982, while the Nepal-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission was established in 1983 at the level of finance ministers. An agreement on avoidance of double taxation was signed in 2001, while a Joint Business Council was established in 1996 between the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry. She also recalled that an MoU between the Nepal Chamber of Commerce and LCCI was concluded in 1993. The Ambassador said governments could sign agreements, but it was the business community that turned those agreements into economic reality. She urged the business communities of both countries to operationalize existing agreements and memorandums of understanding through regular business exchanges and concrete commercial initiatives. She said Pakistani investors had previously entered into joint ventures in textile industries, hotels and banking sectors in Nepal.

She identified textiles, leather products and surgical equipment as promising areas for Pakistani businesses, while Nepal could export high-quality tea, coffee, herbs, handicrafts and agricultural products to Pakistan. Ambassador Dhital highlighted tourism and hospitality as a major area of cooperation, saying Pakistani companies could explore Nepal's growing tourism industry, including luxury resorts and adventure tourism. She also invited Pakistani investors to participate in Nepal's hydropower and clean energy sector, which she described as offering long-term investment opportunities. The Ambassador invited the leadership and members of LCCI to lead a trade delegation to Nepal and assured them of the Embassy's full support in organizing B2B matchmaking. She also offered necessary assistance to Pakistani businesses interested in organizing single-country exhibitions in Nepal. She said around 5,000 Pakistanis visited Nepal in 2025 and highlighted that Pakistani citizens are eligible for visa on arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, with the first 30-day visa in a calendar year being free of charge.

Struggle in Life' explores resilience, courage and enduring human spirit Book Review

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The recently-published book 'Struggle in Life: Challenging, Inspiring, Enduring' a reflective work by Ali Syed Azhar, offers readers an introspective account of life's unpredictable journey, highlighting the challenges, dangers, losses and unexpected encounters that shape human character. Through a series of experiences and observations, Azhar examines the fragile yet remarkable nature of human life. The book focuses on situations in which individuals are confronted with uncertainty and adversity, and explores the resilience required to endure such moments. A key strength of the work is its portrayal of real-life situations that test human endurance and character. Rather than presenting struggle merely as a

source of hardship, Azhar approaches difficult experiences as opportunities for reflection and personal growth. The book invites readers to pause and consider how adversity can influence the way people understand themselves, their circumstances and the value of life. Its observations underline the importance of courage and perseverance when confronting difficult or unpredictable situations. According to literary consultant and inspirational nonfiction enthusiast Lana Swift of Books to Life Marketing, the work provides a sincere and contemplative perspective on the universal experience of struggle. Swift describes the book as a reflection on the resilience demanded by life, noting that its experiences demonstrate how challenges can become moments that shape courage, wisdom and a deeper appreciation for life. The book's central message revolves around perseverance — the

ability to continue despite setbacks and uncertainty. By drawing attention to experiences of challenge, danger, loss and unexpected encounters, Azhar presents struggle as an integral part of the human journey. Struggle in Life: Challenging, Inspiring, Enduring therefore seeks to connect personal experiences with a broader human reality: that difficult moments, while often painful, can also become defining experiences that strengthen character and broaden one's understanding of life. The work is positioned as thoughtful and contemplative nonfiction, offering readers an opportunity to reflect on their own encounters with adversity and the lessons that emerge from them. At its heart, the book suggests that endurance is not simply about surviving difficult circumstances, but about finding courage, wisdom and renewed appreciation for life in the process.

Kundi stresses character-building alongside modern education

LAHORE: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday stressed the need for establishing educational institutions that impart modern education to the next generation while also focusing on character building. Addressing the Minhaj-ul-Quran University's Convocation 2026 at Expo Centre Lahore, the governor said education was the key to national development and Pakistan needed to promote both modern sciences and Islamic studies. He lauded the educational services of Sheikh-ul-Islam Dr Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, saying Minhaj-ul-Quran University was serving the country by providing modern education alongside religious studies. He noted that many graduates of the university were serving in various national institutions. Faisal Kundi

said the College of Shariah and Islamic Sciences was established at the university in 1984, adding that the institution was now offering undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in modern disciplines as well as higher Islamic studies. He emphasised that educational institutions should promote science, technology and research alongside religious education. He said the Pakistan Peoples Party leadership had always regarded promotion of education as a foundation for national progress. The governor said the relationship between the Pakistan Peoples Party and Minhaj-ul-Quran was based on intellectual harmony and equality rather than being merely personal or formal. He recalled that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had appreciated Dr Tahir-ul-Qadri's scholarly services and had

also remained a life member of Tehreek Minhaj-ul-Quran. He said Pakistan was passing through a difficult and challenging period, but there was no reason for despair. He urged citizens to collectively counter false propaganda and play their role in strengthening national unity and harmony. He said ignorance, extremism, hatred and intolerance should be confronted through knowledge, awareness and reason. Islam, he added, was a religion of peace and love, and its message of peace and harmony should be promoted to help address challenges such as terrorism. Addressing the graduating students, the governor urged them not to restrict their education to personal development but to use their knowledge for nation-building, serving humanity and promoting positive action.—DNA

PHC directs hospitals across Punjab to strengthen fire safety measures

LAHORE: The Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC) has issued urgent directions for the effective implementation of fire safety measures in public and private hospitals across Punjab to protect patients, attendants, healthcare workers and hospital infrastructure from fire and other emergencies. According to the directives issued on Thursday, the PHC has called upon the health departments, Punjab Emergency Services Department and hospital managements to take immediate steps to ensure comprehensive arrangements for responding to fire and non-fire emergencies. The Commission directed hospital administrations to ensure the availability of trained personnel, functional emergency equipment, adequate resources and regular emergency drills to enable a prompt and effective response in case of an emergency. The PHC reiterated that all public and private hospitals must fully comply with the prescribed Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS), including requirements under the Facility Management System (FMS) and Hospital Infection Control (HIC). Hospitals have been directed to establish an emergency coding system, including Code Red for fire incidents, maintain functional firefighting equipment, train staff, conduct regular emergency drills and develop and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs). They have also been instructed to prominently display emergency exit maps and obtain the required building safety and fitness certificates. The PHC requested the Punjab Emergency Services Department to inspect hospitals under Section 3(3) of the Punjab Community Safety Act, 2021, and the Punjab Community Safety Buildings Regulations, 2022. Under the applicable legal framework, District Emergency Officers are authorized to inspect buildings, including hospitals, verify the installation and availability of fire safety arrangements and issue safety certificates valid for one year where the prescribed legal and regulatory requirements have been fulfilled. The Commission further called for fire safety audits of all public and private-sector hospitals to be completed without delay. Hospitals found non-compliant with applicable laws, rules, regulations or bylaws should be issued inspection reports containing recommendations for improvement, while details of such institutions should be shared with the PHC. The Punjab Emergency Services Department has also been asked to provide details of inspections conducted during the past three years, along with a list of hospitals that have failed to meet the requisite statutory requirements. The PHC said it would continue coordinating with relevant institutions and monitoring compliance to promote safe, quality and dignified healthcare services for patients.—APP

DGTO decision vindicated MCCI election process: says president

MULTAN: Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Mian Bakhtawar Tanvir Sheikh said that the Directorate General of Trade Organizations (DGTO)'s rejection of all 17 appeals challenging the chamber's 2026-28 election process has established that the objections raised by the Friends Group against the Founder Group were without legal or factual basis. He said the DGTO's detailed decision had found the actions taken by the MCCI Secretary General and Election Commission to be in accordance with the law and relevant rules, while rejecting the objections raised by the Friends Group. Mr Sheikh said the Friends Group had challenged the voter list, classification of members and the status of certain business entities in the chamber. He alleged that these issues were exaggerated on social and electronic media as part of what he described as a negative campaign against the Founder Group and the chamber's leadership. According to him, the DGTO decision had now clarified the factual and legal position, while the rejection of all 17 appeals by the regulatory authority demonstrated that the objections were not sustainable on either legal or factual grounds. Referring specifically to the case

of Osteria Food Technologies, the MCCI president said the Friends Group had used the matter to launch what he termed a character-assassination campaign against the Founder Group and responsible chamber officials on social and certain electronic media platforms. He said an impression had been created that the chamber had disregarded laws and regulations in dealing with the matter. However, the DGTO, after examining the record, relevant documents, tax records and arguments presented by the parties, had upheld the decisions concerned and determined that the chamber's actions were in accordance with the law. He said the DGTO's endorsement of the decision to retain Osteria Food Technologies on the relevant voter list had also exposed what he described as the lack of factual basis behind the negative propaganda surrounding the issue. Mian Bakhtawar Tanvir Sheikh stressed that it was not in the interest of the business community to make the reputation of any business entity or trader controversial for political or electoral gains. "Differences of opinion are the right of every group in an election, but such differences should not be turned into false allegations, char-

acter assassination or negative propaganda," he said. He maintained that the Founder Group had always given priority to law, merit, transparency and the collective interests of the business community. The MCCI president said the DGTO decision would provide satisfaction to traders who wanted electoral and administrative matters to be decided on the basis of facts and law. He said the Founder Group was not contesting the elections against any individual or group but was working for the rights of Multan's traders and industrialists, improvement of the business environment and effective representation of the business community. He described the Founder Group as a genuinely business-friendly group, saying its manifesto focused on serving the business community, promoting trade and industry and resolving traders' problems. He urged the business community to choose its representatives on the basis of facts, performance and legal decisions rather than negative propaganda. He also called upon all stakeholders to ensure that the electoral process proceeded in a positive, transparent and dignified manner in accordance with the DGTO decision.—DNA

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Australia keen to diversify relations with Pakistan

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Timothy Kane emphasized the longstanding people-to-people ties between Australia and Pakistan, while highlighting the potential for stronger collaboration in food security, water management, climate resilience and education



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RAWALPINDI: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Timothy Kane visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), where RCCI President Usman Shaukat, along with Vice President Fahad Barlas, warmly welcomed him. Director Trade & Education Mr. Azhar Shah also attended the meeting. President Usman Shaukat briefed the High Commissioner on RCCI's major events and upcoming activities, highlighting the Chamber's initiatives to promote trade, investment and business linkages. He identified significant opportunities for enhanced Pakistan-Australia cooperation in pharmaceuticals, information technology, gems and mining, agriculture and livestock, education, and vocational training. Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Timothy Kane emphasized the longstanding people-to-people ties between Australia and Pakistan, while highlighting the potential for stronger collaboration in food security, water management, climate resilience and education. The High Commissioner noted that Australia currently has more than 22,000 active Pakistani student enrollments, reflecting strong educational and people-to-people connections between the two countries. He also highlighted more than four decades of agricultural collaboration, underscoring the depth and continuity of bilateral cooperation in this vital sector. Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Timothy Kane visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), where RCCI President Usman Shaukat, along with Vice President Fahad Barlas, warmly welcomed him. Director Trade & Education Mr. Azhar Shah also attended the meeting. President Usman Shaukat briefed the High Commissioner on RCCI's major events and upcoming activities, highlighting the Chamber's efforts to promote trade, investment and business linkages. He identified promising opportunities for collaboration between Pakistan and Australia in pharmaceuticals, information technology, gems and mining, agriculture and livestock, education, and vocational training. Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Timothy Kane emphasized the long-standing people-to-people ties between Australia and Pakistan and highlighted the potential for greater cooperation in food security, water management, climate resilience and education. The High Commissioner noted that Australia currently has more than 22,000 active Pakistani student enrollments, reflecting strong educational and people-to-people connections between the two countries. He also highlighted more than four decades of agricultural collaboration, underscoring the depth of bilateral cooperation in this important sector.

FOSPAH Launches CMS, Mobile App

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) on Thursday launched its Complaint Management System (CMS), mobile application and new website at a ceremony held at its headquarters in Islamabad, marking a significant step towards digitalization and improving access to justice. Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar attended the ceremony as the chief guest. Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja and National Information Technology Board (NITB), Chief Executive Officer, Faisal Iqbal Ratyal also played an important role in the development of the digitalization initiative. Federal Ombudsman Fozia Waqar said the new system would enable complainants to create accounts using their Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC), email address and mobile number and file and track multiple complaints through a single account. She said notices, updates and relevant documents would now be available online, reducing the need for repeated visits to offices and reliance on postal services. Verified registration would also help reduce false and frivolous complaints, she added. Fozia Waqar said the CMS would strengthen case monitoring and make it easier to identify delays in the complaint process. FOSPAH has set a target of reducing paperwork by 70 to 80 percent, with the ultimate objective of making the institution fully paperless. She said the new website would provide easy access to laws, procedures, rights, decisions and relevant statistics. The Federal Ombudsman further said that, in the next phase, FOSPAH planned to introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data analytics to support its work, including assistance in preparing applications and developing a searchable database of decisions. Fozia Waqar thanked the National Information Technology Board (NITB) team, FOSPAH's IT team and all officers and officials involved in making the digitalization project possible. Federal Minister, Azam Nazeer Tarar appreciated FOSPAH's efforts to establish the digital application and CMS, describing the initiative as an important step towards modernizing public service delivery and facilitating access to justice. FOSPAH presented appreciation certificates to members of the NITB team. Federal Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar was also presented with a commemorative shield and FOSPAH's institutional annual report by Federal Ombudsman Fozia Waqar. FOSPAH said it remained committed to making support against workplace harassment more accessible and ensuring that complainants could seek justice through a faster, more transparent and digitally enabled system.—APP

CDA to introduce micro-planning for better waste management

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to introduce a comprehensive micro-planning and field-monitoring system for waste management and sanitation services in Islamabad, under which the deployment, contact details, assigned areas and responsibilities of sanitation workers will be clearly documented to improve efficiency, accountability and service delivery. The initiative was discussed during an interactive session held at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) during a visit by CDA Director Sanitation Malik Atta and Deputy Director Sanitation Atta Bari Arshad. ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, representatives of various trade associations, Executive Members and ICCI members participated in the discussion and highlighted sanitation and civic issues affecting businesses and citizens. Speaking at the session, CDA Director Sanitation Malik Atta said that sustainable improvement in Islamabad's sanitation system required collective efforts and close coordination among the CDA, ICCI,



NA, Save Children sign MoU

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Secretariat and Save the Children International on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at Parliament House, Islamabad, to strengthen cooperation on child specific issues and support the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR). The agreement aims to promote evidence based parliamentary engagement and advance initiatives including the Children's Citizens Internship Programme, digital protection of children and other measures focused on the promotion and protection of child rights in Pakistan. The MoU was signed by National Assembly Secretariat Secretary Saeed Ahmad Maitla and Save the Children International Country Director Muhammad Khurram Gondal. Federal Coordinator of the PCCR and Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Danyal Chaudhry, along with MNAs Asia Naz Tanoli and Daniyal Ahmed, attended the ceremony. The partnership is aimed at strengthening institutional collaboration, supporting child focused parliamentary initiatives and contributing to a safer, more inclusive and supportive environment for children in Pakistan. The signing marks an important step towards closer cooperation between Parliament and Save the Children International and reflects a shared commitment to advancing the rights, protection and well being of children. Special Secretary (Special Initiatives) Syed Shamoan Hashmi, Chief Technical Advisor Minail Khan and National Assembly Secretariat officials Syed Hazik Bukhari, Ifat Pervaz and Syed M. Arslan Kazmi were also present.—DNA

Sherry Rehman Moves Senate to Discuss PIMS Tragedy

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Senator Sherry Rehman has submitted an adjournment motion in the Senate over the tragic deaths of 14 newborn babies at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), calling for an immediate and comprehensive investigation into the incident. Senator Sherry Rehman said the loss of 14 newborn lives at a major government hospital in the federal capital is a matter of grave public concern and cannot be treated as a routine incident. "The failure of essential safety arrangements at the capital's central government hospital is unacceptable. The reported non-functioning of several safety protocols at PIMS raises serious questions that must be answered," she said. She stressed that the deaths of 14 newborn babies constitute a matter of urgent and significant public importance, warranting an immediate discussion on the floor of the House. Senator Rehman called for the Senate's routine proceedings to be suspended to allow a detailed debate on the PIMS tragedy and to ensure that those responsible for any negligence are held accountable. "A complete and transparent investigation must be conducted into this tragedy, and the House must be informed of the facts. The failure of safety systems at one of the capital's most important public hospitals requires a serious and comprehensive review," she added.—APP

MoITT, Meta invite SMEs

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), in collaboration with Meta, has invited small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across Pakistan to register for the Small Business Growth Academy (SBGA), a free programme designed to help businesses use digital and AI-enabled tools for growth. Through practical training, participating SMEs will learn how to reach and engage more customers through Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp Business, build a stronger digital presence and create content that supports business growth. They will also learn how to use digital advertising effectively, including targeting, budgeting and optimisation, as well as AI-powered tools for advertising and content creation. The programme will also help businesses improve productivity and expand their reach locally and across borders. The programme will support more than 1,000 SMEs across Pakistan, with women-led businesses particularly encouraged to apply. SBGA is being implemented by AtomCamp, with support from Ignite - National Technology Fund, SMEDA.—APP

ISMO

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Stakeholder Consultation Workshop Before Issuance of RFP for Wheeling Auction 2026

Independent System and Market Operator of Pakistan (ISMO) is organizing a stakeholder consultation workshop to seek valuable input and feedback on the Draft RFP for Wheeling Auction 2026.

The workshop will provide stakeholders with an overview of the Draft RFP, an update on key developments under the CTBCM, and a demonstration of the Data Hub that includes relevant information, data sets, models and other related information relevant for interested parties. The session is intended to help participants better understand the auction process and provide informed feedback.

Stakeholders are requested to submit their written feedback and comments on the Draft RFP by 03 September 2026 (Thursday) via email at: shaheer.ali@ismo.gov.pk.

The consultation will be held as per the following details:
Date: 31 August 2026 (Monday)
Time: 10:00 AM to 01:00 PM
Mode: Online via Zoom
Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83237177027?pwd=ePuc3Vm5BbTF5EEw8laQ02Knuzp7mU.1>
Meeting ID: 832 3717 7027
Passcode: 061531

Interested stakeholders are invited to participate in the session through the Zoom link shared above. The Zoom link is also available on the ISMO website.

Office of Executive Director (Market Operations)

Independent System and Market Operator of Pakistan (Guarantee) Limited (ISMO)

Address: ISMO Building, Pitras Bukhari Road, H/8-1, Islamabad

Briefs

ICT Police catch two suspects red-handed in Ghouri Town

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have arrested two suspects red-handed for allegedly extorting money from residents and plot owners in Ghouri Town under the guise of "security charges", launching a wider investigation to uncover their alleged network and other accomplices. An official told APP on Thursday that the Koral Police arrested the suspects, identified as Kamran Majeed and Kashif, following complaints from citizens about harassment and extortion in the area. The official said the suspects allegedly visited houses and plots to collect money in the name of security charges and were particularly involved in harassing and blackmailing non-resident plot owners to extract substantial amounts from them. Taking immediate notice of the complaints, SP Sawan Zone Muhammad Khurram Ashraf constituted a special police team to trace and arrest those involved. The police team, working under the supervision of SHO Koral Aamir Hayat, carried out an operation and caught the two suspects red-handed while allegedly collecting extortion money. A case has been registered against the arrested suspects, while further investigation and legal proceedings are underway. SSP Qazi Ali Raza said the scope of investigation would be widened to identify other accomplices and uncover the entire network allegedly involved in the extortion racket.—APP

Magsi expresses grief over PIMS Hospital fire tragedy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic fire incident at PIMS Hospital that resulted in the loss of innocent children's lives. "The loss of innocent children's lives is an extremely painful and heartbreaking incident," the minister said, expressing solidarity with the bereaved families and extending his heartfelt sympathies to them. He prayed that Allah Almighty grant patience and courage to the parents and families of the deceased children to bear the irreparable loss. Magsi said that if any negligence or lapse is established in the incident, those responsible would face action in accordance with the law.—APP

FGEHA's grand auction for commercial plots

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is all set to hold a grand auction of premium commercial plots in G-13 and G-14 on September 15 and 16, offering investors an opportunity to acquire commercial properties at prime locations. The two-day auction will be held at Aura Grande Enclave, Sector E-11, Islamabad. An official spokesperson for the Authority told APP that the auction will feature commercial plots in G-13 and G-14, including plots in G-14 Markaz, Class-III commercial plots in G-14/2, mixed-use commercial plots, and a corporate office plot in the Mauve Area, with a two-year easy installment plan. The spokesperson said the commercial plots were strategically located adjacent to the Metro Bus route and GT Road, around an eight-minute drive from the M-1 and M-2 motorways and approximately 12 minutes from the New Islamabad International Airport. He said investors would be able to obtain approval for building plans after making an initial payment of 25 percent, facilitating the early commencement of development activities. He added that investors could also avail themselves of a 10 percent discount on lumpsum payments. FGEHA described the auction as an attractive investment opportunity, highlighting the commercial potential of the sites due to their prime locations, accessibility and planned urban infrastructure. The spokesperson advised interested investors and members of the public to stay updated through the Authority's official channels for the auction schedule and other details. Regarding preparations for the auction, he said key arrangements, including the preparation of the auction brochure, advertising and publicity strategy, auction schedule, and other administrative and operational matters, were being finalized to ensure that the process was conducted in a transparent, fair and competitive manner, providing equal opportunities to all investors. FGEHA, working under the Ministry of Housing and Works, develops residential and commercial projects for federal government employees and contributes to planned urban development in the federal capital.—DNA

Japan provides grant assistance to Moawin Foundation

As a longstanding friend of Pakistan, the Government of Japan will continue to work with local NGOs through the GGP to enhance grassroots human security in Pakistan. It is hoped that this project will become another symbol of the strong and longstanding friendship between Japan and Pakistan



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan, under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Program, has decided to provide grant assistance of USD 53,419 (equivalent to PKR 14.8 million) to the Moawin Foundation for the project to establish a women's vocational training institute in District Chakwal, Punjab. The grant contract was signed between His Excellency Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and a representative of Moawin Foundation at the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad on August 27, 2026. The project, titled

"the Project for the Construction of Women's Vocational Training Institute in Village Dulmial, District Chakwal," aims to strengthen the capacity of regional skill development to empower vulnerable women and secure their economic independence. Moawin Foundation has long been engaged in addressing the needs of underserved communities across Pakistan. Its vocational programs have steadily expanded their reach and impact over the years, reflecting the trust the Foundation has earned among local communities. In rural areas in Pakistan, many families face economic and environmental challenges, while employment opportunities remain limited. Access to vocational training and opportunities to earn a stable income are

particularly important for women, who often have fewer opportunities to acquire practical skills and achieve greater economic independence. Through this grant, Moawin Foundation will construct a dedicated training facility on land generously donated by the local community of Village Dulmial. This new Institute will offer structured courses in dress-making, stitching, and fashion design to women from surrounding areas who require stable sources of alternative income throughout the year. The project is expected to provide high-quality vocational training to 240 women annually, equipping them with practical skills that can help them earn their own income and build more secure livelihoods. At the signing ceremony, Ambassador Akamatsu expressed his hope that

the new Vocational Training Institute would serve the women and families of the community for many years to come. He also highlighted the contribution of the local community, which donated land for the project, and expressed his delight that Japan, in alignment with its unwavering commitment to women's empowerment, could help turn the community's long-standing aspiration for a permanent vocational training facility into reality. As a longstanding friend of Pakistan, the Government of Japan will continue to work with local NGOs through the GGP to enhance grassroots human security in Pakistan. It is hoped that this project will become another symbol of the strong and longstanding friendship between Japan and Pakistan.

Maritime Minister orders fire safety audits

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Maritime Affairs, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Thursday directed all organisations under the administrative control of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs to immediately conduct comprehensive fire safety audits of their buildings and premises following the recent incident at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital. The exercise will cover offices, hospitals, residential buildings, workshops, warehouses, oil piers and other facilities, with a focus on identifying and promptly addressing risks to life and property. According to a letter addressed to heads of organisations, Karachi Port Trust Hospital has been given particular priority. The audits will assess the availability, condition and functionality of fire extinguishers, alarms, smoke detectors, hydrants, sprinklers and other firefighting equipment. They will also examine electrical wiring, distribution systems, generators, UPS units and other potential fire hazards. The organisations have further been directed to verify that emergency exits, escape routes, stairways and fire exits are clearly marked and free of obstructions. Emergency lighting, safety signage, evacuation arrangements, response plans, assembly points and staff responsibilities will also be reviewed. The directive calls for regular inspection, testing, servicing and timely replacement of firefighting equipment, along with fire safety and evacuation drills and staff training. Compliance with relevant fire safety codes, building regulations and requirements prescribed by fire and emergency services authorities will also be assessed. All deficiencies identified during the audits are to be rectified immediately, particularly those posing risks to life or property. The ministry has allowed organisations to engage qualified fire safety professionals and relevant fire and rescue authorities for inspections and certification, where necessary. Heads of the organisations have been instructed to submit building-wise audit reports to the ministry within 15 days. The reports must identify deficiencies, corrective measures taken and timelines for resolving outstanding issues. The heads have also been directed to personally supervise implementation and ensure that all avoidable fire safety hazards are promptly addressed.—DNA

Safdar reviews zero-waste sanitation operation

RAWALPINDI: Managing Director Suthra Punjab Agency (SPA), Rawalpindi, Rana Sajid Safdar, on Thursday visited the Commercial Market and inspected the ongoing zero-waste sanitation operation. Safdar reviewed cleanliness arrangements,

waste collection and the performance of field teams in different parts of the market. He directed officers and staff to improve sanitation standards in the market further and adjoining areas and ensure that no garbage accumulates at any point. He said

providing a clean and healthy environment to citizens, in line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, was a top priority of SPA. Rana directed field officers to ensure continuous cleaning and maintain zero-waste conditions at commer-

cial areas, markets and public places. The MD directed that complaints regarding sanitation should be addressed promptly and that staff attendance, cleaning schedules and waste-lifting operations be effectively monitored. Safdar said cleanliness was not a one-time activity but a continuous responsibility, requiring regular field monitoring and timely action. He also urged citizens to dispose of waste at designated points and cooperate with sanitation teams to help keep the city clean and beautiful.—APP

FPCCI forms high-powered committee

DNA

ISLAMABAD Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), has expressed his profound concern, shock, and strong condemnation over the unwarranted, continuing mistreatment and high-handedness meted out to prominent industrialist and former FPCCI President, Mian Muhammad Adrees. It is pertinent note that a unanimous resolution was passed in the Executive Committee meeting of FPCCI on Thursday to follow-up on the high-handed treatment of Mian Muhammad Adrees through collective voice of the business community. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh informed that he has formed a high-powered liaison committee—representing the collective force of the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan—on the concerned matter to be chaired by Mr. Manzoor Ul Haq Malik, former VP FPCCI; and, Mr. Zubair Tufail, former President FPCCI; Senator Mian Muhammad Ateeq and Senator Talha Mahmood, will be its members. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stated that the entire business and industrial fraternity of Pakistan stands in absolute solidarity with Mian Muhammad Adrees. He noted that Mian Muhammad Adrees is a respected national figure who has rendered decades of invaluable service to industrial growth, employment generation, exports, and philanthropy across the country. Atif Ikram Sheikh emphasized that subjecting distinguished trade leaders, industrialists, and wealth creators to arbitrary harassment and coercive measures is completely unacceptable and damages the dignity of the business community. He pointed out that at a time when Pakistan urgently needs economic revival, investment confidence, and industrial continuity, such incidents send an alarming message to domestic and international investors alike. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh raised serious concerns regarding the handling of ongoing investigative proceedings related to decade-old power purchase agreements between Sitara Energy Limited, Sitara Chemical Industries, and FESCO. He pointed out that abruptly placing a seasoned business leader on the Provisional National Identification List (PNIL) and subjecting him to airport offloading.—DNA

CDA launches waste management plan

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), under the vision of Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi Federal Minister for Interior and leadership of Sohail Ashraf, Chairman CDA, CDA has taken a landmark, practical and Excellent initiative to address one of the longstanding challenges of Islamabad's rural areas by introducing a comprehensive Integrated Operations & Resource Planning System for solid waste management for collection and disposal of solid waste in Zones IV and V. For many years, the rural areas of Islamabad very neglected very badly in terms of systematic cleanliness and solid waste management. Unlike the developed and central sectors of the Federal Capital, a comprehensive, organized and technology enabled mechanism for regular collection, transportation and environmentally responsible disposal of solid waste was not available across these areas. Recognizing this long standing issue of the citizens of Zones IV and V, CDA Chairman Sohail Ashraf has made cleanliness and environmental sustainability of the rural areas an important priority and has directed to chalked out a comprehensive, workable.—DNA

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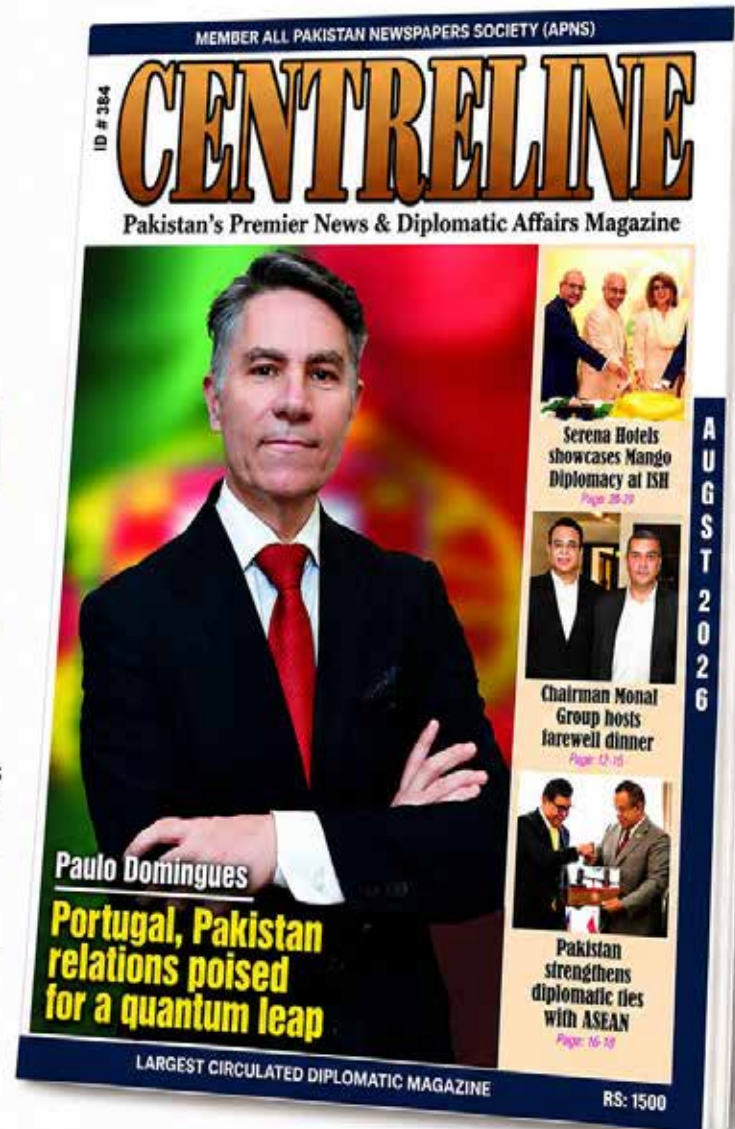
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The Limits of Civil Justice in America



DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM ZAHEER

MORE than three decades after the killing of 17-year-old David Boim in Israel, a long-running American court battle is again raising difficult questions about accountability, the limits of civil judgments and the legal identity of organisations that emerge after earlier groups have disappeared. David Boim was killed in 1996 by Hamas gunmen while he was in Israel. His parents, Stanley and Joyce Boim, subsequently pursued legal action in the United States against organisations and individuals whom they alleged had supported Hamas. In 2004, a US jury awarded the family \$156 million under the Anti-Terrorism Act. The judgment was later upheld on appeal. Yet securing a judgment and collecting it proved to be two very different matters. The organisations against which the judgment had been entered eventually became defunct, leaving the family with only a small portion of the award. The Boims did not accept that the closure of those organisations should bring the matter to an end. In 2017, they brought another case against American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), Americans for Justice in Palestine Educational Foundation and several individuals. Their argument is essentially that the newer organisations are successors or “alter egos” of organisations that were previously found liable and that the unpaid judgment should therefore remain enforceable against them. AMP and the other defendants reject that claim. This distinction is central to the case. The court is not simply being asked to revisit the killing of David Boim or the judgment entered more than two decades ago. The question is whether a legally separate organisation can be made responsible for an old judgment because of alleged continuity in leadership, purpose, activities or other organisational links. That is a serious legal question. Organisations change names, leadership and structures. New organisations can emerge from old political, religious or charitable networks without necessarily being the same legal entity. If every new organisation inherited the liabilities of an earlier organisation merely because some people, ideas or activities overlapped, the consequences for civil society would be considerable. But the opposite principle carries its own dangers. If an organisation can escape a lawful judgment simply by closing down and reappearing under another name, civil judgments could become little more than pieces of paper. The law would then reward organisational restructuring rather than accountability. The US Seventh Circuit confronted part of this issue in 2021. It held that the lower court had gone too far when it treated the question of whether AMP and the other defendants were alter egos as a jurisdictional issue and dismissed the case. The appeals court said the federal court had jurisdiction under the Anti-Terrorism

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Act and that the case should proceed on its merits. It did not, however, rule that AMP was legally responsible for the earlier judgment. That remains a matter to be established through the evidence. The distinction is important because allegations are not findings of fact. In a 2022 ruling, the district court allowed the case to continue after rejecting motions to dismiss. It noted that the Boims had made allegations concerning such matters as overlap in leadership, similarity of organisational purpose and operations, and possible efforts to avoid liability. But the court expressly cautioned that at that stage it was not determining the objective truth of those allegations. That is how a functioning legal system should work. A painful history may explain why a lawsuit was brought, but it cannot replace evidence. Equally, an organisation's political or religious identity should not by itself determine its legal liability. The question must be whether the evidence establishes the legal connection alleged by the plaintiffs. There is also a wider issue here. Civil litigation arising from terrorism has increasingly become an important avenue through which victims and their families attempt to obtain some measure of accountability. Criminal prosecutions may focus on perpetrators and their immediate networks, while civil cases can examine financial relationships and institutional responsibility. The Anti-Terrorism Act has provided American victims with one route to pursue such claims.

If the Boims ultimately succeed, the judgment could strengthen the ability of terrorism victims to pursue alleged successor organisations when the original defendants have disappeared. If they fail, the case could reinforce the principle that a new legal entity cannot be held responsible for another organisation's judgment without sufficiently strong evidence establishing the required legal connection. There is a further lesson for policymakers. Terrorism financing is rarely confined to the battlefield. Money, institutions, charities, political networks and informal relationships can cross borders long before governments recognise their significance. Legal systems therefore need mechanisms capable of following financial and organisational trails without abandoning the fundamental principles of due process. The Boim family's persistence is understandable. They lost a teenage son and obtained a substantial judgment, only to find that much of it remained uncollected. But justice cannot be measured solely by the size of a damages award. It also depends on whether the courts can establish responsibility fairly, distinguish evidence from allegation and enforce their decisions within the limits of law.

That is ultimately what makes this case important. It is not simply about an old judgment or a long-running family grievance. It is about whether legal responsibility can survive organisational disappearance, and how far the courts should go in tracing continuity from one organisation to another. The answer should neither be dictated by politics nor by sympathy alone. It must come from evidence, law and a careful examination of the facts. For the Boim family, the coming proceedings represent another attempt to turn a judgment into something tangible. For the defendants, they represent a defence against being held responsible for liabilities they say belong to organisations that no longer exist. For the wider legal system, the case presents a much larger test: whether accountability can endure when institutions change their names, structures and identities.

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China's Great Leap in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics

Qamar Bashir



China recognized the strategic significance of artificial intelligence comparatively early. Its 2017 New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan established objectives extending to 2030 and connected fundamental research, infrastructure, education, industrial applications and regulation. Artificial intelligence was treated not as a fashionable consumer service but as a general-purpose technology capable of transforming the entire economy. The scale of the resulting achievement is demonstrated by China's patent output

ARTIFICIAL intelligence and robotics are becoming the defining instruments of economic, scientific and strategic power. Nations leading these fields will shape manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, education, transportation, defence and scientific discovery. China has emerged as an extraordinarily powerful force in this new age, competing directly with the United States and moving ahead in several areas. This achievement is not the result of one company or an isolated breakthrough. It reflects an entire national ecosystem built around education, research, manufacturing, energy, infrastructure and technological innovation. Behind this transformation stands a political and philosophical approach that places national development, collective advancement and long-term planning above short-lived political considerations. Under President Xi Jinping and the Communist Party of China, scientific and technological self-reliance has become a central national objective. The continuity of Chinese leadership—frequently presented in Western political discourse as a weakness or democratic deficiency—has enabled China to pursue strategic goals over decades. The results are visible in China's extraordinary development of human resources. By 2025, China had established 3,167 higher-education institutions enrolling approximately 48.7 million students, while its gross higher-education enrolment rate had reached 60.8 percent—more than twice its 2012 level. Chinese universities produced more than 55 million graduates between 2021 and 2025, while the country's research-and-development workforce reached approximately 7.95 million full-time-equivalent person-years, the world's largest. Vocational colleges also supplied more than 70 percent of the newly added skilled workers required by modern industries. China has therefore converted the numerical advantage of a vast population into a formidable scientific, technical and industrial asset. China recognized the strategic significance of artificial intelligence comparatively early. Its 2017 New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan established objectives extending to 2030 and connected fundamental research, infrastructure, education, industrial applications and regulation. Artificial intelligence was treated not as a fashionable consumer service but as a general-purpose technology capable of transforming the entire economy. The scale of the resulting achievement is demonstrated by China's patent output. Updated figures published by the World Intellectual Property Organization in July 2026 show that more than 56,000 new generative-AI patent families were published worldwide during 2024 and 2025—exceeding the entire global output of the preceding decade. China-based inventors accounted for more than 43,000 of those new patent families. When added to approximately 38,000 published between 2014 and 2023, China's cumulative output since 2014 exceeds 81,000. Chinese generative-AI patent publications recorded a compound annual growth rate of 64 percent between 2023 and 2025, while six of the world's ten largest applicants are based in China.

China's open-weight models represent another remarkable achievement. DeepSeek, Alibaba and Moonshot AI have challenged Silicon Valley's traditionally proprietary approach by releasing powerful systems whose mathematical weights can be downloaded and adapted. These companies have demonstrated that Chinese laboratories can produce frontier-class AI, optimize it under hardware constraints and distribute it globally at highly competitive prices. Alibaba's Qwen has become one of the world's most influential open-model families. It ranges from compact systems to the 2.4-trillion-parameter Qwen3.8 model. According to Hugging Face, Qwen repositories recorded approximately 2.06 billion downloads during the first seven months of 2026, while developers had created more than 151,000 derivative repositories based upon the family. Download totals do not establish overall market share or prove that Qwen is superior to every competitor, but they demonstrate extraordinary global adoption. DeepSeek has similarly advanced the open-weight paradigm. Its R1 reasoning system was released under the permissive MIT licence. In 2026, DeepSeek introduced the V4 family, including V4-Pro and the smaller V4-Flash. These models employ mixture-of-experts architectures, activating only part of their total parameters during each operation. This improves efficiency while supporting reasoning, coding and autonomous agent functions. Both versions offer context windows of up to one million tokens. Moonshot AI's Kimi K3 provides another example. Released in July 2026, it is a 2.8-trillion-parameter, natively multimodal model designed for complex reasoning, extended coding and knowledge work. Its release further strengthened China's position in the frontier open-weight ecosystem. Although benchmark comparisons should always be treated carefully, the broader direction is unmistakable: competitive AI no longer originates exclusively from closed American laboratories. These developments are particularly significant because American export controls have restricted Chinese access to certain advanced semiconductors. Rather than ending Chinese progress, the restrictions have encouraged greater attention to software efficiency, sparse attention, mixture-of-experts architectures, inference optimization and domestic hardware. Export controls remain a genuine obstacle, but they have neither removed China from the competition nor prevented its developers from producing advanced models. Open-weight technology also provides a degree of sovereignty. Governments, universities and companies can deploy suitable models on infrastructure within their own jurisdictions. Proper local deployment can prevent sensitive information from being transmitted to an external provider. China's achievements extend from software into the physical economy. Companies such as Unitree and AgiBot are developing humanoid robots capable of walking across difficult terrain, recovering from falls, carrying loads and performing complex movements balancing machine vision, dexterity, durability and affordability. China possesses a decisive advantage in converting such

inventions into manufactured products. It has dense supply chains for batteries, motors, sensors, cameras, electronics and precision components, together with enormous factories and a large domestic market. The same industrial ecosystem supported China's rise in electric vehicles, commercial drones, telecommunications equipment and solar technology. China has become exceptionally capable of carrying innovation from the laboratory through engineering and into mass production. NVIDIA chief executive Jensen Huang has repeatedly emphasized China's universities, engineering culture and technical workforce. His widely reported observation that approximately half of the world's AI researchers are Chinese illustrates the immense contribution Chinese scientists make to global artificial-intelligence research. China has demonstrated that political continuity, when combined with capable leadership, education and measurable national objectives, can become an instrument of rapid advancement. Only after recognizing the foundations and magnitude of China's achievement does the larger lesson become clear. This is not a warning solely for Pakistan, Africa, Latin America or the Muslim world. It is a lesson for every developed or developing nation that has failed to prioritize artificial intelligence and robotics as seriously as China and the United States.

Countries neglecting scientific education, reliable energy, computing facilities and advanced manufacturing may gradually lose their economic independence. They may continue importing intelligent machines and foreign software, but they will not control the technologies determining productivity, employment and national security.

Pakistan and other developing nations face an especially serious danger because many still depend upon inexpensive labour and inadequately educated populations. In an age of automation, a young population without scientific and technical competence may produce unemployment, inequality and instability rather than a demographic dividend.

These nations need measurable programmes in mathematics, science, AI, robotics, semiconductors and advanced manufacturing. They require modern universities, research funding, computing facilities and dependable electricity. International partnerships must transfer knowledge and create local capability rather than permanent dependence. China's rise demonstrates that lasting national power grows from educated people, scientific institutions, productive industries, infrastructure and leadership capable of sustaining a vision. Other countries need not copy China's political system mechanically, but its discipline, continuity and investment in human capability deserve serious study. Every nation that has not entered the AI and robotics race must begin immediately. The opportunity to participate in the emerging technological order still exists, but it will not remain open forever.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
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Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
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The Silent Cry of the Newborns

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Relatives who had entrusted their children to that place of supposed safety spoke of locked doors, of staff nowhere to be found at the critical moment, and of a long and agonising wait for help. One mother cried for two hours outside a closed entrance; another asked why the doctors had left the children alone

INDEED, Allah, the Most High, is the protector and sustainer of this entire universe, as He Himself declares in the Holy Qur'an: "Allah is the Protector of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into light" (Al-Baqarah 2:257). After the divine decree, human beings are charged with a share in the preservation of life, acting within the limits of their understanding, authority, and the trusts placed upon them. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, taught that "every one of you is a shepherd and every one of you is responsible for his flock." Those who first examine their own failings and correct them are counted among the wise; yet such self-scrutiny remains rare among men and nations. It is the enduring habit of mankind to feel weakness when pain or calamity strikes. Still, the soldiers who keep watch upon our frontiers grant the rest of us peaceful nights, remaining themselves alert against every hostile movement by land, sea, or air. In the moment of danger, they do not flee; they offer their lives so that the homeland and its people may endure. In the same spirit, physicians and their assistants in the hospitals assume the role of healers. The Qur'an elevates the act of preserving life with these solemn words: "Whoever saves a life, it is as if he had saved all of mankind" (Al-Ma'idah 5:32). Accidents and natural disasters visit even the most advanced lands and the best-equipped institutions. What distinguishes honourable service is the readiness of some to fulfil their duty without regard for personal safety, standing firm when others might turn away. As reported in the media yet in the early hours of Wednesday, the twenty-sixth of Au-

gust, a grievous fire broke out in the nursery of the Mother and Child Health ward on the third floor of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, the foremost public hospital of the federal capital. Shortly before seven in the morning an air-conditioning unit exploded or suffered a short circuit; the flames, fed by the oxygen points and incubators that sustained the infants, spread with terrible swiftness. Fifteen newborns lay in that nursery—some but a few hours old, others only two or three days into life. Fourteen of them perished amid the smoke and the heat; only one was rescued by a doctor who remained at his post reportedly. The little ones, many of them still dependent upon continuous oxygen, were either burned or overcome when their supply was cut off. Relatives who had entrusted their children to that place of supposed safety spoke of locked doors, of staff nowhere to be found at the critical moment, and of a long and agonising wait for help. One mother cried for two hours outside a closed entrance; another asked why the doctors had left the children alone. Fathers stood outside in grief, among them a vegetable seller whose twin daughters of three days had been left overnight while he sought brief rest at home, only to learn that both had been taken. The bodies, once identified, were returned to families who had prepared for joy and now received only silence and mourning. Officials maintain that rescue teams with six fire engines and four ambulances arrived swiftly and brought the blaze under control; yet the anguish of the parents remains un-

assuaged, and the question of why the ward was left unattended continues to pierce the heart.

One is compelled to ask where the failures lay—in education, in professional training, in the daily habits of responsibility, in the maintenance of equipment, or in the larger culture of accountability. After such a tragedy, can the nation be assured that the same neglect will not be repeated when the next emergency arises? No formal survey in the public domain records the precise degree of satisfaction among Pakistanis with the performance of government hospitals; yet the quiet judgement of ordinary observation suggests that dissatisfaction runs between sixty and seventy-five per cent. Contrast this with the scenes, once widely shared, from the great earthquakes in China and Japan: there the medical staff covered the infants in the neonatal wards with their own bodies, refusing to abandon the helpless even as the walls shook. Their example stands as a living commentary upon the Prophetic teaching that the best of people are those most beneficial to others.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan took swift notice, ordered a full investigation by a high-level committee, and directed the immediate suspension of the Federal Health Secretary. Let that inquiry proceed without fear or favour. Let it examine not only the spark that began the fire but the deeper tremors in training, supervision, equipment safety, and moral resolve. For the trust of healing is sacred, and the lives of the weak are a trust from Allah. May those who stand at the bedside of the afflicted remember always that they are shepherds, accountable for their flock, and that the saving of even one life carries weight of all mankind.

Briefs

Qatar PM visits Tehran to pursue mediation...

FROM PAGE 01
A memorandum of understanding reached between the US and Iran in June to end the conflict broke down in part because of differences over the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman where one-fifth of the world's oil supplies passed before the war began on February 28. Qatar and Iran discussed a proposed phased framework that includes establishing a temporary joint Iranian-Omani shipping corridor through the strait and carrying out a joint project to clear mines from the waterway, Qatar's foreign ministry said. The two officials also reviewed the latest developments in the region and efforts to de-escalate tensions and create conditions for dialogue, the ministry said. Although the strikes have stopped, Washington is now piling on economic pressure by announcing plans to cut Iran off from its trading partners with increased sanctions. Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Thursday called for national unity in the face of what he described as "all-out economic war," warning that internal division was "exactly what the enemy wants." Ebrahim Azizi, the head of the Iranian parliament's national security committee, said the sanctions were an "inhumane and hostile act" which nonetheless had lost their effectiveness. Tehran has lived under various forms of US sanctions since the Islamic revolution in 1979. Hormuz oil flows have fallen to a three-month low, with just 5 million barrels per day transiting on Monday, according to the latest ship-tracking data. Before the war, the strait carried roughly 20 million barrels per day of crude oil. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Wednesday that Iran and Oman had agreed on how to share the waterway and its revenues, but a senior Iranian source later said the two countries were still working on the details of an agreement. Despite an aerial bombardment earlier in the war that severely diminished Iran's conventional forces, Tehran has maintained enough missile and drone capability to attack Gulf neighbors that house US military bases and disrupt oil tankers in the strait. The International Maritime Organization has reported 70 incidents in the Strait of Hormuz since February 28 that have killed 19 seafarers.

Pak set to assume SCO chair

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and he will also hold bilateral meetings with the Kyrgyz leadership. He said the hallmark of Pakistan's SCO chairmanship will be the SCO Summit to be held in Islamabad next year. Responding to a question, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said Pakistan notes the proposal by the interim Afghan government's Interior Minister for a dedicated bilateral mechanism to address contentious issues. He said Pakistan remains open to state-level dialogue. However, the sustainability of any mechanism will depend on tangible actions, rather than mere assurances.

Imran sister moves SC for early hearing

FROM PAGE 01
The petitioner sought the former premier's transfer to Shifa International Hospital for medical examination and treatment, as directed by the Supreme Court. It urged the court to ensure immediate and complete implementation of its August 18 order, arguing that continued failure to comply with a judicial directive amounts to intentional and blatant violation of the law. The plea further argued that the court's case-fixation policy should not prevent an urgent hearing of the contempt petition, given the seriousness of the ex-PM's health.

Petroleum Minister urges SSGCL Board to Strengthen Sustainability

Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik highlighted that gas prices have not been increased for the past one year, while the increase in gas circular debt has nearly been stopped, marking important progress towards stabilization of the gas sector

DNA

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik has directed the Board of Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) to develop a comprehensive strategy and sustainable business model with special focus on UFG control to transform SSGCL into a financially viable organization, with public service as the foremost priority. The Federal Minister chaired a meeting with the Chairman and Board of Directors, Managing Director and senior management of SSGCL in Karachi to review the company's performance, key achievements, operational challenges and future reform priorities. The Chairman SSGCL Board welcomed the Federal Minister, while the Managing Director briefed the Minister on the company's milestones, achievements and challenges. The management highlighted a significant improvement in the company's gas distribution system, with UFG reduced by approximately 57 percent in volumetric terms. The meeting was informed that there is no gas load shedding for K-Electric, industrial consumers and fertilizer plants, while domestic consumers are being provided gas three times a day. Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik highlighted that gas prices have not been increased for the past one year, while the increase in gas circular debt has nearly been stopped, marking important progress towards stabilization of the gas sector.



The Minister said that the existing system of gas subsidies via pricing slabs needs to be revisited. He emphasized the need to transition to a single fair gas price for all consumers, while vulnerable segments be protected through targeted social protection programmes. This transition would spur greater economic activity while quelling migration of customers to alternative fuels. He urged the SSGCL Board to formulate a comprehensive business reform strategy focused on making the company self-sustaining, improving operational efficiency, HR capabilities, reducing losses and gas theft, strengthening revenue recovery and ensuring better utilization of resources.

Secretary Petroleum, during the meeting, emphasized that the Board operates independently in accordance with the spirit of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) Act. He said the Board should exercise its mandate and take all necessary measures required for the betterment, efficiency and long-term sustainability of SSGCL. The Minister said the Government is already working with the World Bank on comprehensive gas sector reforms, aimed at addressing structural challenges and creating a more efficient, sustainable and financially viable gas sector. Discussing the situation in Balochistan, the SSGCL Board welcomed the constitution of the Political Committee

under the Deputy Prime Minister to look into the province's challenges and appreciated the initiative as a positive step towards addressing longstanding issues in Balochistan. The Minister directed that gas supply issues in Balochistan be resolved on a priority basis, alongside addressing technical challenges, infrastructure constraints and gas theft. He stressed the need for sustainable solutions to improve gas availability and service delivery in the province. The Federal Minister added that public service must remain the top priority in all operational, financial and strategic decisions, while pursuing reforms to ensure the long-term sustainability of the company.

9th meeting of JWG scheduled to be held in coming week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In preparation for the 9th meeting of the Joint Working Group on Gwadar (JWG on Gwadar) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), an important meeting has been held here. The meeting aimed at discussing the implementation of completed, ongoing, and future projects in Gwadar. The meeting was chaired by Secretary of the Planning Commission, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor, and was attended by senior officials from various federal ministries, divisions, and relevant agencies, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro. Director General of the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA),

Moeen-ur-Rehman Khan, and Director General of Operations at the Gwadar Port Authority, Dawood Kalmati, participated via video link. The meeting conducted a detailed review of the progress of completed CPEC projects in Gwadar, the current status of ongoing projects, and proposed future initiatives. This review aimed to facilitate key decisions and finalize the future roadmap for these projects during the 9th meeting of the Joint Working Group, scheduled for the coming week. During the briefing, DG GDA Moeen-ur-Rehman Khan provided detailed insights into the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan (2017-2050), its implementation progress, and the future urban and economic development of Gwadar. The Gwadar Smart Port

City Master Plan is among the key completed projects under CPEC and serves as the foundational guideline document for Gwadar's future urban development, land use, micro-planning, infrastructure, and economic activities. DG GDA also gave a comprehensive briefing on the progress and current operational status of the GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital Gwadar. He stated that the hospital, managed by the Indus Hospital & Health Network, is a significant and valuable gift from China to the people of Gwadar, Makran, and Balochistan, playing a vital role in providing quality healthcare services to the local population. During the meeting, DG GDA proposed that the expansion of the Pak-China Friendship Hospital be

included in future CPEC projects. The proposal envisions increasing the hospital's capacity to 300 beds, along with the establishment of a medical college and a nursing college. These proposals aim to provide the people of Gwadar and Balochistan with medical education and modern healthcare facilities under one platform. He further proposed that the development of a modern fish landing jetty, fish harbor, and boat-building industry at Gwadar's West Bay/Padi Zir be included in future CPEC projects. This project aims to equip Gwadar's fishing industry with modern facilities, create better business opportunities for local fishermen, promote boat-building, and strengthen the local economy.

Forgotten and remembered fast bowling heroes deserve a better legacy

STUART Broad and James Anderson have every right to feel proud men. In England's colors they bowled in tandem for years, Anderson claiming 704 Test wickets and Broad, 604. Their achievement has been recognized this week via a joint portrait that was unveiled at Lords and is to be hung alongside other luminaries of the game. Surely, there are few who would quibble at this acclaim for yeomen of their craft and country. They are one chapter in a long line of English and Welsh fast bowlers and, so far, have not been satisfactorily replaced. When they started their careers, they were regarded as "promising," a euphemism for maybe they will make it to the top level or maybe not. Both needed to make their case and overcome early setbacks. Anderson survived one coach's attempt to remodel his action, while Broad overcame the embarrassment of being hit for six sixes in an over by Yuvraj Singh at Durban in 2007 in the inaugural T20 World Cup, aged 21. He says that this hardened his approach to the game, making him more resilient and adaptive. His father, Chris, played for England between 1984 and 1989 as an opening batter and faced the might of an uncompromising West Indies attack with bravery. Stuart, born in 1986, was steeped in cricket, following his father around at Trent Bridge when he played for Nottinghamshire, a place he calls home. — DNA

Forces kill 11 terrorists in KP areas

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In the Ladha area of South Waziristan, five Khawarij terrorists were killed during an operation, it added. Meanwhile, four terrorists belonging to Fima al Hindustan were killed in the Sasool area of Khuzdar district, it said. "Security forces effectively targeted Fitna al Hindustan terrorists with the assistance of [a] quadcopter," the report said. President Asif Ali Zardari paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation, according to a statement issued by the Presidency. "The elimination of terrorist elements active with foreign support is essential for national security and lasting peace," the president was quoted as saying. "We will rid Pakistan of the scourge of terrorism," he said, adding that the nation took pride in the professional capabilities and successes of the security forces and law enforcement agencies. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operations against the terrorists, according to a statement issued by his ministry. He said that security forces had thwarted the terrorists' nefarious designs by taking timely action. The minister said the nation stood united against terrorism and in solidarity with the security forces. On Aug 21, the military's media affairs wing said security forces eliminated 49 terrorists in separate IBOs in KP and Balochistan. According to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, an Islamabad-based think tank, violence linked to terrorist attacks and counterterrorism operations intensified sharply in July, making it the deadliest month of 2026, with 112 security personnel among 205 people killed. According to the report, the security situation deteriorated most significantly in Balochistan, where the overall death toll increased by 241 per cent, from 109 in June to 372 in July, followed closely by mainland KP, which recorded 154 deaths in July, compared with 75 in June, representing an increase of 105pc.

Shehbaz says ties with Saudi...

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His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He reaffirmed Pakistan's deep appreciation for the Kingdom's steadfast support and generous assistance to Pakistan, and its pivotal role in promoting peace and stability in the region. Ambassador Al-Malki expressed his profound gratitude to the Prime Minister and the Government of Pakistan for the warmth, cooperation, and hospitality extended to him throughout his assignment. He described his stay in Pakistan as a deeply memorable and rewarding experience, and reaffirmed his personal commitment to the continued strengthening of Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations. The Prime Minister wished the Ambassador continued success in his future endeavours.

PIMS lacked fire safety NOC

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licences without ensuring fire safety arrangements. For annual licence renewals, hospitals reportedly rely on photographs of rescue training conducted in November and December, the sources said. The sources said the Capital Development Authority (CDA) had twice written to the authority, asking it not to issue certificates to hospitals without fire safety arrangements. However, the authority never responded to the CDA's letters, according to the sources. The IHRA is the regulatory body responsible for ensuring safety and security at hospitals, while fire safety arrangements and training are part of the annual licence renewal process.



SINGAPORE: High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq in a group photograph with attendees of the special screening of the Legend of Maula Jatt, hosted by the High Commission of Pakistan in Singapore. — DNA

Infantino has no future at Fifa, says European Leagues chief

Schaefer says Fifa needs reform and such changes can only happen with another president

ROME: Gianni Infantino cannot have a future at Fifa, European Leagues President Claudius Schaefer said as he stressed the importance of reforming world soccer's governing body and the responsibilities of its president. In an interview with the Athletic published on Wednesday, Schaefer said European Leagues, which represents 53 professional men's and women's football leagues, was deeply concerned about Infantino's leadership. "We question his suitability to continue as president. Here in Switzerland, we've had a close view of Fifa and it seems that the influence of the president has grown from year to year," he added. "Major decisions are taken without meaningful consultation with stakeholders who will be affected." Schaefer's comments come amid a bitter conflict among governing bodies, sparked by Fifa's now abandoned proposal to sell off a slice of the World Cup's commercial rights. Infantino is under pressure from three confederations to resign, including Europe's Uefa, Asia's AFC and CONCACAF, which represents North and Central America and the Caribbean. The sport's regional ruling bodies have also discussed a potential vote of no confidence against the Fifa chief. Concerns



have been raised over the inaugural Fifa peace prize that was awarded to US President Donald Trump in December and the overturning of a ban for American forward Folarin Balogun during this year's World Cup following a call from Trump. "Fifa is an association under Swiss law and in this association you have rules. The president and the board members have to perform their duties with care. This is a legal matter," Schaefer said. "If you take such a decision (as the peace prize), without even informing the council, that, in my view, is a breach of law. And then, during the World Cup we all know about the red card issue. 'It was a real scandal. I can't ever recall a political intervention of this kind relating to a sporting matter. Such acts call the integrity of the game into question. That's why there is no future at Fifa for Infantino. There can't be.' Infantino will be seeking re-election for a fourth term next year and will likely face stiff opposition, but Schaefer said it was more important to redefine the role of Fifa president than it was to get someone else into office. "For us, getting these reforms is the most important task and they can only happen with another president," he added. Fifa did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. — APP

All options open with...

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feels that maybe they come to the table in a meaningful way. We have not seen that yet," she said. "He of course continues to retain all options on the table, and the naval blockade continues to be in effect as well." US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had warned countries on Monday to cut their financial ties with Iran or face secondary sanctions as part of what had been billed as "economic D-Day," but the Treasury Department stopped short of actually imposing penalties. Qatar's prime minister visited Tehran on Thursday in a bid to relaunch diplomacy after the US and Iran traded recriminations over Washington's promise to increase economic pressure, a move an Iranian official described as "all-out economic war."

Briefs

Inclusive finance advances as lending expands to key productive sectors

ISLAMABAD :Advisor to the Finance Minister, Khuram Schehzad on Thursday said Pakistan's agenda of inclusive finance was making visible progress, with increased access to credit for housing, agriculture, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), electric vehicles (EVs) and productive investment helping translate macroeconomic stability into private-sector-led, export-oriented and inclusive growth. In a progress update shared on social media platform X, the advisor said the objective was not merely to increase lending but to direct finance towards productive sectors, broaden economic opportunities and enable more people and businesses to participate in economic growth. He said significant progress had been recorded since June 2026 under various initiatives. Under the Apna Ghar housing finance programme, applications had increased by 84 per cent to more than 46,000, while approved financing had nearly doubled to around Rs280 billion. Loans disbursed had risen by 59 per cent to more than 7,600, he added. The advisor said the expansion of housing finance was supporting home ownership while generating economic activity across the construction sector, building materials, SMEs and employment. In the agriculture sector, the number of borrowers had increased by around 115,000 to 3.37 million, reflecting broader.—APP

Will US sanctions on Iran bite? It may depend on China

DNA

Since February, the United States has been applying military and political pressure to Iran to force terms akin to a surrender. Six months later, and despite the White House bombast, there has been no agreement, and international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remains vulnerable to Iranian attacks. With talks seemingly drifting, Washington now appears to have moved to Plan B: tightening the financial noose. The aim is to make Iran's continued resistance so economically costly that it is forced to reconsider. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent thinks this will reduce the need for US military operations. Writing in The Financial Times, he described the latest sanctions as "a sweeping economic offensive" against Iran's financial links and trading partners around the world, with the intention of inflicting an 'Economic D-Day' on the country. Last week, the United Arab Emirates announced that it had suspended all forms of trade, commercial exchange, and financial transactions with Iran until further notice following another missile attack on the Gulf state. Bessent said the UAE's decision "was no coincidence.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Police personnel look through broken window at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital in the Federal Capital. The hospital resumes its routine operation after fire incident at maternity ward.

US religious freedom panel calls for sanctions on RSS members

The RSS, meanwhile, has defended Bhagwat's New York appearance and described the event as inclusive and open to all, rejecting accusations that the organization promotes intolerance toward religious minorities

DNA

WASHINGTON :The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has urged Washington to place targeted sanctions on members of India's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) as its leader Mohan Bhagwat visits New York. USCIRF Chairman Dr Asif Mahmood, a Pakistani-American physician, noted that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a member of the RSS, describing it as an Indian umbrella organization whose sub-groups have perpetrated attacks on religious minorities, including Christians, Muslims and Sikhs, according to media reports. Dr. Mahmood called on the US government to consider revoking the visa issued to Bhagwat and making him ineligible for future entry into the United States. "Religious freedom conditions in India continue to deteriorate as violence and incitement are frequently used to target religious minority communities," Dr. Mahmood said, urging the U.S. gov-

ernment to consider targeted sanctions against RSS members and Indian officials complicit in religious freedom violations. The USCIRF statement comes as New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani has separately voiced opposition to Bhagwat's planned appearance in the city. Mamdani said Tuesday that he did not support the rally the RSS chief is addressing, while acknowledging that he was unsure whether the city had jurisdiction to cancel a privately organized event. Mamdani described the rise of the RSS movement as "incredibly troubling" and said he was opposed to what he characterized as its "exclusionary vision." Indian American Muslim Council has lo condemned Mohan Bhagwat's policies, and is staging a protest against RSS chief's visit to the United States. Bhagwat is scheduled to address the Indian diaspora on August 29 at Madison Square Garden at an event promoted as the "Universal Oneness Celebration," organized by American Hindus for Engagement and Dialogue. The event has drawn opposition from organizations and activists who have

raised concerns about the RSS's record and Bhagwat's leadership. USCIRF's concerns, however, extend beyond Bhagwat's New York appearance. The commission has accused members of RSS subgroups of involvement in violent attacks against religious minorities and said Indian authorities have failed to adequately prevent, investigate or punish such violence. USCIRF also raised concerns over India's anti-conversion laws, saying they have been used to target Christians and other religious minorities. It cited the expulsion of Muslim citizens in Assam under the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), as well as what it described as shrinking space for civil society. The commission further warned that proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) could threaten the ability of faith-based organizations to continue operating in India. USCIRF Vice Chairman Cece Heil said the United States had an opportunity to hold India accountable and demonstrate that Washington stands for religious freedom in

India. "Without this accountability, religious freedom will only deteriorate further," Heil said, pointing to attacks by vigilante groups against religious minorities and houses of worship. In its 2026 Annual Report, USCIRF recommended that the U.S. Department of State designate India a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for what it described as systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom. The commission also examined India's religious freedom conditions during a May 2026 hearing titled "Deteriorating Religious Freedom Conditions in India." The Indian government has rejected USCIRF's assessments, maintaining that the commission presents a distorted and selective picture of the country. The RSS, meanwhile, has defended Bhagwat's New York appearance and described the event as inclusive and open to all, rejecting accusations that the organization promotes intolerance toward religious minorities. Meanwhile, a prominent Indian-American interfaith leader Dr. Mike Ghouse has appealed to Indian Americans to stand up against the hateful RSS ideology.

Death toll from Algeria wildfires rises to 12

DNA

ALGIERS, Algeria: Forest fires killed 12 people and injured dozens in northeastern Algeria on Wednesday, the interior minister and civil protection authorities said. The tolls rose from earlier local media reports of two deaths and an unspecified number of injuries in coastal Bejaia province, around 300 kilometers (190 miles) from the capital Algiers. Five people were killed in Jijel province, four in Bejaia and three in Tizi Ouzou province, Interior Minister Said Sayoud told national television. A further 54 people were being treated for burns, including six serious cases, at a hospital in Bejaia, he said. An eight-year-old boy and a 22-year-old woman were among those killed in Bejaia, a local radio station reported. Sayoud and Health Minister Mohamed Seddik Ait Messaoudene had traveled to Bejaia to "assess the progress of firefighting operations on the ground ... and the condition of the injured," the official APS news agency reported. Many residents in Bejaia and Jijel have been evacuated, according to the civil protection agency and local media. As of 8:00 p.m. (1900 GMT) on Wednesday, firefighters were battling 69 blazes, the civil protection agency said. Images broadcast by local site Jijel News showed panicked residents taking refuge in a post office as thick clouds of smoke billowed around them. Three major national highways connecting regions in the east of the country were closed due to forest fires near the cities of Bejaia, Jijel and Setif, the gendarmerie said.—APP

Qatar Prince shows interest in investing Pakistan's various sector

ISLAMABAD: Prince of Qatar Sheikh Naif bin Eid Al Thani on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and expressed interest in investing in various sectors of Pakistan. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, bilateral cooperation, investment opportunities and avenues for joint ventures between Pakistan and Qatar were discussed, said a press release. Talking during the meeting, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said that Pakistan and Qatar enjoy strong religious, cultural and historical ties. He mentioned that thousands of Pakistanis are associated with education and employment in Qatar while people-to-people and fraternal relations between the two countries are growing stronger with each passing day. Abdul Aleem Khan said Pakistan would warmly welcome investment from Qatar, adding that there are vast opportunities for joint ventures in the construction, expansion and development of Motorways and Highways. He emphasized that enhanced bilateral cooperation and joint business ventures would serve the interests of both countries while Pakistan is providing a conducive environment for investment. The minister said Qatar holds particular importance in the region and appreciated its active role in promoting regional peace and stability. He also expressed appreciation for Qatar's contribution to peace efforts in the region.—APP

FPCCI President calls for exploring European Markets

KARACHI: President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh has called for a strategic and concerted effort to expand Pakistan's trade and investment relations with Eastern Europe, describing the region as a promising and largely untapped market offering significant opportunities for Pakistani exporters, investors and businesses. He said that Pakistan's economic engagement with Eastern Europe remains far below its potential. According to State Bank of Pakistan data, Pakistan's exports to the Eastern European region increased from US\$740 million in FY2024 to US\$758 million in FY2025, while imports declined from US\$1.67 billion to US\$705 million during the same period. Total two-way merchandise trade stood at approximately US\$1.46 billion in FY2025. "While the recent growth in our exports is encouraging, the overall volume of trade remains modest in view of the economic potential, market size and strategic importance of Eastern Europe. This clearly demonstrates that we need to diversify our export destinations and make a concerted effort to explore these relatively untapped markets," Atif Ikram Sheikh stated. The President said that Romania, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Ukraine and other Eastern European markets offer opportunities for Pakistani products and services. He emphasized that Pakistan should not remain excessively concentrated in its traditional European markets and should develop new business linkages with emerging and under-explored destinations. He identified textiles and apparel, home textiles, rice and food products, surgical and medical instruments, sports goods, leather products, furniture, agriculture and food processing, pharmaceuticals, IT and digital services among the sectors that could find greater market opportunities in Eastern Europe.—DNA

Senate body to take up chemicals, dyes sector issues

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla on Thursday assured the chemicals and dyes trade that the sector's key taxation, import, Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) and e-invoicing issues would be taken up at the parliamentary level, with the relevant government departments called in to seek solutions. Speaking at the annual dinner of the Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA) here at a local hotel, Senator Mandviwalla urged the business community to remain engaged with the government and parliament throughout the year instead of approaching policymakers only around the federal budget. The PCDMA annual dinner was attended by Chairman Salim Valimuhammad, Vice Chairman Sharif Feroz, Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue Qazi Hifzur Rehman, Chairman BMG Zubair Motiwala.—APP

Pak substantially completes its CASA-1000 infrastructure

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has substantially completed its infrastructure under the CASA-1000 Electricity Transmission and Trade Project, with work on the converter station reaching 99.7% and the associated electrode station 99.5%. Pakistan has substantially completed infrastructure works under the CASA-1000 Electricity Transmission and Trade Project, with the converter station reaching 99.7% completion and the associated grounding electrode station 99.5%. According to project status document available with Wealth Pakistan, the Pakistan-side works involve construction of a bi-pole ±500kV high-voltage direct-current converter station along with a 66kV grounding electrode station. At the converter station, engineering and design have reached 97%, procurement 100%, civil works 99.9%, installation 99.9%, and testing and commissioning 99%. Overall progress on the converter station stands at 99.7%. The electrode station has also reached an advanced stage, with engineering and design 100% complete. Procurement, civil works, and installation are each 99% complete, while testing and commissioning have reached 98%. Overall progress stands at 99.5%. According to the document, the project has been substantially completed, but full commissioning will remain pending until completion of the Afghanistan transmission line, which is expected in September 2027. Until then, the stations will remain under the care and custody of M/s Hitachi from April 1, 2026, to February 29, 2028. The document states that commercial operations are expected to start from May 1, 2028. However, full system testing and commissioning depend on the availability of the Afghanistan transmission line. The Pakistan component is supported by two World Bank loans. Loan IDA-54090-PK has a total amount of \$120 million, of which \$99.437 million, or 82.86%, has been utilised. The second loan, IDA-64320-PK, amounts to \$65 million, of which \$56.821 million, or 87.41%, has been utilised. The document lists unutilised amounts of \$9.742 million under the first loan and \$5.690 million under the second. Both loans have a closing date of December 31, 2028. The first loan was signed on May 11, 2015, and became effective on January 24, 2018, while the second was signed on November 26, 2019, and became effective on May 15, 2020. With the converter and electrode stations almost complete, Pakistan's remaining project activities are largely linked to testing and commissioning, which cannot be fully undertaken until the Afghanistan transmission segment becomes available.—DNA

Every drop is not safe: why Pakistan needs a water purification revolution

DANEEN SHABBI

Islamabad: For millions of Pakistanis, turning on a tap is supposed to be the simplest act of daily life. Fill a glass, drink, and move on. But behind that apparently ordinary act lies a growing public-health challenge, water may be available, yet it may not be safe. Pakistan's water crisis is often discussed in terms of scarcity, declining groundwater level and increasing demand. But there is another crisis unfolding alongside it: contamination. UNICEF estimates that around 70 percent of households in Pakistan still drink bacterially-contaminated water. The organisation also estimates that poor water and sanitation contribute to the deaths of around 53,000 Pakistani children under five every year from diarrhoeal disease. As the old saying goes, "water is life's matter and matrix, mother and medium". In a country like Pakistan where both Hepatitis A and E are water-borne diseases, and with the National Institute of Health identifying contaminated water and inadequate sanitation as key transmission risks, voices calling for improving water-supply systems to prevent sewage contamination are getting louder. The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the fact that between 14% to 26% of the apparently healthy pediatric population has been found exposed to Hepatitis E. This figure points to a stark reality: clean water is not simply an environmental or infrastructural issue, it is a question of public health, child survival and economic productivity. Pakistan

Council of Research in Water Resources, or PCRWR, identifies a wide range of potential contaminants, including bacteria, E. coli, arsenic, fluoride, nitrates, iron, excessive dissolved solids and other chemicals. Its national monitoring programme has also found that contamination is not confined to one province or one type of water source. PCRWR's assessment of drinking-water sources across 29 cities found 61% of monitored sources unsafe for drinking, with only 39% classified as safe. The major problems included microbiological contamination, total dissolved solids, iron, hardness, turbidity, chlorides, arsenic, nitrates and fluoride. Even though the figures vary considerably from place to place, the message remains the same: water that looks clear is not a defining factor of its purity. Even bottled water is not automatically safe as many claim. According to PCRWR's quarterly monitoring programme, 763 bottled and mineral-water samples that were examined between July 2023 and June 2024, 673 met the applicable safety standards, while more than 80 were classified as unsafe because of contamination. That means approximately 12% of the tested samples were unsafe. The finding underlines an important principle: the word "filtered", "mineral" or "bottled" should not automatically be a go-ahead for purification. Regular independent testing, enforcement of national standards and transparent publication of results are essential. There is no single source for contamination. PCRWR identifies broken or leaking water and sewerage pipelines, cross-connections between water and sewerage systems, leaking underground and overhead tanks, malfunctioning filtration plants and poor maintenance as potential

causes of microbial contamination. Groundwater can also acquire naturally occurring contaminants as it moves through soil and rock. At the same time, agriculture, industry and urban waste can introduce chemicals, pesticides and heavy metals into water sources. This means installing a filtration plant is only one part of the solution. A purification plant without proper maintenance, testing and monitoring can eventually become another weak link in the water-supply chain. Now the real question emerges: what can actually make water safe? The first step must always be testing the water. PCRWR recommends testing for microbiological contamination. Once the contaminant is identified, treatment can be selected accordingly. For microbiological contamination, boiling, chlorination, ultraviolet treatment and other appropriate disinfection methods can be effective. PCRWR advises that boiling can destroy potential pathogens and recommends boiling water continuously for approximately three to four minutes, followed by safe storage. Chlorination is another established method, provided it is correctly dosed and adequate contact time is allowed. Even though these methods can easily be carried out by ordinary households, boiling or chlorination should not be presented as a universal solution. If the problem is arsenic, fluoride, excessive salts or certain heavy metals, a different treatment technology may be required. PCRWR notes that activated-carbon filtration combined with reverse osmosis can help remove TDS, turbidity and various heavy metals, while ultraviolet treatment can be used to kill waterborne bacteria.

Briefs

Trial for accused mastermind of 9/11 attacks set for June 2028

DNA

WASHINGTON: A US Air Force judge on ordered Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the accused mastermind of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, and three co-defendants to go on trial before a military tribunal in June 2028. The trial-scheduling order entered by Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Michael Schrama marked the latest milestone in a military prosecution beset by two decades of legal deadlock surrounding the four detainees held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Last month, a US appeals court refused to allow Mohammed and two of his co-defendants to plead guilty under agreements that would have spared them the death penalty. The appellate decision reversed decisions of a military judge and the US Court of Military Commission Review in support of the plea deal. The agreement had been offered last year and accepted by the official who oversees the Pentagon's Guantanamo war court, only to be revoked last August by then-defense secretary Lloyd Austin amid criticism of the deal from Republican lawmakers.

NA health panel visits PIMS

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Members of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination said on Thursday that the fire at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims), which claimed the lives of 14 infants, may have been caused by a "technical fault". Health Minister Mustafa Kamal had attributed Wednesday's incident to a spark in the air conditioner. But standing committee chairperson Mahesh Kumar Malani told the media in Islamabad on Thursday that "we have to see whether the fire was the result of negligence or a natural cause. It appears that there may have been a technical fault". He added that the source of the fire had yet to be ascertained. "Some said that a spark was caused by an old air conditioner, [but] it had not been working for some time. The other two were portable," he said. Malani said one of the doctors had stated that a spark was caused by a bundle of wires while the nurses said it all happened suddenly.

Russia attacks Kyiv with drones

DNA

KYIV: Russia attacked Kyiv with drones on Thursday, the latest in a series of increasingly frequent daytime assaults on the capital, after strikes across the country wounded around a dozen people, authorities said. More than four years into its invasion of Ukraine, Russia has recently intensified its attacks on the capital, including during the day. AFP journalists in Kyiv heard multiple explosions, with air raid alerts sounding several times Thursday morning. Authorities said one man was wounded in the capital's Golosiivsky district. Social media footage showed huge plumes of smoke rising from one of the sites targeted in the morning attack. Russia also carried out its regular overnight attacks across the country. "The enemy has been attacking the Kyiv region all night with strike drones and ballistic missiles," said the head of the Kyiv region, Tymur Tkachenko, adding that warehouses were targeted. In the northeastern Sumy region, authorities said one person was killed and four others wounded by Russian attacks.

Pakistan, Kuwait sign new pact to expand cooperation

New agreement expands cooperation in training, capacity building border management

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kuwait on Thursday signed a new defence agreement aimed at expanding military cooperation, including training, capacity building and border management between their armed forces. Top officials from the countries signed the "Protocol Agreement-2026" in Islamabad, significantly enhancing the existing military cooperation framework established under the "Defence Cooperation Agreement-2023", the Ministry of Defence said in a statement. The statement mentioned that the agreement was reached as a high-level delegation from Kuwait, led by Minister of Defence Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Saleem Al-Sabah, met his Pakistan counterpart, Khawaja Muhammad Asif. "During the meeting, matters of mutual interest were discussed, with particular focus on bilateral defence relations, security cooperation and further strengthening defence ties between Pakistan and Kuwait," the ministry's statement said. Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif (left) meets Kuwait's Minister of Defence Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Saleem Al-Sabah in Islamabad, on August 27, 2026. — Ministry of Defence. Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif (left) meets Kuwait's Minister of Defence Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Saleem Al-Sabah in Islamabad, on August 27, 2026. — Ministry of Defence. While announcing the new pact, the ministry said that under the new agreement, the Armed Forces of Pakistan will extend assistance to the Armed Forces of Kuwait in diverse fields, including training, capacity building, border management and other mutually



agreed areas of defence collaboration.

"The agreement reflects the deep trust, mutual respect and shared strategic interests underpinning the longstanding defence relationship between the two brotherly countries." It added that both sides reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen this partnership in support of mutual security and regional peace and stability. Before this, the Kuwaiti delegation met Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). Kuwait's Minister of Defence Sheikh Abdullah Al-Saleem Al-Sabah (left) meets Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in Rawalpindi, on August 27, 2026. — ISPR. Kuwait's Minister of Defence Sheikh Abdullah Al-Saleem Al-Sabah (left) meets Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in Rawalpindi, on August 27, 2026. The ISPR said in a statement that the meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, regional security and bilateral defence cooperation. Both sides, it said, reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing institutional ties and expanding mutually beneficial defence collaboration between the two brotherly countries. "The Kuwaiti delegation appreciated the professionalism, operational excellence and valuable contributions of the Pakistan Armed Forces towards regional peace and stability." "The engagement reaffirmed the resolve of Pakistan and Kuwait to further consolidate their historic and brotherly relations into a strong, enduring and mutually beneficial defence partnership, contributing to regional security and stability."

Iraqi Brig. killed in mass shooting

BAGHDAD: Iraqi military personnel and municipal workers came under fire in Baghdad on Thursday as they tried to remove illegal housing structures, leaving a senior officer dead and five other people wounded, an Iraqi security official and state media said.

The security official said the shooting left an army brigadier general dead and wounded a police officer and four municipal workers in Baghdad's southern district of Dora. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. Police and armed forces sealed off the area, while the Baghdad Operations Commander went to the scene to monitor the situation, the security official said. The state news agency also reported that a brigadier general was killed and several municipal workers were wounded in the shooting, adding that Baghdad's municipality acted after receiving legal orders to remove the illegal structures. The southern neighborhood of Dora consists of large agricultural areas where illegal construction is not uncommon. — APP

Another former Malaysian PM faces criminal charge

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian former Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob was charged Thursday with failing to declare his assets, making him the nation's third leader to face criminal charges after leaving office. Ismail, 66, pleaded not guilty to a charge under the anti-graft law that alleged he failed to provide a complete declaration of assets following a notice from the anti-corruption agency in January 2025. The charge sheet lists large amounts of cash in Malaysian and foreign currencies, as well as gold and silver. If convicted, Ismail faces up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to 100,000 ringgit (\$24,810). Ismail, the country's ninth leader, unexpectedly became prime minister without a general election after emerging as a consensus figure during a turbulent political period. He was the shortest-serving leader, leading for only 15 months from August 2021 to November 2022. After leaving office, Ismail has been questioned multiple times by anti-graft officials for possible misconduct involving millions of dollars spent on government publicity during his tenure. The anti-graft agency has also seized gold bars and some \$40 million in cash from properties linked to him. His indictment followed that of his two predecessors. — APP

Finance Minister, Asyad Group CEO discuss investment expansion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Mr. Ghassan Ahmed Amodi, Chief Executive Officer, Asyad Group, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Chairperson, Wafi Energy Pakistan Limited Board of Directors, accompanied by Mr. Javaid Akhtar, Group CFO, Asyad Group and Board Member, Wafi Energy Pakistan Limited; Mr. Zubair Shaikh, CEO, Wafi Energy Pakistan Limited; and Mr. Imran Husain Qureshi, Corporate & Government Relations Director, Wafi Energy Pakistan Limited. The meeting focused on the Group's existing investment portfolio in Pakistan, plans for further expansion, and opportunities to undertake new investments across key sectors, including those arising from the Government's broader privatization efforts. Mr. Amodi reaffirmed Asyad Group's commitment to Pakistan as a long-term investment destination and expressed satisfaction with its experience in the country. He highlighted Pakistan's importance within the Group's investment portfolio outside Saudi Arabia and shared plans to further expand its presence in Pakistan. The Finance Minister welcomed the continued interest of Saudi investors in Pakistan and highlighted new opportunities being opened through the ongoing privatization process. He emphasized the importance of attracting credible, long-term investors and facilitating commercially viable investments across key sectors. He also highlighted the importance of multidimensional engagement with Saudi Arabia and the private sector in advancing investment, trade and economic cooperation. Mr. Amodi briefed the Finance Minister on Asyad Group's interest in participating in the upcoming airport privatization process and its efforts to bring together Saudi and international partners with relevant technical expertise.

CM Maryam orders safety audit of hospitals after Pims tragedy

Punjab chief minister directs authorities to conduct fresh audit of public sector health facilities within 24 hours

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the administration and hospital authorities to conduct a fresh audit of public sector health facilities within 24 hours and submit a report on the findings. According to a letter issued by the Chief Minister Office, the Punjab government has issued priority instructions for public sector health facilities across the province, ordering an immediate review of fire safety arrangements, emergency exits and firefighting equipment. The development comes after at least 14 infants died in the gynaecology ward fire incident at Pims hospital in Islamabad. The provincial government has directed deputy commissioners to check the availability and functionality of fire extinguishers and other firefighting arrangements at public hospitals and health facilities. They have also been asked to assess the accessibility and suitability of emergency exits in consultation with Rescue 1122 teams. The instructions also call for Rescue 1122 to review the availability and functionality of hydrant points and identify locations where new hydrants are needed near health facilities. Relevant departments have been given one week to carry out necessary rectification and installation work.



Death toll rises to over 300 Rescuers search for survivors after devastating Nepal floods

Nearly 1,500 people, including more than 700 foreigners, missing across Nepal and China's Tibet, say authorities

TRISHULI, BEIJING: Rescuers in Nepal used helicopters on Thursday to scour for hundreds still missing after a wall of mud and rock collapsed into a river on the Himalayan border with China's Tibet, sending catastrophic floods through towns and valleys, killing over 300. Nearly 1,500 people, including more than 700 foreigners, are missing across Nepal and China's Tibet, authorities said on Thursday. "This will go up, as we have resumed the search and more bodies are expected to be recovered," police spokesperson Abi Narayan Kafle told. Almost 500 foreigners were among 826 people missing in Nepal, police and tourism officials said. Among the missing tourists from more than two dozen countries, 177 were from India, 63 were from the United States, 34 from Australia, 33 from Britain and 25 from Canada. Malaysia's foreign ministry said 55 nationals were uncontactable but there was no official confirmation of casualties. The tally of missing in Tibet's Gyirong county was 558, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said on Thursday, including 260 foreign nationals. China said the death toll stayed at three. More than 400 foreigners were among 579 tourists missing, Nepal tourism officials said, after the disaster swept a region thronged by trekkers and pilgrims, while police said they expected the death toll to rise beyond 162. Verified videos showed crushing masses of water and debris sweeping away dozens of people at a border crossing in Gyirong, with homes, roads and power projects washed away further downstream in Nepal. "It was a huge gush of mud coming straight towards us, said Keshav Prasad Baral, a 68-year-old survivor, being treated in hospital. "As it got closer, it kept rising higher and higher. When I saw it enter our home, I tried to grab my wife's hand and take her to the terrace. But she was swept away by the mud." A helicopter ferried him to safety four hours later.

"My wife is still somewhere beneath the mud," he added. "She's gone." Another survivor said he saved himself by clinging to a mango tree as he watched the house where he had been working disappear. In the hardest-hit districts, helicopters are dropping tents, food and other emergency supplies provided by neighbouring India, said Raja Ram Basnet, a spokesperson for Nepal's army. Early reports from Nepali officials suggested an earthquake in the area could have caused the The US Geological Survey said an earthquake with magnitude initially reported as 4.4 was in fact seismic energy generated by the collapse of glacial rock and ice, followed by debris flow. Many of the victims were making a pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar, a high-altitude site in Tibet revered by Hindus and Buddhists among others. Mount Kailash, which Hindus believe to be the abode of Lord Shiva, lies on the banks of Lake Mansarovar, also held sacred in various religions. The US State Department said it was sending a disaster response adviser and providing assistance of \$500,000. Canada was also closely following the situation, Prime Minister Mark Carney said on X, describing the floods as "absolutely devastating". UN teams and partners were sending supplies and personnel to support affected Nepali communities, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. China's state broadcaster tallied three deaths and 265 missing in Gyirong, but added the toll was still being verified amid the rescue effort. Thirty-four Australians were among the missing, said Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. "Nepal ... is a developing country," he said. "It doesn't have the resources that an event like that would have in Australia, so information is difficult." South Korea said eight nationals working on a hydropower plant were missing, with Malaysia and Japan also reporting some missing nationals. — Agencies

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