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Uzbekistan all agog to have closer links with Pak, says envoy

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Italian envoy visits Walled City Lahore

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DPM Ishaq Dar arrives in Türkiye for negotiations

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Briefs

CDF Munir, Dar arrive in Türkiye

DNA

ISTANBUL: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar arrived in Türkiye on Sunday, where Pakistani, Turkish and Saudi officials are set to hold a meeting tomorrow under their trilateral defence pact. Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a brief statement issued in the evening, said CDF Munir arrived "in Türkiye on an official visit". Meanwhile, the Foreign Office (FO) earlier in the day said Dar, who is also the foreign minister, reached Istanbul after concluding his visit to the United Kingdom. The Turkish foreign ministry confirmed that the first meeting of the "Strategic Political and Defence Committee" established under the defence pact will be held in Istanbul on August 31 (Monday). On its side, Türkiye said its Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Defence Minister Yasir Guler and Chief of Turkish General Staff Gen Selcuk Bayraktaroglu will participate in the meeting. While FO did not share specific details of Dar's visit — saying "official engagements" were on his itinerary — the Turkish ministry said "officials" from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were to attend the meeting. Upon his arrival in Istanbul, Dar was received by Turkish Deputy Chief of Staff for Administration Brig. General Senol Varol, Pakistan's Ambassador to Türkiye Dr Yousaf Junaid, Ambassador Cihad Erginay of the Turkish foreign ministry, and other senior officials of the Turkish government, the FO said.

Blast kills three brothers in Balochistan

QUETTA: Three brothers were killed and one of their relatives was injured in a blast caused by an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Duki district of Balochistan on Sunday, police said. Duki Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mansoor Ahmed Buzdar said the blast occurred while a pick-up truck was crossing a seasonal stream near the Kili Bakhtair Khan area of Luni tehsil. "Three brothers and one of their relatives were travelling in a pick-up on their way to their agricultural land in the area when they met the fatal incident," SSP Buzdar said, adding three brothers were killed on the spot while their relative was injured in the blast. He said the blast was caused by a remote-controlled IED planted by unidentified miscreants. Soon after the blast, police and security personnel reached the site and shifted the bodies and injured to the district headquarters hospital, he said, adding that the pick-up truck was destroyed in the incident. Police said an investigation into the incident was underway. The incident took place against the backdrop of near-constant terrorist activity and lawlessness in Balochistan. On August 27, four terrorists belonging to Fina-al-Hindistan — the term the state has designated for Balochistan-based groups to highlight India's role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan — were killed in the Sasool area of Balochistan's Khuzdar district, the military said. Days earlier, on August 22, a security official embraced martyrdom and six others sustained injuries in a roadside bomb explosion in the Khad Kocha area of the province's Mastung district. — APP

Germany edges Spain 2-1 to claim World Cup crown

With the Asian Games looming next month, urgency surrounds the national setup. Observers and analysts note that a strong podium finish, or even capturing the gold by defeating India, remains attainable if the Pakistan team addresses its glaring structural flaws

SPORTS DESK / DNA

BRUSSELS: Germany crowned a stellar campaign at the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup by edging past Spain 2-1 in a gripping final to lift their fourth World Cup title. The summit clash at the Belfius Hockey Arena delivered a masterclass in tactical discipline, where the run of play told a contrasting story. Spain dominated large phases of the encounter, playing fluid, high-tempo hockey and carving out ample scoring chances. However, their failure to convert dominance into goals proved costly. Germany, true to their trademark efficiency, capitalized on the few opportunities that came their way, ruthlessly converting to secure the trophy. With this triumph, Germany matches historical milestones, echoing past eras of dominance where powerhouses like Pakistan historically claimed four World Cup titles. Earlier in the day, the bronze medal match saw Argentina pull off a dramatic 2-1 victory over tournament co-hosts the Netherlands. A breathtaking late winner

by veteran Matias Rey in the 59th minute broke Dutch hearts and sealed a well-earned podium finish for Los Leones. While European hockey continues to set the benchmark on the global stage, the tournament's conclusion triggers heavy introspection for nations further down the rankings, particularly Pakistan. Currently sitting 12th in the FIH world rankings—several places behind arch-rivals India, who occupy the No. 8 spot—Pakistan faces a crucial reality check. With the Asian Games looming next month, urgency surrounds the national setup. Observers and analysts note that a strong podium finish, or even capturing the gold by defeating India, remains attainable if the team addresses its glaring structural flaws. Most critically, the goalkeeping department has been labeled entirely redundant, exposing an urgent need to scout and groom a reliable custodian under the bar. Furthermore, questions loom over the long-term coaching staff, with critics pointing to the current setup as ineffective and calling for an immediate overhaul to bring in visionary leadership capable of steering the team back to its former glory.

AJK PM pledges swift restoration of internet services

AJK's entry and exit routes will be fully restored in 48 hours, says Barrister Iftikhar Gilani

BUREAU REPORT

MUZZAFARABAD: Newly elected Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Barrister Iftikhar Gilani has announced plans to restore internet services across the region within two days. Addressing the media during his first visit to the Central Press Club after taking office, he said that internet connectivity will be restored in a phased manner, with educational institutions receiving priority access in the initial phase, according to The News. The AJK premier said that AJK's entry and exit routes will also be fully restored in 48 hours. Internet and cellular services were suspended earlier this year after protests by the banned Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) demanding the abolition of 12 refugee seats in the AJK Assembly turned violent. The AJK government later banned JAAC, declaring it a proscribed organisation under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). Meanwhile, PM Gilani highlighted good governance and the Kashmir freedom movement as the primary focus areas of his administration. He pledged swift action to resolve public issues, improve administrative efficiency and guarantee essential civic facilities. Gilani, a leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), was sworn in as

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Imran sons can come to Pakistan any time: Asif

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday said that PTI founder Imran Khan's sons — Qasim and Sulaiman Khan — could visit Pakistan "today if they wished", citing the validity of their National Identity Cards for Overseas Pakistanis (Nicop). The government has consistently maintained that Imran's children can enter the country based on their Nicops with no visa required. However, the sons claimed earlier this month that their Nicops have expired and accused the government of denying them visas. In a post on social media platform X, the defence minister recalled that the ex-premier's sons had last travelled to Pakistan on their Nicops in November 2022, when the PTI founder got injured in an assassination attempt. "They can visit Pakistan today if they wish. Both Nicops are valid," Asif stated.

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ISTANBUL: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting with H.E. Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, in Istanbul. — DNA

PM, Nawaz hold 2nd meeting

DNA

LAHORE: Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and incumbent Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif convened their second meeting in Lahore during the second week of the month. According to party sources, the two leaders discussed the prevailing political situation and deliberated on possible courses of action should Imran Khan be shifted to hospital. The meeting was described as part of ongoing consultations within the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership to assess future strategy. Both leaders reportedly emphasized the need for unity within the party ranks and agreed to continue regular consultations in the coming weeks.

New PIMS Chief assures quick action

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed executive director of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) on Sunday pledged measures to prevent a recurrence of the incident that claimed the lives of 14 infants. Speaking to the media after assuming charge, Dr Muhammad Salman said that the administration will try to resolve all issues based on the inquiry committee's report. Dr Salman took charge as the Pims executive director after the government suspended several officials following the deadly fire at the hospital's gynaecology

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Union is strength

Iran's supreme leader urges Gulf rulers to unite against plots

Mojtaba specifically asked Gulf Arab rulers whether "rogues without identity" would have dared to covet their lands and possessions if the peoples and governments of the Gulf had been "united under the flag of Islam"

6 months on, Iran's leaders are defying the US

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei urged Muslim countries, particularly those in the Gulf, to unite against what he called their "real enemy" and said divisions among Muslims served the interests of their adversaries. The message was published on Mojtaba's Telegram account for Islamic Unity Week, which marks the birth anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It called for Muslim unity, cooperation in various fields and mutual defence, saying anyone who creates divisions among Muslims, "knowingly or unknowingly," helps Islam's enemies. "And how, in these times, can anyone attribute such an act to ignorance or negligence, when the tyrants of the world, led by the criminal US, have now cast aside the deceptive and flimsy masks concealing their ugly colonial aims and their hegemonic and domination-seeking schemes, removed their deceptive velvet gloves, and revealed their bloodstained claws to the entire world?" the supreme leader said, according to Iran's Press TV. He asked whether Palestinians would have been left "so helpless" and "subjected to the oppression and crimes of the occupiers" if Muslims had been united. Mojtaba has not been seen in public since the start of the US-Israeli war on Iran, in which his father, the previous supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Mojtaba, was assassinated. His call for unity echoes a statement he made on Friday to

DUBAI: After six months of war, Iran's leadership has coalesced around a hard core of military generals and clerics long entrenched in the ruling theocracy. They are ready for a potentially long confrontation with the US and determined to prevent any unrest at home. It's a far cry from US President Donald Trump's initial hopes of toppling the Islamic Republic and his subsequent claims that "regime change" had brought more compromising officials to the fore. Iran's new leaders evince little faith in any agreement with Trump — after coming under attack twice while holding talks — and they may be bracing for another assault once the US replenishes its supplies of interceptors. They have also threatened to escalate the war as a continuing American blockade and Trump's plans for new sanctions threaten to suffocate Iran's already worsening economy.

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Pakistan and Saudi Arabia target \$3B agri-food export goal

Reaffirming fraternal ties established in 1947, both nations highlighted the strong alignment between Saudi Vision 2030 food security goals and Pakistan's agricultural export capabilities

SAIFULLAH ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has spearheaded a major breakthrough in Pakistan-Saudi Arabia agricultural cooperation following high-level bilateral negotiations in Islamabad from August 26 to 28, 2026. Driven by the Prime Minister's personal initiative, the successful talks between Saudi Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture His Excellency Engineer Abdulrahman A. Al-Fadley and Pakistan's Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research His Excellency Rana Tanveer Hussain culminated in a comprehensive Joint Statement aimed at elevating food security and trade partnerships. The Saudi delegation, which included key officials from the General Food Security Authority and related institutions, met directly with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss strategic collaboration. The Pakistani delegation featured Commerce Secretary Jawad Paul, National Food Security Secretary Amir Ali Ahmed, Prime Minister's Coordinator on Agriculture Ahmad Umair, and key leaders from Pakistan's private sector across the rice, red meat, processed food, fruit concentrate, and green fodder industries. During the three-day visit,

the delegation received briefings on the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Agriculture and Food Strategic Plan, held sessions with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Fauji Foundation, and the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Agribusiness Forum, and visited the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC). Reaffirming fraternal ties established in 1947, both nations highlighted the strong alignment between Saudi Vision 2030 food security goals and Pakistan's agricultural export capabilities. The two countries set a target to increase Pakistan's agri-food exports to Saudi Arabia to USD 3 billion over the next two years. Priority focus areas include rice, red meat, fruits, green fodder, and water-efficient farming technologies. Trade data reviewed during the summit highlighted that Pakistan supplied 169,000 metric tons of rice worth USD 163 million to Saudi Arabia in 2025, with Saudi Arabia seeking to expand these volumes further. In red meat, where Pakistan currently supplies 30,000 metric tons annually valued at USD 167 million, the Saudi delegation expressed interest in doubling imports. Both sides also agreed to boost Pakistani fruit exports through business matchmaking and mutual recognition of quality standards. Saudi Arabia recognized

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KP govt to expand skills recognition programme

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to extend the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme to all districts to provide skilled workers with formal recognition and certification of their existing expertise and improve their access to employment opportunities. The initiative is aimed at bridging the gap between informal skills and the formal labour market by assessing workers' prior experience and competencies. The certification is expected to enhance the employability and professional mobility of skilled individuals at both national and international levels. Provincial Minister for Labour Faisal Khan Turki during a visit to the Government Monotechnic Institute Gadoon Amazai on Sunday said that technical and vocational education was essential for promoting self-reliance and dignified employment. He urged the skilled people to register with relevant skills development programmes so they could benefit from assessment, certification, training and better job opportunities. The minister reviewed the RPL initiative and interacted with trainees and students. More than 500 students, trainees and staff members attended the event. Certificates were distributed among successful RPL trainees, while high-achieving students of the DIT programme received awards for securing first, second and third positions. The three-day RPL training programme provided training to male and female participants through professional trainers from Shah Rukh Shehroz Academy. —APP

‘Nurses, an integral part of healthcare’

LAHORE: Ameer-ud-Din Medical College (AMC) Principal Prof. Dr. Muhammad Farooq Afzal said that nurses were an integral part of health sector and regular training workshops were essential to enhance their professional skills in accordance with modern medical requirements. He expressed these views during a meeting with DMS Nursing Dr. Sundus Tahir and Acting Deputy Chief Nursing Superintendent (DCNS) of Lahore General Hospital (LGH), Saima Fateh, at his office on Sunday. Prof. Farooq Afzal said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was taking revolutionary steps to ensure the provision of the best medical facilities to patients in hospitals. He said nurses constituted the backbone of every healthcare system and their continuous professional training was vital for strengthening their capabilities and expertise. During the meeting, DMS Nursing Dr. Sundus Tahir gave a detailed briefing on the operations and performance of the hospital's Day Care Centre. Acting DCNS Saima Fateh apprised the Principal about the daily working of nursing staff, duty rosters and issues being faced by them. Prof. Farooq Afzal assured the nursing administration that all official and administrative problems of nurses would be resolved on a priority basis to enable them to perform their duties without mental stress. —APP

Ethiopian coffee makes debut in Islamabad

The Ambassador noted that the cafe's ownership by an Ethiopian-Pakistani couple adds further significance to the initiative, reflecting the growing fraternity between the two nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Oumer Hussien Oba, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, inaugurated the first-ever Ethiopian coffee cafe in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Sunday. The inauguration was preceded by a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony which held in the presence of the Ethiopian community, Embassy staff, and representatives of the media. Following the ceremony, the Ambassador held an interactive session with the media, highlighting the growing bilateral re-

CDA seals 3 buildings over fire safety violations

Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf has directed the concerned formations of CDA to adopt a zero tolerance approach towards serious fire safety violations and ensure strict compliance with safety standards

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), in line with the decision of the government conveyed through Secretary MOI has intensified enforcement of fire and life safety standards across Islamabad, making it clear that the protection of precious human lives will remain the CDA's top most priority. In a significant enforcement action, the CDA has sealed Shaheed-e-Millat Secretariat, State Life Building and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan Building in Blue Area Islamabad following non compliance with fire safety observations issued by the CDA's Fire & Emergency Services Directorate CDA as earlier which they have not been complied. The action has been taken in accordance with the prescribed safety requirements and reflects CDA's firm commitment to ensuring that buildings provide a safe environment for employees, visitors and the general public. Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf has directed the concerned formations of CDA to adopt a zero tolerance approach towards serious fire safety violations and ensure strict compliance with safety standards. He has emphasized that no building, institution or organization can be permitted to compromise the lives and safety of people by ignoring essential fire prevention and emergency response requirements. The CDA's Fire & Emergency Services Directorate has been conducting inspections of buildings to identify deficiencies relating to fire prevention, emergency exits, firefighting arrangements, evacuation preparedness and other essential life safety measures. Building Control Section of CDS has been advised to rectify identified deficiencies within the prescribed timeframe. The sealing of the two buildings demonstrates that CDA's fire safety campaign is not merely an inspection exercise but a practical enforcement initiative aimed at preventing avoidable loss of life and property. Buildings failing to comply with mandatory safety requirements will face action in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf has further directed the relevant departments to maintain close monitoring of fire safety compliance and ensure that safety observations are followed by effective corrective measures. The objective is to develop a strong culture of prevention, preparedness and responsibility throughout Islamabad. CDA has urged all govern-



ment departments, public sector organizations, commercial establishments, private building owners and managements to immediately review their fire safety arrangements and ensure full compliance with the prescribed standards. The Chairman CDA has reiterated that fire safety is a collective responsibility. Timely installation and maintenance of firefighting equipment, clear emergency exits, proper evacuation arrangements and compliance with safety protocols can save lives during an emergency. The ongoing enforcement drive is part

of CDA's broader efforts to transform Islamabad into a safe, secure, modern and well managed capital, where public safety, quality infrastructure and effective governance remain central to urban management. CDA has made it clear that while every opportunity will be provided to building administrations to rectify deficiencies, continued non compliance with essential fire and life safety requirements will not be tolerated. Protection of human lives is the first and foremost responsibility. No compromise will be made on fire and life safety.

Punjab to get AI-powered multi-disease scanner

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has decided to introduce an AI-powered multi-disease scanner in Punjab as part of efforts to modernize healthcare services and facilitate faster and more effective screening and diagnosis of diseases. The chief minister was given a detailed briefing on the advanced technology during a meeting with executives of the Chinese technology company Alibaba, said a handout issued here on Sunday. She took keen interest in the proposed AI-powered scanning solution and directed the health authorities to prepare a pilot project for its introduction in Punjab. The AI-powered multi-disease

screening solution, based on non-contrast CT technology, has the potential to screen for multiple diseases within around two minutes. The system could assist healthcare professionals in disease screening, detection, diagnosis, treatment planning and subsequent management. According to the briefing, the technology could facilitate early screening and detection of several serious diseases, including pancreatic, liver, gastric, esophageal and colorectal cancers. It can also support assessment of cardiovascular disease risks and help evaluate muscle and body-fat composition. The system could further assist in the assessment of osteoporosis and fatty liver

disease, offering additional diagnostic information that can support timely medical intervention. The AI-powered technology was intended to complement rather than replace conventional diagnostic procedures, providing healthcare professionals with an additional tool to accelerate the diagnostic process and improve early identification of potential health conditions. The CM directed the relevant health authorities to formulate the pilot project and take necessary steps for its implementation in Punjab. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif emphasized the importance of harnessing modern technology and artificial intelligence to improve healthcare delivery. —APP

PPSC announces written exam results

LAHORE: The Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) has announced the written examination results for posts in the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department and the Board of Revenue Punjab. According to the PPSC, 11 candidates have been provisionally shortlisted for document verification after appearing in the written examination for one post of System Analyst in the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department. Meanwhile, five candidates have been provisionally cleared for interview for one post of Assistant Network Admin in the Board of Revenue Punjab's Provincial Disaster Management Authority. For two posts of Assistant IT in the Board of Revenue Punjab's Provincial Disaster Management Authority, 11 candidates have been provisionally cleared for interview. —APP

CDWP okays 5 uplift projects under Uraan Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives/Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday chaired a meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) that approved five development projects worth Rs60.259 billion. The forum okayed three projects valued at Rs11.714 billion and recommended two major projects worth Rs 48.545 billion to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for consideration, a news release said. The projects form part of the government's development and reform agenda under Uraan Pakistan, aimed at strengthening human capital, mod-

ernizing infrastructure and governance, and promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The CDWP approved the revised project for the Establishment of Medical & Nursing College at Gilgit, worth Rs4.924 billion. While reviewing the project, Ahsan Iqbal stressed the need to expand medical and nursing education opportunities in remote and underserved areas to develop a skilled local healthcare workforce and improve healthcare delivery in rural and mountainous communities. He directed that the project be completed at the earliest, noting that it had been initiated in 2017 and faced delays due to inadequate funding. The forum also approved the

Establishment of National Defence University (NDU) FCS Campus at Defence Complex Islamabad (DCI) at a cost of Rs2.753 billion. Ahsan Iqbal directed the relevant authorities to collaborate with the Planning Commission on research aligned with national development goals, including achieving a \$1 trillion economy and \$100 billion in exports by 2035, and to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in this regard. He also directed that Planning Ministry staff be included in relevant training programmes for capacity building, stressing that universities should provide evidence-based solutions to national challenges through high-quality research. —APP

Equipping youth with skills to priority : Mashhood

LAHORE: Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said that party workers were a valuable asset and the government was making concerted efforts to provide youth across the country with opportunities in education, technical training, entrepreneurship, startups and employment under the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Addressing Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) workers in PP-172 constituency, here on Sunday, he said he was fully aware of the issues faced by the people of the constituency and was working round the clock for their resolution and completion of development projects. He said the party's organizational structure, including its Youth, Labour, Lawyers, Traders and Women wings, had been empowered at the union council level, while coordinators appointed for various departments were maintaining continuous liaison to identify and resolve public issues. PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood said climate change had become a serious threat to the entire region, with extreme heat, melting glaciers, cloudbursts and unusual rainfall creating new challenges. He said recent floods along the China-Nepal border were also an example of the impacts of climate change. Discussing electricity-related issues, he said the increased demand during extreme heat was placing additional pressure on the power system. A complete record of transformers replaced in Lahore, particularly in PP-172, was being compiled to keep the public informed about the work being undertaken, he added. He said work was continuing on roads, streets, sewerage, electricity and gas-related issues in the constituency. In UC-93, 146 roads had been provided with sewerage systems and inaugurated after completion. The chairman said providing dignified employment to youth was a major challenge, which was why special attention was being given to skills development and employment generation. A technical education institution in Sabzazar was expected to become operational by December or January after delays due to departmental matters. He said arrangements were being made to train at least 2,000 youth from his constituency within six months and facilitate employment opportunities, including overseas employment. With private-sector collaboration, the institution would target training 10,000 students within six months. Chairman Rana Mashhood announced the provision of seven dialysis machines at Rana Abdul Rahim Hospital in Sodiwal and four additional machines at Haji Ibrahim Hospital. —DNA



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Pakistanis owing to their deep reverence for Hazrat Bilal Habashi (R.A.) and the King Nejashi who gave shelter to the earliest Muslim migrants during the First Hijra. Reaffirming his commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation, the Ambassador underscored the importance of strengthening people-to-people ties between the two countries through increased cultural exchange. Mr. Naem Hashmi, the owner of the cafe, said through Habasha, we want to create a space that brings Pakistan and Ethiopia closer together, a platform where both nations can share and discover each other's art, culture, music and tourism.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey
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Aug 31/Kyrgyz
Republic
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia
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Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

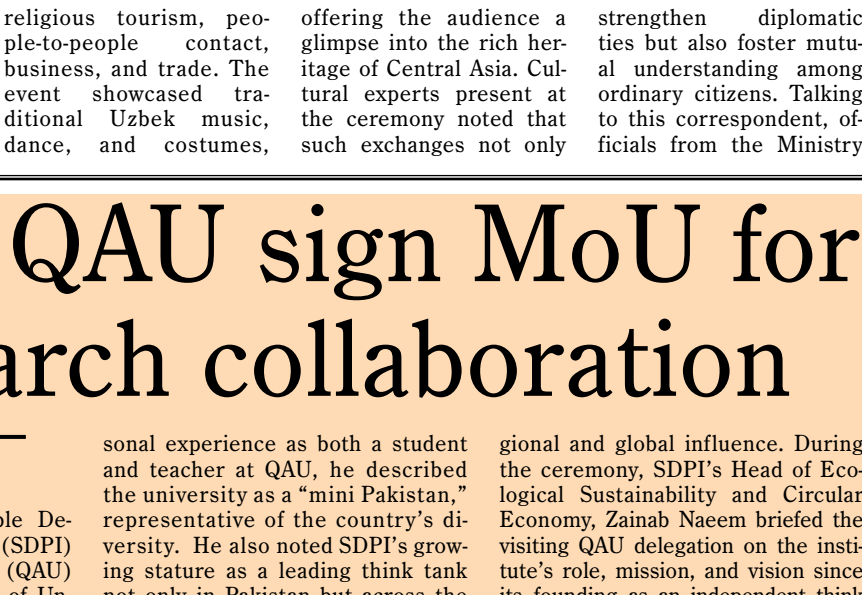
Melodies of Friendship and Brotherhood

Uzbek cultural troupe presents a spell-binding performance

The Culture minister noted that both countries share deep cultural and historical connections, pointing to similarities in language, cuisine, traditions, and religious heritage; Uzbek ambassador describes Pakistan and Uzbekistan as “brotherly nations” with many similarities

SAIFULLAH ANSAR/
DNA

ISLAMABAD: A vibrant performance by an Uzbek cultural troupe in Islamabad drew praise from dignitaries and highlighted the growing cultural ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Federal Minister for Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi spoke on the occasion, commending the troupe's performance and stressing the importance of strengthening bilateral relations. He said Pakistan values its ties with Uzbekistan and looks forward to diversifying them further. The minister noted that both countries share deep cultural and historical connections, pointing to similarities in language, cuisine, traditions, and religious heritage. “Our peoples are bound together by shared words, flavors, and faith. These commonalities make our relationship unique and enduring,” he remarked. Ambassador of Uzbekistan Alisher Tukhtaev also addressed the gathering, expressing his country's keen interest in making Uzbek culture better understood in Pakistan. He described Pakistan and Uzbekistan as “brotherly nations” with many similarities, and emphasized that cooperation between the two countries is expanding with each passing day. The ambassador highlighted areas of collaboration including culture, religious tourism, people-to-people contact, business, and trade. The event showcased traditional Uzbek music, dance, and costumes, offering the audience a glimpse into the rich heritage of Central Asia. Cultural experts present at the ceremony noted that such exchanges not only strengthen diplomatic ties but also foster mutual understanding among ordinary citizens. Talking to this correspondent, officials from the Ministry of Culture underscored that Pakistan is committed to expanding cultural diplomacy as a means of enhancing regional co-operation. They pointed out that initiatives like joint performances, exhibitions, and tourism projects can serve as bridges between nations. The performance was attended by government officials, diplomats, artists, and members of the public, all of whom lauded the troupe's artistry and the spirit of friendship it represented.



SDPI, QAU sign MoU for research collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at deepening academic-policy collaboration in research, capacity building, and knowledge exchange. SDPI, QAU sign MoU to strengthen research, policy collaboration. The agreement was formally signed by Dr. Shafqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director (Policy) at SDPI, and the Head of QAU's School of Economics, marking a new chapter in the longstanding relationship between the two institutions, said a press release issued on Saturday Speaking at the signing ceremony, Dr. Shafqat Munir welcomed the collaboration, calling it a significant and special occasion. He recalled the enduring ties between SDPI and Quaid-i-Azam University, noting that both institutions enjoy strong standing at the national level. Drawing on his personal experience as both a student and teacher at QAU, he described the university as a “mini Pakistan,” representative of the country's diversity. He also noted SDPI's growing stature as a leading think tank not only in Pakistan but across the Asia-Pacific region and globally. Dr. Munir underlined the importance of expanding cooperation between the two institutions, particularly in research, policy development, and knowledge exchange. He praised QAU's contributions in economics, political science, and international affairs, and said the partnership had strong potential to bridge the gap between academic research and practical policymaking. He expressed hope that the MoU would help deepen the historic friendship and cooperation between SDPI and the university. He also shared that SDPI has been elected, for the third consecutive time, as chair of the South Asia Climate Action Network, part of the wider Climate Action Network International, a reflection, he said, of the institute's growing regional and global influence. During the ceremony, SDPI's Head of Ecological Sustainability and Circular Economy, Zainab Naeem briefed the visiting QAU delegation on the institute's role, mission, and vision since its founding as an independent think tank. She outlined SDPI's three core areas of work, research, advocacy, and capacity building, spanning policy advisory services, evidence-based research, public education, and local-to-global dialogue platforms. She also highlighted SDTV, Pakistan's first digital platform of its kind, along with the institute's international partnerships. Ms. Naeem detailed SDPI's key research themes, including environment and climate change, resilience and systems analysis, and economic growth and development. She spoke about specialized units such as the Centre for Evidence and Policy Research, the Centre for Learning and Development, and the Network for Clean Energy Transition, as well as data initiatives including Data for Development, the Alif Ailaan Data Repository, and the Sub-national Level Resource Mobilization (SLRM) programme.

PM&DC concludes national medical edu workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has concluded a three-day national workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of medical and dental institutions. The workshop was arranged to design and implement a credible, sustainable and quality-assured Continuing Medical Education/Continuing Professional Development (CME/CPD) system. The workshop, titled Designing High-Impact CME/CPD: From Concept to Completion, brought together institutional leaders, medical educationists, faculty members and representatives of medical and dental institutions from across the country. Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage and Culture Ms Farah Naz Akbar attended the closing ceremony as chief guest, along with PM&DC President Prof Dr Rizwan Taj, Registrar Brig Dr Rehan Naqvi, faculty members, participants and senior officials. Addressing the ceremony, Prof Dr Rizwan Taj highlighted the importance of CME/CPD in ensuring that healthcare professionals remain abreast of developments in medical science and clinical practice. He said PM&DC was committed to developing a CME/CPD system aligned with international best practices and aimed at ensuring that Pakistani doctors and dentists remain among the most up-to-date healthcare professionals in terms of knowledge, skills and professional practice. The PM&DC president also appreciated Dr Natasha of Aga Khan University, who served as facilitator throughout the workshop, for her expertise and contribution to guiding participants on effective CME/CPD design, implementation and evaluation. Chief Guest Farah Naz Akbar appreciated PM&DC's initiative and commended Prof Dr Rizwan Taj for his vision and leadership in strengthening the regulatory framework for medical and dental education and professional development. Registrar Brig Dr Rehan Naqvi acknowledged the leadership of the PM&DC president and highlighted key milestones achieved by the Council during his tenure. He said the CME/CPD initiative represented another important step towards strengthening professional standards and promoting continuous learning among registered medical and dental practitioners. The workshop covered the complete CME/CPD cycle, including identification of professional practice gaps and educational needs, development of measurable learning objectives, educational design, integrity and independence, outcome evaluation, governance, documentation, monitoring and quality assurance. Participants welcomed the practical approach of the workshop and expressed interest in continued engagement with PM&DC and similar capacity-building initiatives. PM&DC said the initiative was part of its broader efforts to establish a transparent, credible and internationally aligned CME/CPD framework aimed at supporting lifelong learning, professional competence, improved patient care and greater global recognition of Pakistani medical and dental professionals.

ADRC amicably resolve disputes

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza said the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC) is helping citizens settle disputes through dialogue and mutual understanding while saving their time and resources and strengthening trust between police and the public. He expressed these views while addressing the annual ceremony of the ADRC in Islamabad as the chief guest. An official told media on Sunday that the ceremony was attended by senior police officers, ADRC Chairman Tayyab Nawaz Malik, committee members and representatives of civil society. Qazi said the ADRC provided an effective platform for the peaceful settlement of citizens' disputes, with mutual understanding, dialogue and consensus forming the basis of its dispute-resolution mechanism. He said the committee offered citizens an accessible way to resolve disputes amicably instead of allowing disagreements to prolong and consume their valuable time and resources. The SSP Qazi said the ADRC was also helping strengthen police-public trust by bringing different segments of society together to address citizens' concerns. He said peaceful settlement of disputes promoted tolerance, brotherhood and positive social attitudes, contributing to greater harmony within society. Qazi described the ADRC as an effective example of community policing and public service, where police, community representatives and other stakeholders worked together to resolve issues through dialogue. He appreciated the efforts of ADRC Chairman Tayyab Nawaz Malik and committee members and expressed the hope that the committee would continue playing an effective role in dispute resolution and community service. The SSP reiterated that Islamabad Police remained committed to providing citizens with timely, accessible and dignified services, adding that measures to strengthen community policing and facilitate peaceful settlement of public disputes would continue.—APP

India's move to hold IWT in abeyance breaches int'l law

ISLAMABAD: Legal experts, diplomats and international researchers have warned that India's decision to hold the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance constitute a breach of international law and pose serious threats to regional stability and security. The experts expressed these views during a webinar titled “Violation of the Indus Waters Treaty by India”, organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) here Sunday. The panelists cautioned that the move, announced in the wake of the Pahalgam attack and reinforced by the closure of the Baglihar Dam's sluiced gates on the Chenab River, amounts to the weaponisation of water and sets a dangerous precedent for transboundary rivers across South Asia. According to figures cited during the session, the closure sharply reduced Chenab flows into Pakistan at the Marala measuring point, threatening the livelihoods of tens of millions of farmers in Punjab and Sindh and placing a significant share of regional crops at risk. International law expert Ahmer Bilal Soofi argued that the IWT is a self-standing international instrument containing no provision for unilateral abeyance, suspension, or withdrawal. He said India's attempt to tie the treaty to allegations of cross-border terrorism has no basis in its text, noting that Pakistan's counterterrorism compliance has repeatedly been assessed by bodies including the Financial Action Task Force and mechanisms of the UN Security Council. On that basis he described India's action as a potential breach of its treaty obligations. Advocate Feisal Naqvi examined Pakistan's legal options. He observed that the existing Court of Arbitration may not, as currently constituted, carry a full mandate to rule on the question of abeyance, and suggested Pakistan seek an authoritative advisory opinion from distinguished international legal scholars and publish it to engage the global legal community. He also advised pursuing separate adjudication on the legality of the abeyance while constructively addressing India's stated technical concerns, such as sediment management. Ms. Margarida Gama, a PhD researcher in International Politics and Conflict Resolution at the University of Coimbra and the Centre for Social Studies and a Fellow of Portugal's Foundation for Science and Technology, characterised the Baglihar closure as water weaponisation through deprivation. Drawing on her research into hydropolitics and India's control of Chenab flows, she framed it as part of a longer “continuum of water violence,” warning that the precedent carries implications for India's other shared basins with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan, and exposes a gap in international water law. In concluding remarks, IPRI's leadership stressed that Pakistan must mobilise the international community to raise the political and moral costs of India's actions and reaffirm the sanctity of binding international treaties, describing the matter as a humanitarian and security concern warranting urgent global attention.—DNA

Briefs

From khidmat centres to roads
CTO checks public services, traffic enforcement

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Kainat Azhar Khan inspected different Police Khidmat Centres and field duty points, directing officers to ensure timely and transparent public services while strengthening traffic enforcement and keeping traffic moving smoothly across the federal capital. An Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) official told APP on Sunday that the CTO Kainat reviewed various services being provided to citizens at the Police Khidmat Centres and checked arrangements made for their facilitation. She directed the staff to ensure that citizens received timely, transparent and quality services without unnecessary inconvenience. During her field visits, Kainat also checked the performance of officers deployed on traffic duties and reviewed measures being taken to maintain smooth traffic flow. She directed field officers to take effective steps to facilitate road users while ensuring uninterrupted movement of traffic. The CTO Kainat also ordered stronger enforcement of traffic laws and more effective action to prevent violations on the capital's roads. She stressed that public service and citizens' facilitation remained a top priority of Islamabad Traffic Police, directing field officers to perform their duties responsibly and professionally while maintaining a public-friendly attitude.—APP

SSP opens tree plantation drive

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza formally launched a tree plantation campaign by planting a sapling along with SP Soan Zone Muhammad Khurram Ashraf and ADCR Chairman Tayyab Nawaz Malik, highlighting collective responsibility for a greener and healthier environment. An official told on Sunday that the plantation marked the formal launch of the campaign aimed at promoting greenery and environmental responsibility. Speaking on the occasion, Qazi said trees were a guarantee for a safe and healthy future for coming generations and their protection and growth required collective efforts.—APP

CPEC 2.0 to boost industry, exports and technology

ISLAMABAD: Research Fellow at the China International Press Communication Center Muhammad Zamir Assadi has said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has significantly changed Pakistan's economic, geographical and strategic landscape while its second phase can open new opportunities for industrial growth, exports, technology and public prosperity. In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said the first phase of CPEC focused on developing basic infrastructure, including roads, energy projects and ports, which improved connectivity and created new opportunities for trade and economic activity. He said CPEC 2.0 should now focus on turning connectivity into industrial cooperation, infrastructure into value chains and energy projects into economic

Rural Islamabad set for cleaner future

ISLAMABAD: For years, waste has remained a stubborn challenge across the rural landscape of Islamabad, where scattered settlements, narrow roads, long distances and the absence of a uniform collection system have made cleanliness difficult to maintain. From busy village roads to residential pockets, the lack of regular waste collection has affected the everyday environment of many communities. Now, a major shift is taking shape as the Capital Development Authority (CDA) moves to bring a more organized and modern waste management system to rural Islamabad.

Under the leadership of Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf, the CDA Board has approved an Integrated Operations and Resource Planning System for solid waste collection and disposal in Zones IV and V, CDA Director/Spokesperson Shahid Rafiq told APP. The new system will introduce organized, regular and technology-based waste management services across 65 union councils of rural Islamabad. Mini tippers and hand carts will reach the narrow lanes and difficult corners where larger vehicles cannot go, while GPS tracking and route optimization will add a digital eye to waste collection and transportation, ensuring every route is monitored and every service stays on track. Unlike Islamabad's developed sectors, many rural areas have lacked a standardized system for collecting, transporting and disposing of household and commercial waste. The new plan seeks to bridge this gap by establishing a structured system tailored to the requirements of each locality. Rather than applying a uniform approach, the CDA will plan man-

power, vehicles, machinery, collection points and routes according to population, waste generation, road conditions and the geographical spread of each area. Areas including Bani Gala, Ghuri Town and other surrounding rural and peri-urban localities will gradually be incorporated into the organized system. For residents, the proposed change brings hope of relief from a problem that has quietly become part of everyday life, promising cleaner surroundings and a healthier community. "Regular waste collection is something residents have been waiting for. When garbage remains for days, it affects the cleanliness and overall environment of the area," said a resident of Bani Gala Islamabad. The system planned for Zones IV and V is designed to manage approximately 342 tonnes of solid waste daily. It will be supported by around 1,610 personnel and 103 units of machinery. Given the differences between rural areas and Islamabad's densely populated sectors, the CDA plans to deploy equipment suited to local conditions. Mini tippers, hand carts and other smaller vehicles will be used on narrow roads and in areas where large vehicles cannot operate efficiently. The objective is to ensure that waste is collected regularly rather than being left on streets, in open spaces or at informal dumping sites. The new system will establish a comprehensive waste management chain. Waste will be collected from residential, commercial and institutional areas through designated routes. It will then be transported to designated facilities for transfer and compaction before being moved to final disposal sites.—APP

Young graduates exhibition at PNCA

The Young Graduates Exhibition is part of PNCA's ongoing commitment to providing a platform for emerging artists and connecting new artistic voices with wider public audiences

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has opened the 4th edition of its Young Graduates Exhibition, "A World Out of Place," curated by Noor Fatima, Consultant for Visual Arts and Marketing at PNCA. The exhibition brings together the work of 53 emerging artists from leading art institutions across Pakistan. Held at the Grand Hall and Gallery No. 2, PNCA, Islamabad, the exhibition presents a diverse range of contemporary practices, reflecting the ideas, concerns, experiences and evolving visual languages of a new generation of Pakistani artists.



Participating institutions include National College of Arts (NCA) Rawalpindi, Fatima Jinnah Women

University (FJWU), Rawalpindi Women University (RWU), University of Gujrat, and COMSATS University Islamabad. "A World Out of Place" considers the position of young artists navigating a rapidly changing social and cultural landscape. The exhibition brings together varied approaches to painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, mixed media and other contemporary practices, creating a collective portrait of a generation negotiating questions of identity, place, memory, belonging and transformation.

The Young Graduates Exhibition is part of PNCA's ongoing commitment to providing a platform for emerging artists and connecting new artistic voices with wider public audiences.

Alkhidmat launches 2nd batch of Bano Qabil Programme

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The second batch of the Bano Qabil Programme, initiated by Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan to equip young people with modern technology and professional skills, has formally commenced at Razi Hospital, CBR Town, Islamabad. A ceremony was held to mark the launch, which was attended by Alkhidmat Foundation Islamabad President Altaf Sher as the chief guest, along with Campus Coordinator Aneel Younis and a large number of students. Addressing the

ceremony, Altaf Sher said that the Bano Qabil Programme is an important initiative aimed at equipping the younger generation with skills compatible with the demands of the modern era and enabling them to earn respectable livelihoods. He said Alkhidmat Foundation is committed to empowering young people by providing them with free and quality technical and digital education. Referring to the vision of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman, he said that the youth are the most valuable asset

of Pakistan and that investing in their education, training and professional capabilities is essential for ensuring a brighter future for the country. He added that the Bano Qabil Programme seeks to develop young people's expertise in modern technology and open up new employment and freelancing opportunities for them. Campus Coordinator Aneel Younis said that 201 students successfully completed their courses and graduated from the first batch, while 300 students have registered for the second batch. He

said the programme is providing training in various digital and technical fields in line with current market requirements. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the participating students described the Bano Qabil Programme as an excellent opportunity for the youth and appreciated the efforts of Alkhidmat Foundation. They expressed their determination to utilize the skills acquired through the programme to create employment opportunities for themselves and contribute to the development and progress of Pakistan.

7,000+ children to benefit from school health pact

ISLAMABAD: Sightsavers, the National Education Foundation (NEF) and the Pakistan Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences (PIRS) have entered into a five-year partnership to implement a School Health Integrated Programme for children enrolled in non-formal schools managed by NEF. The programme aims to address health and disability-related barriers that can affect children's participation, learning and retention in school. It will bring essential screening and support services closer to children in underserved communities, with a focus on early identification and timely assistance. Wajih Qamar, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, graced the occasion as chief guest. Addressing the gathering, she said: "Education is not limited to classrooms; it also requires ensuring that children are healthy, supported and able to participate fully in the learning process. This partnership is an important step towards making education more inclusive and equitable." Under the initiative, more than 7,000 children will be screened for vision, hearing and physical health conditions. Children identified with vision impairment will receive spectacles free of cost, while those requiring hearing or disability-related support will be provided appropriate assistive devices, including hearing aids and low-vision devices. The programme will also include teacher training, awareness sessions, referrals and follow-up support, while promoting inclusion, gender parity and child safeguarding across all activities.—DNA

Be Our Eyes campaign to curb traffic violations

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) has launched the "Be Our Eyes" campaign to promote public participation in ensuring compliance with traffic laws and making travel safer on national highways and motorways. Under the initiative, citizens can promptly report traffic violations witnessed during their journey, particularly overloading in public service vehicles, overcharging of fares, dangerous or reckless driving and other violations.—APP

Bids invited to rehabilitate Guddu power plant

ISLAMABAD: The Power Division has invited international competitive bids for rehabilitation of the damaged Steam Turbine-16 (ST-16) and allied equipment at Guddu 747 MW Power Plant, a project expected to reduce generation cost by Rs4.19 per unit and unlock an additional 297 MW of generation capacity. According to a press release issued by the Power Division on Sunday, the rehabilitation would reduce the plant's generation cost from Rs13.87 to Rs9.68 per unit. Currently, as the Steam Turbine-16 and its associated generator remain out of service following the July 2022 fire, the plant operates in open-cycle mode at roughly 450 MW, ranking it at 11th in the dispatch queue with expensive power. Once restored to full combined-cycle operation, the plant will generate its designed 747 MW while improving its merit-order standing to approximately 7th, giving the system operator a larger block of lower-cost energy to displace pricier alternatives. Following a detailed technical study and engineering review, the procurement process for rehabilitation of the damaged steam turbine has now been formally initiated. Targeted commissioning date of the repair works in December 2028. The Power Division conducted comprehensive integrity assessments, culminating in a focused EPC-turnkey procurement package. Following detailed evaluation international competitive bids have been invited for the rehabilitation of ST-16 and allied equipment, with submissions due by 7 October 2026. This marks a decisive step forward in restoring the plant to its full potential. The additional 297 MW of generation capability alone represents a 66 percent increase over current output, ensuring that Pakistan gets the maximum possible value from its existing generation assets. Beyond the direct financial savings, the project holds strategic value for Pakistan's national grid.—APP

Swedish embassy relaunches Pakistan alumni network

ISLAMABAD: The Swedish Embassy in Pakistan hosted a special reception on Friday to reconnect and reactivate its alumni network, celebrating the enduring academic and cultural ties between Sweden and Pakistan. Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Alexandra Berg von Linde and members of the diplomatic community welcomed Pakistani alumni who have studied in Sweden under various scholarship and exchange programs. Speaking at the event, ambassador highlighted the role of alumni in strengthening Sweden-Pakistan cooperation in education, innovation, climate, and sustainable development. Ambassador noted that alumni continue to serve as bridges between the two countries in academia, business, and public service. The reception provided a platform for former students to reconnect, share experiences, and explore new opportunities for collaboration. The Embassy encouraged all Pakistanis who have studied in Sweden to join the alumni network. Interested individuals have been asked to contact the Swedish Embassy through direct message for registration and future engagement activities. The event concluded with a message of continued partnership, with the theme: "Reconnecting, Collaborating & Celebrating Impact."—DNA

ITP facilitation vans, Police Station on wheels

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) will deploy its mobile facilitation vans and Police Station on Wheels at 28 locations across the federal capital from August 31 to September 6, enabling citizens to access driving licence and other police services closer to their homes. An ITP official told APP on Sunday that the mobile units will remain available daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., according to the weekly schedule issued by Islamabad Police. Citizens will be able to obtain services including missing document reports, character certificates, learner permits, driving licence renewals and duplicate licences, while designated facilitation vans will also provide driving test sheets. Monday, August 31: Police Station on Wheels – Ghouri Garden; Van-I – Zero Point Checkpost; Van-II – I-10 Markaz; Van-III – Traffic Office Faizabad. Tuesday, September 1: Police Station on Wheels – TM CNG Khanna; Van-I – E-11 Markaz; Van-II – DHA Phase 5; Van-III – Foreign Office Checkpost. Wednesday, September 2: Police Station on Wheels – F-10 Markaz; Van-I – Golra Darbar; Van-II – F-10 Bolan Gate; Van-III – Traffic Office Faizabad. Thursday, September 3: Police Station on Wheels – G-11 Markaz; Van-I – G-14 Checkpost; Van-II – Model Town Humak SDPO Office; Van-III – Adventure Inn Checkpost. Friday, September 4: Police Station on Wheels – D-12 Markaz; Van-I – Naval Anchorage; Van-II – Bahria Phase-II; Van-III – Traffic Office Faizabad. Saturday, September 5: Police Station on Wheels – Tarlai Kalan; Van-I – Mandi More, IJP Road; Van-II – F-10 Markaz; Van-III – Rawal Town. Sunday, September 6: Police Station on Wheels – I-8 Markaz; Van-I – Traffic Office Faizabad; Van-II – Police Lines H-11; Van-III – Islamabad Club. Islamabad Police said the mobile initiative was aimed at bringing essential police and traffic-related services closer to citizens and reducing the need to visit permanent facilitation centres. For assistance, citizens can contact the ITP helpline 1915.—APP

Badri Pond to strengthen water security, climate resilience

ISLAMABAD: Restoration work has commenced at Badri Pond in Burzawali Village, Dera Ismail Khan, marking a major milestone under the Recharge Pakistan project. The initiative aims to restore the seasonal freshwater system, improve water storage and ground-water recharge, and strengthen climate resilience for surrounding communities. Hamid Naqi Khan, Director General, WWF-Pakistan, said, "Pakistan's floods and droughts are symptoms of a changing climate that is placing increasing pressure on our people, ecosystems and water resources. Part of the answer lies in restoring nature's own capacity to capture, store and regulate water. Investments in ecosystems such as Badri Pond are investments in long-term climate resilience." Under the intervention, 415 metres of natural flow paths will be restored, one hectare of the pond will be desilted, and 211 metres of embankments will be reinforced. The work is expected to increase the pond's water-holding capacity by approximately 20,000 cubic metres and improve water security for an estimated 2,957 households. Carlos Pagoaga, President, The Coca-Cola Foundation, said, "Building watershed resilience requires strong collaboration and long-term investment. The Coca-Cola Foundation is proud to support Recharge Pakistan as it moves from planning to implementation, delivering practical Nature-based Solutions that aim to improve water security and strengthen communities for generations to come."—DNA

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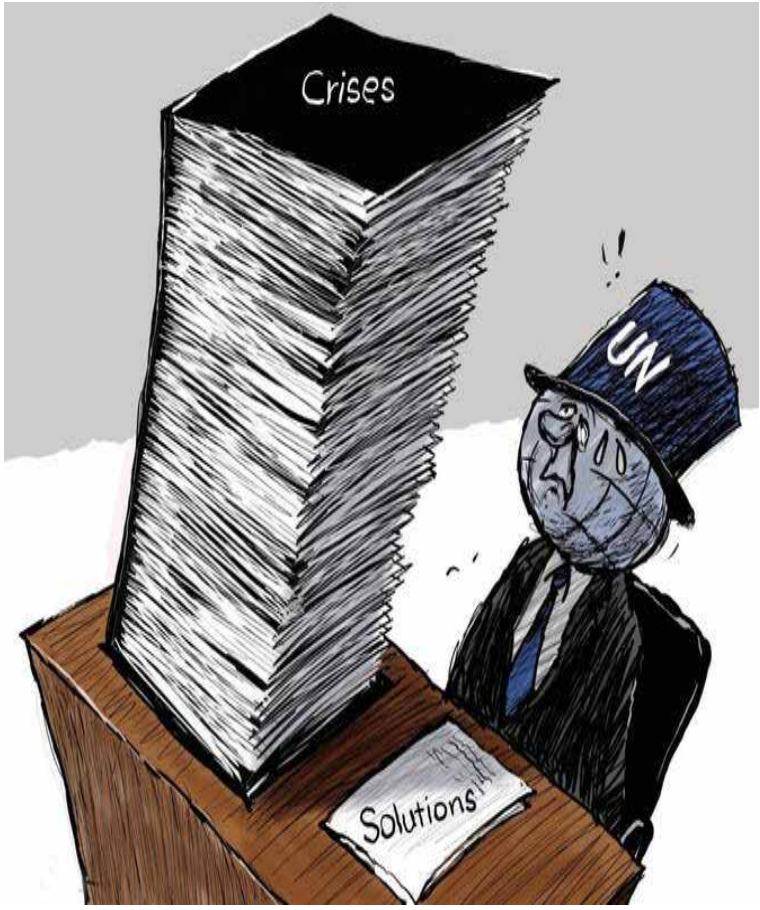
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Bad governance pushes Islamabad towards alarming decline

ISLAMABAD, once celebrated as Pakistan’s most secure and orderly city, is now grappling with a disturbing convergence of crises: unchecked crime, rampant corruption, and glaring governance failures. The recent fire incident at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) stands as a tragic reminder of how apathy and mismanagement continue to endanger lives in the capital. What should have been a wake-up call for authorities has instead become another fleeting headline, soon forgotten in the cycle of negligence. The blaze at PIMS exposed not only the vulnerability of public institutions but also the indifference of those tasked with safeguarding them. Patients and staff were left scrambling for safety, while emergency preparedness proved woefully inadequate. Fire alarms and safety protocols were either absent or dysfunctional, underscoring how corruption and poor oversight have hollowed out critical infrastructure. For a few days, outrage filled the airwaves, officials promised inquiries, and some heads rolled. Yet, as history has shown, these dismissals are temporary; many of the same individuals eventually return to prized posts, perpetuating the cycle of impunity. This pattern is a classic example of bad governance: tragedies spark hype, committees are formed, but systemic reform never materializes. The bigger tragedy is not the fire itself, but the normalization of such disasters. Citizens are conditioned to expect negligence, while institutions remain unaccountable. Parallel to institutional decay, Islamabad faces a rising tide of crime. Once considered a safe haven compared to other cities, the capital now witnesses frequent robberies, street crimes, and brazen acts of violence. In G-11/1, armed dacoits recently targeted a shopkeeper as he closed his store. In the same

sector, a senior journalist was robbed at gunpoint, highlighting how even prominent citizens are vulnerable. Despite these incidents, locals complain of no effective police action, leaving communities exposed and fearful. Much of this criminal activity is linked to the Mehraabadi settlement in Sector G-12, which residents describe as a “no-go area” even for law enforcement. Illegal settlements have long plagued Islamabad, with the Capital Development Authority (CDA) failing to assert control. Attempts to demolish encroachments often end in violent clashes, while auctions of land in G-12 have repeatedly failed. Experts warn that even decades from now, the sector may remain undeveloped, a testament to institutional paralysis. The malaise extends beyond law enforcement. Sector G-14/1, announced in 2004, remains occupied by illegal residents. Many rightful allottees have died waiting for possession, their families left in limbo. This failure reflects how corruption and inefficiency in housing authorities rob citizens of their investments and dreams. Islamabad’s urban planning, once a model of order, now mirrors the chaos of other cities where encroachments and land disputes dominate. Citizens increasingly blame political interference for the decline in policing and administration. Police leadership, they argue, is appointed to serve politicians rather than the public. Nepotism and jobbery erode professionalism, leaving the force ill-equipped to tackle crime. The same dynamics play out across departments: health, housing, and municipal services all suffer from corruption and lack of accountability. Rules exist, but their supremacy is undermined by selective enforcement and patronage networks. The fire at PIMS and the crime wave in Islamabad are not isolated events; they are symptoms of a deeper rot. Governance failures allow illegal settlements to thrive, criminals to operate unchecked, and institutions to collapse under pressure. Citizens are left to fend for themselves, while officials issue hollow reassurances. Without the corrective measures, Islamabad risks losing its identity as a capital city where citizens once felt secure. The normalization of tragedy whether a hospital fire or a crime wave must be resisted. Otherwise, the city will continue its descent into lawlessness and dysfunction.

I’m president of one of America’s most reliable allies. Here’s how we stand up to Russia

President Nicușor Dan



Black Sea ally has built its armed forces anchored in American defense systems. The partnership between Romania and the United States was built for moments like this. Its strength rests on two things: geography and reliability. Geography we did not choose

RUSSIA is a growing threat that America and Europe cannot afford to ignore. Romanian airspace has been violated by drones dozens of times in recent months. According to press reports, American intelligence believes Russia may test NATO’s resolve with a limited move against an allied country. For Romania, none of this is abstract. We sit on NATO’s southeastern flank, on the Black Sea, and we share the longest border with Ukraine of any ally. We have watched this from its edge for years, with drones crossing into our airspace and debris falling on our territory. We have learned by direct experience that deterrence is tested first at the perimeter of the alliance. The partnership between Romania and the United States was built for moments like this. Its strength rests on two things: geography and reliability. Geography we did not choose. Reliability we have earned. When Operation Epic Fury required access and support, Romania was among the first allies to answer. Quickly and publicly. That is what a trusted partner does. That is why I recently sent our national security advisor and our chief of defense to convey Romania’s commitment to Black Sea security, to NATO burden-sharing and burden-shifting, and to deeper strategic partnership with the United States. I asked them to keep that conversation going, in Washington and at NATO headquarters, to answer whatever questions our American allies may have. And to make clear that Romania is prepared to raise both the level of its commitments and the speed at which it delivers them. Behind that offer lies a simple premise. Romania is not asking America for more. Romania is offering to do more. We are grateful for American leadership and understand that gratitude must be matched by responsibility. The United States is right to expect Europe to carry more of its own defense, and Romania is backing that expectation with money and action, including the benchmark of spending 5% of GDP on defense by 2035. At Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base, on the Black Sea coast, Romania began one of the largest military infrastructure programs anywhere on NATO’s eastern flank: roughly 2.5 to 3 billion in expansion and modernization under way or planned. Câmpia Turzii, Cincu, Smârdan, Babadag, Constanța and the Danube are being connected through a military logistics network, linking airfields, roads, ports, training grounds and supply infrastructure so Romania and the United States can rapidly move troops and equipment when needed most. The modernization of our armed forces is anchored in American systems: Patriot air and missile defense, HIMARS rocket artillery, F-16s, Abrams tanks and 32 planned F-35As. This is not a shopping list. It is a decision to be interoperable with American and NATO platforms. And for Romanian forces to be ready on the first day of a crisis rather than the 30th. Because deterrence is not only about what NATO can do once a crisis has begun. It is about persuading an adversary, before that moment arrives, that aggression will fail and that the alliance will answer as one. That requires visible capability, resilient infrastructure and the political will to use both. It also requires allies to know they can count on one another, not only in Washington or Brussels, but on the ground, where geography and readiness decide how fast a decision becomes an action. Europe’s answer to Russia includes Romanian runways, ports, training ranges, pipelines and air-defense batteries, as well as the support Romania provides its allies under pressure. A stronger Romania means a stronger southeastern flank. A stronger flank means a more secure Black Sea. And a more secure Black Sea strengthens NATO’s ability to deter conflict across the whole of Europe. We are prepared to invest, to host, to train, to modernize and to stand with our allies, above all with the United States. Our message is therefore straightforward: Romania will not wait to be tested before it is ready.

– Nicușor Dan is the president of Romania. The article first published in Fox News on August 27, 2026

Trump Contemplate Using Nukes Against Iran

Qamar Bashir



Pickaxe Mountain must be understood in the context of Iran’s struggle to preserve its military and technological capabilities against vastly more powerful adversaries. The deeply buried complex near Natanz is commonly portrayed as evidence of sinister intentions, though no public evidence proves that Iran has stored a nuclear weapon there—or that it possesses a nuclear weapon at all. Iran’s decision to place sensitive infrastructure underground is not, by itself, proof of a weapons program. After years of sabotage, assassinations and threatened or actual airstrikes, dispersing and hardening military and nuclear facilities is also...

THE United States and Israel presented the war against Iran as an urgent campaign to prevent nuclear proliferation. Six months later, that justification has collided with an extraordinary move by the Pentagon: American officials are seriously discussing using nuclear weapons against Iranian targets. Former Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene has claimed that nuclear use was discussed in strategy meetings, while Tucker Carlson, America’s most influential and resourceful journalist and podcaster having millions of followers across the globe has disclosed that nuclear options against Kharg Island and Pickaxe Mountain appeared in Pentagon slide presentations. The contradiction at the center of the war is difficult to ignore. Washington and Israel argued that Iran could not be trusted with nuclear weapons because their possible use would be intolerable. If the same governments are now contemplating a nuclear attack to force Iran’s submission, they risk destroying the moral and strategic distinction on which their original case for war rested. The United States and Israel began their campaign against Iran on February 28. Trump initially suggested it would take approximately four or five weeks. By August 28, however, it had reached the six-month mark, with no permanent settlement and no clear definition of victory. Hostilities connected to Lebanon continued, negotiations stalled and Washington shifted the center of its strategy toward blockades, sanctions and threats against countries doing business with Tehran. Trump, who once forecast a quick conclusion, now says he has no timetable for ending the conflict. The costs are substantial. The Pentagon has acknowledged more than 750 wounded American service members, while reporting cited by lawmakers puts the number of American deaths at 18. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told a Senate hearing that the war had cost approximately \$37.5 billion by July, he demanded another 78 Billion as supplementary grant whereas the defence budget has been increased from \$ 900 billion in 2025 to \$1.5 Trillion in 2026. These figures do not include every indirect economic cost, replenishment expense or loss sustained by regional partners. Yet the United States and Israel have also failed to achieve any of their declared objectives. Iran’s government remains in power. Tehran has not surrendered, accepted permanent disarmament or abandoned its regional influence. Preventing an opponent from achieving its central objectives can itself constitute strategic success. By that measure, Iran’s survival and continued resistance expose the limits of overwhelming military superiority. The tactical-nuclear controversy did not arise in a

vacuum. The Pentagon has acknowledged that it is reviewing American nuclear strategy and seeking a broader range of options for regional conflicts. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Elbridge Colby has spoken of providing more credible or “rational” nuclear choices. Admiral Richard Correll, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, has discussed an escalation spectrum that includes the possibility of a limited nuclear exchange. After conventional military operations failed to compel Tehran’s submission and depleted important American weapons stockpiles, the search for broader nuclear options strongly suggests that Iran is a principal—perhaps the immediate—scenario driving the discussion. The troubling implication is that nuclear weapons are being reconsidered because conventional force failed to accomplish Washington’s objectives. Pickaxe Mountain must be understood in the context of Iran’s struggle to preserve its military and technological capabilities against vastly more powerful adversaries. The deeply buried complex near Natanz is commonly portrayed as evidence of sinister intentions, though no public evidence proves that Iran has stored a nuclear weapon there—or that it possesses a nuclear weapon at all. Iran’s decision to place sensitive infrastructure underground is not, by itself, proof of a weapons program. After years of sabotage, assassinations and threatened or actual airstrikes, dispersing and hardening military and nuclear facilities is also an unsurprising survival strategy. Had Iran left every important asset exposed, American and Israeli air power could have destroyed much of its defensive capacity and potentially opened the way to regime change. This discrepancy strikes at the foundation of the war’s stated rationale. The American intelligence had not established that Tehran possessed a nuclear weapon or had made a final decision to build one. Uranium enrichment, including Iran’s claimed right to peaceful enrichment under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, is not identical to manufacturing a bomb. The danger is that Washington may now be considering nuclear means to accomplish objectives that its conventional campaign failed to achieve. The term “tactical nuclear weapon” should not disguise that reality. “Tactical” describes an intended military role; it does not make the explosion humane, limited or reliably controllable. Such a weapon can still cause mass death, radiation exposure, environmental contamination and escalation beyond the region. Iran’s underground construction would then appear not as proof that war was necessary, but as evidence of why a weaker country believed concealment and hardening were essential to its survival. The first wartime nuclear detonation since Nagasaki would transform

international security. It could erode the already fragile norm against nuclear use and encourage other nuclear-armed states to describe their weapons as practical instruments of conventional warfare. India and Pakistan have repeatedly confronted one another while possessing nuclear arsenals. North Korea has developed weapons capable of threatening South Korea, Japan and potentially the United States. Russia has issued nuclear threats during its confrontation with Ukraine and NATO. If Washington normalized limited nuclear employment against a nonnuclear adversary, every one of these governments would gain a precedent with which to justify its own conduct. A nuclear strike might also produce precisely the proliferation pressure the war was supposed to prevent. Governments could conclude that only a deliverable nuclear arsenal protects them from coercion or regime change. The lesson would not be that nuclear weapons are too dangerous to possess; it would be that countries without them remain vulnerable to countries that have them. Harvard professor Stephen Walt told Carlson that the postwar world could be “substantially more dangerous.” He pointed not only to great-power competition among the United States, China and Russia, but also to the deterioration of restraints governing force, assassination and escalation. Once powerful states treat exceptional measures as ordinary, weaker states inevitably adapt. Ending the war would require acknowledging that military power cannot guarantee every political objective. That may be uncomfortable for a president whose public identity depends on winning. But accepting an imperfect settlement is less humiliating than turning a strategic disappointment into a nuclear catastrophe. Regional governments also have agency. States hosting American forces would face retaliation and possible contamination if their territory supported a nuclear attack. They should demand binding assurances that their bases will not be used to initiate nuclear hostilities. Their interests are not identical to those of Israel, Iran or Washington. The broader international community should insist on renewed negotiations, independent nuclear inspections, protection for civilian infrastructure and compliance with international law by every participant. Diplomatic pressure must apply consistently, whether the alleged violator is Iran, Israel or the United States. A war launched in the name of preventing nuclear danger must not become the event that makes nuclear warfare normal again.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

Briefs

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia target \$3B agri-food...

FROM PAGE 01
green fodder as a high-potential trade sector, celebrated the completion of Phase I of a water-efficient irrigation project in Bhakkar, Punjab, and invited Pakistan to join both Phase II for smallholders and the International Dates Council. Finally, both nations agreed to pursue private sector investment opportunities in livestock and food processing, while Pakistan accepted an invitation to attend the 43rd Saudi Agriculture Exhibition in Riyadh from October 19 to 22, 2026.

AJK PM pledges swift...

FROM PAGE 01
the 17th prime minister of AJK on August 28. He was elected to the AJK Legislative Assembly on the reserved seat for technocrats. Gilani secured 30 votes for the top slot in the legislative assembly, defeating Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate Sardar Mukhtar Khan, who received 14 votes. The PML-N leader was first elected to the AJK Legislative Assembly in 2011. He has also served as AJK education minister. The PML-N emerged as the largest party in the recently concluded three-phase general elections, securing 25 seats against the PPP's 11. In the first phase, held in 13 constituencies of Mirpur Division, the PML-N won nine seats while the PPP secured four. PML-N further strengthened its position in the second phase, conducted on August 2 across eight constituencies of Muzaffarabad Division and all 12 refugee constituencies, winning 15 seats compared with the PPP's six.

Iran's supreme leader...

FROM PAGE 01
Iranians, when he said he had banned actions that harm social cohesion and urged authorities to avoid "discouraging statements" that weaken national and public morale. Mojtaba specifically asked Gulf Arab rulers whether "rogues without identity" would have dared to covet their lands and possessions if the peoples and governments of the Gulf had been "united under the flag of Islam." "My emphatic and repeated recommendation to the rulers of Islamic countries, especially the countries of West Asia and the Gulf, is to identify your real enemy, understand his plan and confront it," Mojtaba said. Mojtaba, according to Iranian media, said that "unity among Muslims is the fundamental cornerstone for achieving a proud and dominant Islamic civilisation". "This conceptual and intellectual framework, which embodies our aspirations for the Muslim world, has itself been realised to a considerable extent in our beloved Iran."

New PIMS Chief...

FROM PAGE 01
ward that claimed the lives of 14 infants on August 26. The nursery housed 15 newborns at the time of the incident, according to Pims officials, with only one infant rescued. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday chaired a high-level meeting to review the incident, where the inquiry committee's interim report was presented to him.

Imran sons can come...

FROM PAGE 01
He also shared partially censored Nicop numbers for both Kasim and Sulaiman, stating that the document was valid until Nov 8, 2032 for Kasim and Jan 6, 2030, for Suleman. The minister dismissed the perception that the government was denying them visas as "incorrect", accusing Imran's family and PTI of concocting the narrative.

Javed, Hesson summoned to England amid speculation over Pakistan Test performance

PCB's position is Javed and Hesson travelling to London to attend dinner hosted by King Charles

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan white-ball head coach Mike Hesson and Director High-Performance Centre Aqib Javed have been summoned to London by the cricket board amid the Green Shirts' poor performance in the ongoing three-match away series, scheduled to run until September 13.

On the second day of the Lord's Test, the visitors were bowled out for just 110 runs in the first innings, for which top-order batter Imam-ul-Haq was unavailable to bat due to a calf injury. Consequently, the home side secured a massive 180-run lead, which they later bolstered to 261 runs for the loss of three second-innings wickets.



Meanwhile, speculation began after reports emerged

that Pakistan's white-ball coach Hesson and High-Per-

formance Director Javed were travelling to London.

It was speculated that, following the Test team's

poor performance in England, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had urgently summoned the High-Performance Director and white-ball coach to London.

However, the PCB's position is that Aqib Javed and Mike Hesson are travelling to London to attend a dinner hosted by King Charles, scheduled for September 2 in honour of the Pakistan men's cricket team. PCB Chairman Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Chief Operating Officer Sameer Syed, and PSL Director Salman Naseer have also arrived in London. Furthermore, A Pakistan Super League (PSL) meeting is also scheduled to be held in London on September 1, chaired by PCB Chairman Naqvi. The owners of the eight PSL franchises are already in London to attend the meeting.

Hrgovic storms back to defeat Itauma for IBF heavyweight title

LONDON: Croatian Filip Hrgovic pulled off a stunning comeback to beat British prodigy Moses Itauma by technical knockout to claim the vacant IBF world heavyweight title in thrilling fashion at London's O2 Arena on Saturday. Outpointed over the first eight rounds, the 34-year-old Croatian turned the tide in the ninth, taking advantage of his young opponent's exhaustion to force the stoppage in the ninth round to become Croatia's first heavyweight world champion. Itauma came into Saturday's bout with 12 knockouts in 14 professional fights unbeaten, and it looked like he was about to add a 13th as he pounded his opponent with powerful punches to the head and body. Attempting to become the second-youngest heavy-

weight champion of the world behind Mike Tyson, the 21-year-old's fast hands connected repeatedly with Hrgovic's head, but the Croatian displayed tremendous resilience, despite being on the receiving end of a standing eight count early in the fight. Itauma landed a stunning uppercut as the bell sounded to end the fifth round, but Hrgovic managed to recover, and he played with fire again at the end of the sixth as Itauma pounded him late in the frame. Filip Hrgovic receives a punch from Moses Itauma during their fight in London on August 29, 2026. (Action Images via Reuters/Peter Cziborra). Worn out from his efforts, Itauma slowed as the fight wore on and Hrgovic pounced in the ninth, forcing the young Briton back onto the

ropes and overwhelming him with shots, forcing the referee to call off the fight as the towel came in from Itauma's corner. "He's an amazing fighter, I want to thank him for accepting this fight, to give me a chance to become a new star in the heavyweight division. I am the present, and he is definitely the future," Hrgovic said. "He's an amazing fighter, he's one of a kind, he's the best I've been in the ring with, but he needs more experience. He gassed out ... I knew that I have that pace in my favor." Hrgovic said he wants a unification fight against WBC champion Agit Kabayel, who stepped into the ring to congratulate the new champion, but promoter Frank Warren quickly killed that idea, saying that he must fight Frank Sanchez next. - APP

81 pct of S. Koreans want marriage vs. 58 pct of Japanese

SEOUL: More than 80 percent of young South Koreans are interested in marriage compared with just 57.6 percent of young Japanese singles, a survey showed Sunday. The poll was conducted on 2,000 South Koreans and 2,000 Japanese aged 20 to 39 from June to July, and found that 81.4 percent of the surveyed South Koreans were interested in marriage, according to a bilateral committee dealing with promoting regional growth and tackling low birth rates and aging societies. The committee was launched on the occasion of a South Korea-Japan summit last year and is co-headed by the chiefs of each country's Chamber of Commerce & Industry. According to the survey, 18.6 percent of South Koreans had no interest in ever getting married, while the percentage among Japanese was 42.4 percent. - APP

Professor Qasim Jan receives China Friendship Award

PESHAWAR: Renowned Pakistani geologist and academic Professor Dr. M. Qasim Jan has been awarded China's highest honour for foreign experts, the "China Friendship Award", in recognition of his contributions to scientific collaboration and academic exchanges between Pakistan and China, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Saturday. The University of Peshawar (UoP) announced the award earlier this week, congratulating its emeritus professor of geology and former vice chancellor on receiving the prestigious international recognition. An emeritus professor of geology at the UoP and a Higher Education Commission Distinguished National Professor, Jan has played a key role in promoting scientific cooperation between Pakistan and China. He was also honoured with the Chinese Academy of Sciences Award for International Scientific Cooperation in 2024. A globally recognized geologist, Jan has conducted extensive research on the geology of the northwestern Himalayas, Nagarparkar and Balochistan. His work has significantly advanced the understanding of crustal evolution, mineralogy, petrology and tectonics. He has authored and edited hundreds of scientific papers and books and collaborated with research institutions worldwide. Over his distinguished career, Jan has served as vice chancellor of the University of Peshawar, Quaid-i-Azam University and Sarhad University. He has also held several national and international scientific leadership positions, including president of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences and founding vice president of the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO). His contributions to science and higher education have earned him numerous national and international honours, including Pakistan's Hilal-i-Imtiaz, Sitara-i-Imtiaz and Tamgha-i-Imtiaz. - APP

University of Gwadar expands Chinese Language Education in B.Ed

ISLAMABAD: The Department of Education at the University of Gwadar (UoG) has approved the introduction of Chinese Language as an Arts and Humanities course in its Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes, marking another step towards equipping future teachers with skills aligned with emerging regional and international opportunities. The decision was made during the 6th Board of Studies (BoS) meeting, held at the PCT&VI under the chairpersonship of Dr. Rabia Aslam, the UoG said in a statement issued here, according to Gwadar Pro. The inclusion of Chinese Language reflects the University's commitment to broadening students' academic horizons and enhancing their linguistic and intercultural competencies. As Pakistan and China continue to deepen cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), proficiency in the Chinese language is increasingly viewed as a valuable skill for graduates seeking opportunities in education, business, cultural exchange, and regional development. Alongside Chinese Language, the Board also approved the introduction of Artificial Intelligence as an interdisciplinary course in the B.Ed. programmes, aiming to prepare future educators with knowledge and skills relevant to the evolving educational landscape. - APP

Prof. Dr. Bah appointed DG at OIC

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. Ahmed Said Ould Bah, Senior Advisor OIC-COMSTEC, has been appointed Director General at the Cabinet of the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He has been appointed by the newly appointed OIC Secretary-General, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. Coordinator General OIC-COMSTEC, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, warmly congratulated Prof. Dr. Ahmed Said Ould Bah on his appointment and conveyed his best wishes for success in his new responsibilities. Prof. Dr. Iqbal Choudhary said that the appointment of Dr. Ould Bah to this important position was a recognition of his vast experience, professional competence and long-standing services to the OIC community. - APP

S. Korea attracts more than 2 million foreign medical tourists in 2025

SEOUL: The number of foreign medical tourists coming to South Korea topped 2 million last year amid growing global interest in the country's medical services, a report showed Sunday. A total of 2.01 million foreigners visited South Korea for medical, dental and surgical care in 2025, up 71.9 percent from a year earlier, according to an annual report by the state-run Korea Health Industry Development Institute. By country, 618,000, or 30.8 percent, were from China, followed by 600,000 from Japan, 185,000 from Taiwan and 173,000 from the United States. Among dermatology clinics, 459,000 Chinese patients received treatment, followed by 399,000 Japanese patients. At plastic surgery clinics, 97,000 Japanese patients received treatment, followed by 57,000 Chinese patients. Meanwhile, separate data by the Korea Tourism Organization showed that foreign medical tourists spent 213.08 billion won (US\$154.35 million) in July, up 66.5 percent from a year earlier. The monthly figure remained above 200 billion won for five straight months from March through July. By country, Chinese visitors spent 57.7 billion won, followed by Americans with 44 billion won and Japanese with 28.5 billion won. By type of establishment, 54.9 percent of foreign medical tourists' spending was at dermatology clinics, followed by plastic surgery clinics at 19.3 percent and pharmacies at 12.9 percent. By region, foreign medical tourists spent 86.8 percent of their total spending in Seoul, followed by Busan at 6.4 percent and Gyeonggi Province at 3.7 percent. "This is the result of the growing perception that South Korea's medical technology is world-class, combined with the fact that major hospitals and clinics have established multilingual guidance systems and improved the convenience of treatment," Yoon Ji-hwan, a professor at Kyung Hee University, said. - APP

6 months on, Iran's leaders are defying...

FROM PAGE 01

"If (Trump) wants to do something, we will retaliate in a seismic manner," the new secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, said last weekend. In a post on X, he said that "if the economic war continues, not a single drop of oil will be exported" from the Arabian Gulf. Rezaei's appointment came in a recent set of decrees by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, that formally set Iran's new senior leadership, including top military posts. Khamenei's father and much of the highest echelons were killed in the bombing campaign launched by the US and Israel on Feb. 28. Perhaps most telling was the newly named head of the Basij, the Revolutionary Guard's volunteer street force, which played a major role in crushing January's nationwide protests, when thousands were killed. That post went to Hossein Taeb, a hard-line cleric and long-time intelligence chief who led one of the first major crackdowns on protests, in 2009. His appointment is seen as a sign that the leadership is intent on preventing any new unrest as discontent over the economy spreads. The 56-year-old Khamenei has not been seen in public, or even appeared in video or audio, since Israeli strikes killed his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had been Iran's supreme leader for some 37 years. The younger Khamenei is believed to have been wounded in the strikes. His public absence could reflect the depth of security surrounding him, since he is likely in Israel's sights, or the extent of his wounds. With the appointments announced Aug. 11 and 12, he has surrounded himself with longtime personal allies, like Rezaei and Taeb. They are "a clique of older senior officers who've served together over the last decades," said Sascha Bruchmann, an analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies' Middle East office in Bahrain. Rezaei, 71, led the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard during its formative years, through the entire 1980-1988 war with Iraq and until 1997. He has run for president as a hard-line candidate multiple times since 2009.

Protesters denounce Mohan Bhagwa visit to NY city

NEW YORK: Hundreds of demonstrators rallied in New York City on Saturday to protest a speech by Mohan Bhagwat, the head of India's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a far-right organization, and condemned its policies of promoting Hindu nationalism and the ideology of Hindutva. A mix of Muslim, Sikh, Christian, and privileged-caste groups joined civil rights organizations outside the venue- the iconic Madison Square Garden where Bhagwat addressed Indian-Americans.

Outside the venue, demonstrators and mobile billboard trucks carried placards, signs, and digital messages featuring slogans such as: "RSS Out of NYC", "RSS Killed Gandhi" and "The RSS Does Not Represent Us". They stated that the group promotes violence and discrimination against religious minorities in India. Protesters from civil rights, interfaith, and pro-Khalistani groups also highlighted messages addressing minority rights and historical controversies, while some demonstrators displayed cut-outs and chanted slogans against Hindu nationalist policies. Demonstrators also stepped on a cut-out of Bhagwat. Protesting organizations and coalitions were: - 'Hindus for Human Rights': A US-based advocacy group that helped spearhead rallies and press conferences calling the event a platform for exclusionary ideology. - 'Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC)': Active in organizing local opposition and leading the "No Platform for Hate" coalition. - 'Sikh Coalition & New York Sikh Council': Represented Sikh community concerns regarding historical and modern threats to minorities. - APP

Ethiopia's Addisu Gobena storms to a Sydney Marathon record

Peres Jepchirchir of Kenya broke the women's field early and raced away to win by more than three minutes as she claimed her fourth marathon major

SYDNEY: Ethiopia's Addisu Gobena surged to a record-breaking victory in the men's race at the Sydney Marathon on Sunday. In perfect conditions, Gobena won the hotly contested men's race in two hours four minutes and 42 seconds more than a minute and a half quicker than the previous record on the hilly harborside course which attracted 40,000 competitors from around the world. The 21-year-old Ethiopian, who was a javelin thrower until 2023, broke away with compatriot Chimdessa Debele Gudeta from the lead pack of six runners inside the final two kilometers and then surged ahead on the downhill finish to the Sydney Opera House to win by four seconds. Gobena, who finished second behind Hailemariam Kiros

last year, celebrated by punching the air after crossing the finish line. "I am very happy. Last year I came second, I learnt from my mistake, and I went back home and I worked on my mistake to perform and break the record today," said Gobena through an interpreter. Ethiopia's Addisu Gobena crosses the finish line to win the Sydney Marathon in Sydney, Australia on August 30, 2026. (Reuters/Hollie Adams) Lesotho's Tebello Ramakongoana was third in 2:04:57. The top seven finishers, including Kiros, were all inside Kiros' record time of 2:06:06 set in last year's race. It was the Sydney Marathon's second year as a major, a list of elite events that includes New York, London, Berlin, Boston, Tokyo

and Chicago. Jepchirchir wins fourth major Peres Jepchirchir of Kenya broke the women's field early and raced away to win by more than three minutes as she claimed her fourth marathon major. Jepchirchir crossed the line in a time of 2:18:31, nine seconds behind Dutch multi-distance star Sidan Hassan's mark set in last year's event. Kenya's Peres Jepchirchir crosses the finish line to win the Women's Sydney Marathon on August 30, 2026. (Reuters/Hollie Adams) The Kenyan has now added the Sydney title to her wins in Boston, New York and London. Compatriot Irene Cheptai was second in 2:22:11, with Shure Demise Ware of Ethiopia another 22 seconds behind in third. Medal mishap The event was hit by an em-

barrassing medal mix-up, with a design error resulting in Munich's Allianz Arena being etched onto medals instead of Sydney's Allianz Stadium. Organizers acknowledged the mistake, which incorrectly depicted a landmark in Germany on medals intended to feature a Sydney landmark. Romanchuk, Schar win wheelchair events Daniel Romanchuk of the United States smashed the course record in taking his first Sydney Marathon men's title, as the wheelchair events took place in tandem with the runners The 28-year-old, who won bronze at the Tokyo Paralympics in 2020, was never threatened as he bested the field early in the race and crossed the line in 1:26:50, more than 30 seconds better than the previous mark. - APP

Briefs

Seminar on Intellectual Property Rights

SIALKOT: Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) will organize an awareness seminar on "Importance of Intellectual Property Rights for Trade Development" here on Monday, August 31, 2026, for the benefit of business community. According to the SCCI, Dr. Hafiz Aziz ur Rehman, Chairman IPO-Pakistan, will visit the Sialkot Chamber to participate in the awareness session and brief the business community about the significance of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in promoting trade and business development. The seminar will provide valuable information about Intellectual Property Rights, along with the services and facilities offered by the Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan). Particular emphasis will be placed on matters relevant to businesses, entrepreneurs, innovators and exporters.—APP

AI geo navigators to participate in leap x deepfest

ISLAMABAD: AI Geo Navigators would participate in LEAP x DeepFest 2026, scheduled to be held from August 31 to September 3 at the Riyadh Exhibition & Convention Center, Maltham, Saudi Arabia. At the event, the company will place its flagship Saudi solution, MIRSAD, at the center of its showcase. MIRSAD is an operational hazard and climate screening platform developed for Saudi Arabia, combining multi-hazard risk screening, climate intelligence, sector-specific analysis, bilingual access, and AI-assisted interpretation to support decision-making across the Kingdom, said a message received here on the other day. Representing AI Geo Navigators at LEAP x DeepFest 2026 will be CEO Asim Javid, Communication Manager Shahida Tajik, Program Manager Musfira Aakash, and Tech Team Lead Danish Zahoor. Visitors will be able to meet the team at Booth H1A. P452 in the Startup Pavilion to explore these solutions and discuss opportunities in AI, GIS, remote sensing, climate intelligence, and geospatial technology. AI Geo Navigators welcomes technology professionals, organizations, innovators, and potential partners attending LEAP x DeepFest 2026 to connect with the team in Riyadh.—Agencies

Trade delegation leaves for Malaysia

SIALKOT: A seven-member trade delegation from Sialkot has departed for Malaysia to explore new international markets for the city's export products and strengthen trade ties with the foreign business community. Talking to APP, Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) Departmental Committee on Fair and Exhibition, Chairman Qaiser Baig said that the Malaysia visit was the Chamber's third overseas trade delegation during August.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors walking past the life sized dinosaur sculptures at Dino Valley, a popular dinosaur-themed family amusement park located in the scenic Margalla Hills.

Unilateral sealing of businesses unacceptable

President ICCI Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that sealing business premises without prior notice was creating serious concern, fear and uncertainty among Islamabad's business community, which could undermine business confidence and discourage investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Sardar Tahir Mehmood has called upon the CDA Building Control Department to immediately stop the practice of sealing plazas and business centres without prior notice and consultation, stressing that no business should be closed without providing the concerned owners and traders an opportunity to explain their position. In a statement issued here on Sunday, Sardar Tahir Mehmood said

that targeting an entire plaza or multiple businesses over a single incident or alleged violation is unjustified and irrational. If any violation of building regulations exists, action should be taken against the responsible party in accordance with the law, rather than disrupting the businesses of traders who may have no connection with the violation. He said that sealing business premises without prior notice was creating serious concern, fear and uncertainty among Islamabad's business community, which could undermine business confidence and discourage investment. At a time

when the city needs greater economic activity, administrative actions that disrupt legitimate businesses should be avoided. The ICCI President urged the CDA Building Control Department to take plaza owners, traders and other relevant stakeholders into confidence before initiating any enforcement action. He said businesses should be given proper notice, an opportunity to present the required documents and reasonable time to rectify violations that are capable of being corrected. He demanded an immediate review of recent sealing actions and called for a clear, uniform and transparent mechanism

for dealing with building-related violations. He emphasized that enforcement of building regulations is necessary, but it must be carried out fairly, transparently and without unnecessarily paralysing legitimate commercial activity. Sardar Tahir Mehmood made it clear that ICCI does not oppose action against genuine violations, but strongly opposes arbitrary and unilateral measures that undermine legitimate businesses. He said the business community stands united for the protection of its lawful interests and wants to resolve the matter through meaningful dialogue and consultation with the CDA authorities.

Iraq sentences US-sanctioned oil official to prison

BAGHDAD: Iraq sentenced a US-sanctioned oil official to seven years in prison after he was arrested as part of a government-led anti-corruption campaign, the country's anti-graft body said on Sunday. Deputy oil minister for distribution affairs Ali Al-Bahadli is among dozens of officials who were detained in June during anti-graft raids that took place in several areas, mostly in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone. The Commission of Integrity said in a statement that an anti-corruption court sentenced Bahadli to seven years in prison for "illicit gains." The ruling requires Bahadli to return to the state an amount equivalent to more than \$20 million in ill-gotten gains, in addition to paying a fine of the same amount. The United States imposed sanctions on Bahadli in May, accusing him of fraudulently mixing Iraqi and Iranian oil as part of a scheme to help Iran avoid sanctions. At the time, Iraq's oil ministry denied the accusations against Bahadli, who was then arrested during the anti-graft raids. Iraqi authorities said that the raids were part of new Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi's campaign to fight the corruption that has plagued Iraq for decades. But several Iraqi officials told AFP that the raids were also part of Zaidi's campaign against funding for pro-Iran armed groups and the smuggling of Iranian oil. Iraq has been under mounting pressure from the United States to curb Tehran's influence and rein in Iran-backed armed factions, which Washington designates as terrorist groups. Zaidi, who took office this year with the blessing of the United States, has pledged to ensure the armed factions that emerged after the US-led invasion hand over their weapons to the state.—APP

OIC bodies commend investment minister for visionary leadership

ISLAMABAD: Two prominent institutions of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTEC) and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) have commended the Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh for promoting global investment, technology and economic collaboration across the Muslim world. Inseparate letters addressed to Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, both the organization lauded his proactive leadership, visionary engagement, and steadfast support in promoting global investment, technology, and economic collaboration across the Muslim world, said a press release issued by the BOI here on Sunday. In an official letter, the Coordinator General of OIC-COMSTEC, Professor Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, expressed profound gratitude to Federal Minister for his active participation and impactful addresses at the Global South Innovation & Investment Summit (held on August 3-7, 2026) and the International Education Summit & Expo (held on August 19-20, 2026), jointly organized with CITADEL and ICCD. He commended the minister for steering constructive, forward-looking discussions and sharing valuable insights drawn from his extensive professional experience. He emphasized that the minister's consistent dedication to advancing science, technology, innovation, and international investment has significantly bolstered COMSTEC's initiatives while enhancing Pakistan's positive image globally. The Coordinator General reiterated COMSTEC's commitment to seeking continued guidance to highlight Pakistan's scientific and technological potential across OIC member and observer states.—

The concept of return to western Azerbaijan: A call for peace, Justice, mutual trust

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

The idea of return to Western Azerbaijan is not merely a political aspiration; it is a profound call for peace, justice, and mutual trust among peoples who share a common history and geography. For centuries, Western Azerbaijan has been home to diverse communities, each contributing to its rich cultural mosaic. Yet, displacement, conflict, and mistrust have fractured this harmony, leaving scars that demand healing. Historically, it was the center of the Azerbaijan People's Government. At its core, the concept of return is about restoring dignity to those who were uprooted from their ancestral lands. It is about acknowledging historical injustices and creating pathways for reconciliation. The return is not envisioned as a triumph of one group over another, but as a collective journey toward coexistence, where all communities can thrive in safety and mutual respect. Peace is the cornerstone of this vision. Without peace, return is impossible. Building peace requires dialogue, empathy, and a commitment to justice. It calls for leaders and citizens alike to prioritize reconciliation over division, and to foster trust where suspicion has long prevailed. Justice, too, is indispensable. It means addressing grievances,

ensuring accountability, and upholding the rights of all individuals regardless of ethnicity or faith. Mutual trust is the bridge that connects peace and justice. Trust cannot be imposed; it must be nurtured through consistent actions, transparency, and respect. Communities must see that their voices matter, that their traditions are valued, and that their future is secure. Only then can trust flourish, paving the way for sustainable coexistence. The return to Western Azerbaijan is also a call to embrace diversity. It is a reminder that strength lies not in uniformity, but in the ability to live together despite differences. Multicultural societies are resilient societies, capable of weathering challenges and building inclusive futures. By honoring diversity, Western Azerbaijan can become a beacon of coexistence in a world often marred by division. Ultimately, the concept of return is about hope. It is about believing that wounds can heal, that communities can reconcile, and that justice can prevail. It is a vision that transcends borders and speaks to the universal human desire for belonging and peace. As discussions about Western Azerbaijan continue, let us remember that return is not just about geography—it is about humanity. It is about creating a future where peace, justice, and mutual trust are not ideals, but lived realities.

Manufacturing Reality

SYED SHUAHAT ALI

For much of the twentieth century, the ability to shape public opinion depended on controlling the institutions that produced and distributed information: newspapers, television networks, publishers and news agencies. Today, that power may be moving to a new layer. Artificial intelligence does not merely distribute information. It increasingly interprets and synthesizes reality for us. This creates a profound question: what happens when the information environment itself can be manipulated at scale? Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman explored a version of this problem in Manufacturing Consent. Their "propaganda model" argued that mass media did not need to operate through explicit censorship to shape public opinion. Ownership, advertising, sourcing, institutional pressure and ideology acted as filters, determining which stories received attention and which disappeared. The media could therefore manufacture a particular range of acceptable narratives while retaining the appearance of independent journalism. Chomsky described major media organisations as agenda-setting institutions: what they considered important could become the framework through which everyone else understood an issue. The internet initially appeared to weaken this system. A reader could open ten tabs, compare newspapers, find a primary document and search for opposing views. But generative AI introduces a strange reversal. The ten tabs can become one answer. Large language models are not simply databases of facts. During pre-training, they process enormous quantities of text and learn statistical relationships between tokens—words and fragments of words. They then generate new sequences by estimating what tokens are likely to follow from the context. The result is genuine synthesis, but that synthesis remains constrained by the statistical distribution of the underlying data. And the underlying data is not a neutral representation of humanity.

Common Crawl, one important source of web data for AI research and model training, acknowledges that its datasets have historically been biased toward English-language material and that this makes them less representative of smaller linguistic communities. The English C4 dataset, derived from Common Crawl, was explicitly constructed by filtering the web for pages classified as English. Meanwhile, research into Common Crawl has found that its geographic composition and representation remain important unresolved questions for understanding the biases inherited by LLMs. This is not entirely new. The debate over the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) emerged precisely because much of the developing world believed global information flows were disproportionately controlled by Western institutions. The MacBride Commission documented major imbalances in the international news system decades before the arrival of the internet. The difference today is speed and scale. Imagine a government, corporation, political movement or interest group that wants to promote a particular narrative. It no longer needs to persuade every individual directly. It can invest in AI-LLM Optimization, increasingly referred to as Generative Engine Optimization (GEO): creating, structuring and distributing information so that AI systems are more likely to encounter, retrieve or cite it. Search engines already acknowledge that technical structure and discoverability influence how content reaches generative AI features. Now imagine thousands of websites repeating the same framing, dozens of apparently independent articles citing one another, and social accounts reinforcing the same claims. Individually, each piece may look insignificant. Collectively, they can alter the information distribution from which systems retrieve or learn. This is the crucial distinction between the old and new information environment. In the age of search, manipulating information could influence what appeared on page one. But the user could still inspect pages two, three and four. In the

age of generative AI, manipulation can potentially influence the synthesis itself. If several major AI systems retrieve what looks like overlapping sources, their answers may begin converging. What would be independent agreement between five AI systems could, in reality, be correlated agreement: five models drawing from the same underlying information ecosystem. That creates the possibility of a new form of agenda-setting—not simply manufacturing consent, but manufacturing reality. The problem has a technical vocabulary. Researchers already discuss concepts such as data poisoning, information pollution, distributional bias, source bias, retrieval bias and model collapse. The common thread is simple: statistical systems inherit characteristics from the distributions on which they depend. The solution cannot simply be "build a smarter model." We need context engineering: systems deliberately designed to expose an AI to competing geographic, ideological and institutional perspectives rather than merely retrieving the most statistically salient sources. We need provenance layers showing users where claims originate. We need algorithmic audits measuring geographic, linguistic and ideological representation. And we need independent benchmarks that test whether models systematically reproduce the narratives of particular information ecosystems. Most importantly, we need plurality in AI itself. Open-source and open-weight models cannot guarantee neutrality. But they can make models, datasets, retrieval systems and evaluation methods more contestable. Different societies should be able to build models trained on their own languages, histories and primary sources rather than relying entirely on a handful of systems trained predominantly on information produced by others. Chomsky's question was: who controls the filters through which information reaches the public? The AI-era version may be more consequential: Who controls the information from which machines construct reality?

Briefs

Notifications
issued over
replacement,
suspension
of PIMS staff

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Salman, Chief Executive Officer, National Institute of Health, Islamabad has been transferred and placed at the disposal of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, as Executive Director (BS-2 1) on deputation basis for a period of three years. Dr Salman will also hold the additional charge of the post of Chief Executive Officer, National Institute of Health, Islamabad till suitable arrangements are made, a notification of Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination said.

An inquiry committee formed earlier under Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's directive over PIMS tragic incident, submitted its report with recommendations, which were endorsed and the prime minister further directed for its immediate implementation. According to a set of notifications, Dr. Altaf Hussain (BS-20), Professor of ENT, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, is assigned additional charge of Joint Executive Director (BS-20), non-medical, Dr. Nuzhat Yasmeen, Professor (BS-20)/Paediatrics (Medicine) PIMS is assigned additional charge of Joint Executive Director (BS-20) (Children Hospital), PIMS, Dr. Shumaila Associate Professor, Obs/Gynae (BS-19), MCII, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, given the current charge of Professor and Head of Department Obs/Gynae (BS-20), MCII, Dr. Rehmana Waris, Assistant Professor (BS-18), Paediatrics, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, granted current charge of Associate Professor Paediatrics, Children Hospital and Dr. Amina, Medical Officer (BS-17), Paediatrics, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, given the charge of Senior Registrar (BS-18), Department Obs/Gynae, MCH. – APP

British activist
detained in
West Bank

DNA

DUBAI: A British activist was detained by armed Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank on Saturday before being handed over to Israeli police. The activist, identified by Israeli media as Finn Joughin, was in the Palestinian village of Umm Al-Kheir in Masafer Yatta as part of a "protective presence" initiative intended to support Palestinian residents amid settler attacks. Palestinian news agency WAFA reported that settlers "abducted a foreign activist" from Umm Al-Kheir and took him to an Israeli outpost established on Palestinian land.

Fuel protest

JI chief warns
of sit-ins in
Capital, Pindi*Hafiz Naeem's warning follows JI's call for nationwide shutter-down strike on September 3*

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Sunday warned of staging sit-ins in Rawalpindi and Islamabad if the administration denied permission for the party's public gathering at Liaquat Bagh. The JI's sit-ins in provincial capitals against the petroleum development levy and rising fuel prices, launched on August 16, have entered their 15th consecutive day. The party has also announced a nationwide shutter-down strike on September 3 against the petroleum development levy as it steps up pressure on the government. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Hafiz Naeem accused the administration of employing delaying tactics and refusing to grant permission to hold public gathering in Rawalpindi's Liaquat Bagh. He warned that the authorities would be responsible for any consequences if they failed to change their approach. He said a public gathering would be held in Rawalpindi later in the day and that he would also meet members of the business community. Hafiz Naeem added that his

party was succeeding in raising public awareness and mobilising people on key national issues.

The JI emir expressed concern over the country's law and order situation, saying terrorist incidents were increasing and the younger generation was becoming increasingly disillusioned, contributing to a growing brain drain.

Criticising the government's economic policies, he said income tax was being collected primarily from salaried individuals while excessive taxation was placing further pressure on ordinary citizens.

The JI protests come amid growing public concern over rising fuel prices, inflation and soaring electricity bills. Supporters have been staging sit-ins since August 16 outside the Punjab chief minister's residence in Lahore and governor houses in Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar.

The federal government is facing mounting pressure over successive fuel price increases and their impact on inflation. The pressure has intensified after authorities shifted from a 15-day fuel price review to a daily mechanism amid volatility in global oil prices following renewed hostilities in the Middle East. The fuel price dispute has also triggered protests and demands from transporters and petroleum dealers.



ISTANBUL: Upon arrival in Istanbul, Türkiye, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar visited the sacred shrine of Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (RA) to pay his respects. – DNA

President, PM extend warm
greetings to Turkish leadership

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Sunday, extended warm greetings to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the brotherly people of Türkiye on the occasion of Victory Day. In a post on X handle, the president said Pakistan and Türkiye enjoy a unique and enduring relationship, rooted in deep bonds of history, faith and mutual support. He recalled that the Great Victory of 30 August 1922 remains an important chapter in Türkiye's history and expressed confidence that the close ties between the two countries would continue to grow. The president wished President Erdogan and the people of Türkiye continued peace, prosperity and success. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on his X handle, extended warmest felicitations to the dear brother, President Recep Tayyip Er-

dogan, the Government, and the brotherly people of the Republic of Türkiye on the joyous occasion of Victory Day.

He said the 30th of August commemorated the historic victory secured under the leadership of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which laid the foundations of the modern Turkish Republic. Pakistan joined its Turkish brothers and sisters in honouring this proud legacy of courage and national resolve, he added. "The bonds between Pakistan and Türkiye are bonds of the heart, forged over centuries of shared faith, history and struggle. Today our two nations have reaffirmed this strategic expression of enduring brotherhood through Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, which binds our two nations, alongside brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in our shared pursuit of common security and collective deterrence," he added. – DNA

Zardari's Europe
visit fuels Bilawal
wedding speculation*The speculation gained momentum after reports that President Zardari travelled to the European region accompanied by members of the family, with some sources claiming that arrangements for Bilawal's marriage were being discussed*

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Reports circulating in political and social circles have linked President Asif Ali Zardari's reported private visit to Austria and neighbouring Liechtenstein with speculation that he may be exploring a potential match for his son, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. According to sources cited in several reports, the Bhutto-Zardari family is considering Bilawal's marriage and a wedding could take place before the end of this year. Some reports have gone further, claiming that the family has been in contact with a woman linked to the former Austrian imperial family. However, these claims have not been independently confirmed. The speculation gained momentum after reports that President Zardari travelled to the European region accompanied by members of the family, with some sources claiming that arrangements for Bilawal's marriage were being discussed. Other reports specifically linked the visit to Vaduz, the capital of Liechtenstein, rather than Austria. The PPP, however, has rejected the reports. Karachi Mayor and senior PPP leader Murtaza Wahab said that reports concerning Bilawal's engagement or marriage were "incorrect and unfounded". There has so far been

no public confirmation from Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari or the Bhutto family regarding any engagement or wedding plans.

Despite the official denial, sources insist that discussions about Bilawal's marriage are taking place within the family and that the possibility of his wedding this year cannot be ruled out. The conflicting accounts have turned the issue into a major topic of discussion in political circles and on social media.

Bilawal, 37, remains one of the PPP's principal political figures and is widely regarded as a potential candidate for the office of prime minister in any future political arrangement in which the PPP secures the numbers to form or lead a government. His personal life has consequently attracted increasing political interest, particularly as marriage is often viewed in Pakistan's political culture as an important part of the public image of senior political leaders.

Speculation about marriage also brings back memories of Imran Khan's political career. Khan married Bushra Bibi in January 2018, several months before he became prime minister. However, the suggestion that marriage is a constitutional or political requirement for becoming prime minister is incorrect. Pakistan's Constitution does not require a prime minister to be married, and marital status is not a qualification for the office.

Nepal flood death toll
reaches 734 as rescue
operations enter fifth day

KATHMANDU: China says 261 foreign nationals from 23 countries are still unaccounted for following Himalayan landslide. Devastating floods near the border with China killed at least 734 people in Nepal and 2,498 remain missing, its disaster authority said on Sunday, as rescue efforts entered a fifth day. Chinese state media had earlier confirmed 16 dead in Tibet and 546 people missing following Wednesday's disaster. That takes the overall toll to 750 dead and 3,044 missing. The number of missing in Nepal rose from the 2,426 recorded in its last update on Saturday evening. That list included 589 foreigners, an increase from the 517 previously listed as out of contact. It also included 933 workers on hydropower projects along the river which the torrent crashed through, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority. The disaster authority said teams had rescued 8,186 people in total, 227 foreigners. In India, authorities said they had recovered seven bodies from rivers flowing from Nepal, believed to be flood victims. However, they are not included in the toll. Foreign

nationals missing in Tibet China said 261 foreign nationals from 23 countries are missing on the Tibetan side of the border with Nepal following a landslide that swept through the Himalayan region.

The death toll in Tibet has reached 16, according to officials. A drone view shows damaged buildings and houses covered in mud next to the Likhu River following deadly flash floods and mudslides, in Devighat, Nuwakot district, Nepal, August 30, 2026.

A drone view shows damaged buildings and houses covered in mud next to the Likhu River following deadly flash floods and mudslides, in Devighat, Nuwakot district, Nepal, August 30, 2026. – Reuters

They said at a press conference that the highest number of missing foreigners was from Nepal at 104, while 49 Indians, 33 Latvians, 18 Americans and 15 Britons were also unaccounted for. They said authorities in Beijing have notified foreign missions. The nationality breakdown was the first from the Chinese side since the collapse of a glacier on Wednesday unleashed a torrent of ice, rock, mud and debris down Himalayan rivers. – APP

Italian
Ambassador
visits
Walled City

LAHORE: Italian Ambassador Ugo Ciarlatani and his wife paid a visit to the historic Walled City of Lahore, where they explored sites reflecting the city's rich cultural and architectural heritage. During the tour, the ambassador and his wife walked through ancient streets, inspected centuries old buildings, and observed landmarks that showcase Lahore's unique identity. They expressed admiration for the city's historical depth and vibrant cultural significance. – DNA

Houthis use 'siege' slogan
to advance Iran's agenda

Regarding the Houthis' relationship with Iran, Al-Baidani rejected arguments that downplay the strength of the ties between the two sides

DNA

RIYADH: Yemeni political researcher Saleh Al-Baidani says the Houthis' use of claims about a siege and unpaid salaries is an attempt to mask the group's agenda with Iran behind humanitarian slogans. Al-Baidani, who has authored two books on the Yemeni crisis, believes that Yemenis living in areas under Houthi control will play a role in bringing an end to the coup that began in September 2014. "The Iran-backed group is facing unprecedented popular and economic pressure in areas under its control," the political researcher says, adding that the Houthis are trying to escape this internal predicament by launching new rounds of escalation. The comments came during a new episode of Asharq Al-Awsat Podcast, in which Al-Baidani discussed the latest developments in Yemen. The conversation also covered the tribes, the Houthis' political and ideological ties to Iran, and his home governorate of Al-Bayda, which he described as "strategic." On a warm August night in Riyadh, Al-Baidani cited three main reasons behind the Houthis' latest moves. The first was to support Iran's position militarily and politically and

turn the Houthis into an additional pressure tool in Tehran's hands. The second was an attempt to establish an internal deterrence dynamic that serves the group. The third was linked to growing public anger over economic conditions, levies and taxes, and the declining standard of living. He said the slogan "I am hungry," which has begun appearing in areas under Houthi control, reflects the level of accumulated public discontent. He believes that "the explosion will come from within," and that any future military move by government forces could coincide with a popular uprising in areas controlled by the group. Regarding the Houthis' relationship with Iran, Al-Baidani rejected arguments that downplay the strength of the ties between the two sides. He said the relationship was no longer merely a political alliance or a convergence of interests, but had, in his words, become a deep ideological and military relationship.

He added that the period when Hassan Irluo was in Sanaa represented an important turning point in reshaping the group's decision-making center. He said the small circle controlling political and military decisions had become more closely aligned with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The discussion also touched on the sectarian dimension. Al-Baidani distinguished between traditional Zaydism, which historically coexisted with the Shafi'i school and other Yemenis, and the version embraced by the Houthi group, which he described as more hardline and closer to Jarudism. He considers the problem to have gone beyond the sectarian dimension to a lineage-based view of power and society.

In discussing the tribe, the political researcher argued that the Houthis have helped revive tribal ties that had faded somewhat in recent years. Asked about the current tribal gathering in Yemen's Al-Jawf governorate, Al-Baidani described the "Al-Rayyan Encampment" as more of a symbolic protest than a military one, while stressing that it nonetheless serves as a symbolic indicator of the level of discontent among the tribes. Al-Baidani also discussed Al-Bayda governorate, which he described as one of Yemen's most important geographical crossroads because of its central location and its links to eight governorates. He noted that the Houthis recognized its importance early on, which is why it was among the first areas they moved toward after taking control of Sanaa.