



# Islamabad POST

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**China urges US to refrain from war in outer space: Yi**

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**Govts worldwide are way behind, says Gates in interview**

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**KP CM says he was abused in Lahore**

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## Briefs

**Punjab police to have body cameras**

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Tuesday rolled out body-worn cameras for its police force in a major push to "strengthen accountability, improve public safety and modernise policing". The project is being launched initially in Lahore on the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, with trained police personnel now ready to use the cameras in the field. Installation of docking stations at police stations has also begun. The cameras will be worn by personnel of the Punjab Police, Punjab Highway Patrol, Dolphin Force and traffic wardens while on duty. They will be linked to Smart Safe City systems operating in 43 cities across the province, allowing live monitoring through district Safe City control rooms. Equipped with facial-recognition technology, the cameras can help identify suspects and automatically read vehicle number plates. They can also generate instant threat alerts in emergencies.

**PM fuel relief scheme reviewed**

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting on administrative follow-up of the Prime Minister's Fuel Relief Scheme today. The DPM/FM stressed that registration must remain simple and accessible to ensure maximum benefit to the intended beneficiaries. He directed all concerned to ensure effective public outreach and smooth implementation at petrol stations. In line with the Prime Minister's directions, the DPM/FM urged elected representatives to disseminate information on the Scheme and facilitate registration. He further directed that Prime Minister's Youth Programme volunteers be engaged for public outreach and registration. The DPM/FM was apprised that the Scheme was operational in Islamabad and would be rolled out across Pakistan at 11:59 p.m. on 16 September 2026. The meeting was attended by Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Minister for IT, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Minister of State for Finance, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Secretary IT and MNAs from ICT.

**MBS meets Egyptian president**

NEWS DESK

CAIRO, SEP 15: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reaffirmed Cairo's support for Saudi Arabia's security on Tuesday as he held talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Cairo, with the two leaders calling for freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb. Al-Sisi said the security of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states was an integral part of Egypt's national security and expressed Cairo's "complete rejection and condemnation" of any attacks or threats against the Kingdom's sovereignty, stability or territorial integrity, according to Egyptian presidency spokesperson Mohamed al-Shennawy.

## Pak reaffirms support for Lebanon's sovereignty

The Lebanese Minister appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability and congratulated Pakistan on the signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. He was talking to the Interior Minister of Lebanon, Ahmad Al-Hajjar, who called on him in Islamabad today. Ishaq Dar also expressed the desire to further strengthen bilateral ties, including cooperation in law enforcement and people-to-people contacts. The two ministers discussed Pakistan-Lebanon relations and law-enforcement cooperation and welcomed the signing of the Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons as an important milestone in bilateral legal cooperation. They also exchanged views on regional and international developments of mutual interest. The Lebanese Minister appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability and congratulated Pakistan on the signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement. Both sides expressed the desire to further expand bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest. Meanwhile, Pakistan and Lebanon have agreed to expand security cooperation and

strengthen institutional ties, including through intelligence sharing and closer coordination between their interior ministries, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his Lebanese counterpart Ahmad Al-Hajjar in Islamabad. Al-Hajjar, who is in Pakistan on a two-day official visit, also met President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Force (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. During the meeting, discussions were held on fostering cooperation regarding security, counter-terrorism, narcotics control, curbing illegal immigration, and preventing money laundering and cybercrimes. The talks also focused on enhancing collaboration regarding police academies and training programmes. The regional situation and Pakistan's efforts for lasting peace in the region also came under discussion. During the delegation-level talks, both sides decided to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) soon to enhance cooperation between the two interior ministries.

## Bangladesh sentences seven Hasina-era leaders to death

Members of ousted Hasina's party convicted of crimes against humanity, including murder, instigating and provoking killings

DNA

DHAKA: A Bangladesh court sentenced seven senior leaders of the former ruling party, including two ex-ministers, to death in absentia on Tuesday for their role in trying to crush the 2024 uprising. The seven men, members of ousted leader Sheikh Hasina's Awami League, were convicted of crimes against humanity, including murder, as well as instigating and provoking killings. They include the party's former general secretary, Obaidul Quader, as well as fellow former minister Mohammad Ali Arafat. They were sentenced by a three-member tribunal headed by Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury. "We are happy with the verdict," said prosecutor Muhammad Aminul Islam. As many as 1,400 people were killed between July and August 2024, according

to the United Nations, when Hasina's government attempted to suppress the student-led uprising. Hasina's 15-year, iron-fisted rule ended in August 2024, when she fled her palace by helicopter to neighbouring India - where she remains in hiding. She was sentenced to death by hanging in absentia in November 2025. State-appointed defence lawyer Muhammad Hasan Imam said the seven men were not directly involved in the killings and that the court could have handed down a lesser sentence than death. "They were not directly involved in the killings; they have been convicted due to their fellow activists and supporters," he said. The other five men are AFM Bahuuddin Nasim, Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash, Mainul Hossain Khan Nikhil, Saddam Hussain and Sheikh Wali Asif Enan.

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## KP Governor calls on PM Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi stressed the need for enhanced efforts for "harmony" between the Centre and the province and to resolve people's issues on Tuesday, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The assertion was made in a meeting in Islamabad, the statement said, adding that the "overall political situation" in KP, law and order and matters of mutual interest were also discussed in the huddle that also included Kashmir Affairs Minister Engineer Amir Muqam and Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah.

**Saudi Arabia vows to responds to Houthis**

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia vowed on Tuesday to respond "firmly" to attacks by Yemen's Houthis, after the group wounded 13 people in the kingdom using ballistic missiles and drones. The Houthis have been engaged in renewed fighting with Saudi-backed government forces since Yemen's civil war reignited in July, when the group declared a maritime blockade on Riyadh and began targeting its ships in the Red Sea. They seized control of Yemen's Red Sea coast and the Bab al-Mandab Strait last week, which has become vital as the wider US war on Iran chokes the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Arabia issued attack alerts on Tuesday for

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**OIC lauds Pak support for Palestine**

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed has appreciated the continued contributions of Pakistan towards Palestine cause. He was talking to Coordinator-General of OIC-COMSTEC Pakistan, Professor Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary who called on him at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah. During the meeting, they discussed strengthening scientific, technological, academic, and healthcare cooperation among OIC member states.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest. - DNA

## FCC summons Supreme Court's case records on Imran's hospital transfer

Article 175-E, which was inserted in the Constitution through the 27th Constitutional Amendment, empowers the FCC to call for the record of any case and authorises it to decide matters involving major questions of constitutional law

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Tuesday summoned, under Article 175-E of the Constitution, the complete record of cases related to the transfer of PTI founder Imran Khan to Shifa International Hospital pending before the Supreme Court. Article 175-E, which was inserted in the Constitution through the 27th Constitutional Amendment, empowers the FCC to call for the record of any case and authorises it to decide matters involving major questions of constitutional law. In this instance, the case record was summoned by a three-member FCC bench, headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan and including Justices Ali Baqar Najafi and Aamer Farooq, while hearing a plea filed by three Adiala jail inmates. The prisoner have sought their transfer to a private hospital for medical examination, similar to the relief granted to Imran via an August 18 SC order. As the bench called for the record of Imran's cases on Tuesday, it also sought records of any similar matter from high courts. The bench observed that since the present matter, relating to the provision of medical

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## KP CM alleges police abuse

STAFF REPROT

LAHORE: On the second day of his visit to Lahore, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi reiterated allegations of police abuse against his party workers, prompting the Punjab government to question his presence in Lahore and remind him of the governance challenges and protests facing his own province. In a video message, CM Afridi alleged that Punjab police had blocked routes, arrested party workers and removed tents from a protest camp as supporters gathered for the ongoing street movement. He also claimed that police had switched off lights along some routes and closed petrol stations to prevent vehicles carrying protesters from refuelling. Afridi said he had remained in Lahore and would resume the street movement at 5pm. He claimed that a

Continued on Page 06

## US military confirms Iran war has led to munitions shortfall

"The munitions expenditure on OEF has resulted in strategic inventory shortfalls and revealed industrial base bottlenecks for munitions resupply," the report said

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States is facing a shortfall in ammunition as a result of its war against Iran, the Defense Department's inspector general confirmed Monday, contrasting with President Donald Trump's assertions of full stocks. In a first-of-its-kind mandatory report to Congress, the inspector said that between February 28 and June 30, Operation Epic Fury (OEF) had an estimated cost of \$33.4 billion, including \$22.3 billion spent on expended munitions. "The munitions expenditure on OEF has resulted in strategic inventory shortfalls and revealed industrial base bottlenecks for munitions resupply," the report said. OEF is the US name for its joint campaign with Israel to "destroy Iran's ability to project military power," according to US Central Command (CENTCOM). To deal with shortfalls and delays, the Pentagon is "working to streamline procurement processes and production lead times, and to stockpile critical materials, components, and selected munitions," the report said. Though it noted that expanding production capacities

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## Ukraine launches attack against Russia

NEWS DESK

KYIV: A Ukrainian army unit has launched a counter-offensive against Russian forces near Lyman, an embattled town in Ukraine's east that Moscow has been edging toward for months, the unit's commander said Tuesday. Russia has seized around three-quarters of the Donetsk region since invading in February 2022, with Lyman one of the few urban areas in the region still under Ukraine's control. Its capture could pave the way for Moscow to sweep further south and threaten the Ukrainian-held strongholds of Kratomorsk and Sloviansk, according to military analysts. The area has been the site of intense battles throughout the four-and-a-half-year war.

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## Kundi stresses effective migration policies

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday stressed the need for effective policymaking to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration.

He said transparency and institutional reforms in the migration system were the need of the hour. Addressing the first Parliamentary Dialogue on Migration Governance in Pakistan at Parliament House, the Governor said Parliament had a key role in improving migration governance and formulating effective policies.

Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, federal ministers and members of Parliament attended the dialogue.

Governor Kundi said overseas Pakistanis were making a significant contribution to the country's economy and underscored the need to create greater public awareness and expand employment opportunities to curb illegal migration. He said migrants often faced various social, economic and humanitarian challenges, adding that effective coordination among state institutions was essential to ensure safe and dignified migration. The Governor also stressed the importance of providing Pakistanis seeking overseas employment with legal and secure migration opportunities.—APP

## Virtual classroom launched in KP

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has launched a virtual classroom project in Khyber district to connect students in far-flung areas with quality education. According to a handout, the virtual classroom established at Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan School has been connected with the Global Virtual School Hub in Peshawar, where experienced teachers will provide standard educational facilities to students through online classes. AI-based teaching tools and modern digital educational resources have also been provided in the classroom so that students of Khyber can get modern and quality education opportunities like students of big cities. The provincial government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi, is taking revolutionary steps in the education sector to provide standard education and equal opportunities of progress to every child in the remote and backward areas of the province.—APP

## Progress on land records digitization reviewed

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Tuesday reviewed progress on the proposed reforms and digital transformation of the Board of Revenue, focusing on implementation of decisions taken at the working group's first meeting. Revenue and Estate Minister Tariq Mahmood Arifani chaired the second meeting of the Working Group on Board of Revenue Reforms and Digital Transformation in Peshawar. The meeting examined progress on reforms in the Board of Revenue and the ongoing digitization of the land record system.—APP

# Pak needs stronger actionable policies to address challenges

**Pakistan's maritime potential and its strategic and economic significance also came under discussion. Participants highlighted the limited role of domestic shipping and stressed the need to strengthen national and private-sector shipping capacity.**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ability to address its complex national and international challenges depends on stronger institutions, improved governance, evidence-based policies, and effective implementation. At the same time, the country needs to anticipate opportunities in technology, agriculture, maritime affairs, regional connectivity, and its evolving strategic environment while addressing persistent social and economic concerns. These issues were discussed at the annual meeting of the National Advisory Council (NAC) of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), where scholars, policymakers, diplomats, technocrats, and practitioners stressed the need for forward-looking, practical, sustainable, and actionable approaches to Pakistan's future. Chaired by Khalid Rahman, chairman, IPS, and moderated by Amb (r) Syed Abrar Hussain, vice chairman, IPS, the session also provided intellectual input to IPS's research agenda. The forum was addressed by Justice Dr. Syed Muhammad Anwer, judge, Federal Shariat Court, Dr. Anis Ahmad, VC, Riphah International University; Amb (r) Sardar Masood Khan, former president, AJK; Lt Gen (r) Hidayat ur Rehman, chairman, AJK Public Service Commission; Owais Ahmed Ghani, former governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Prof Dr Qibla Ayaz, former chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology; Vice Admiral (r) Iftikhar Ahmed Rao; Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, former federal secretary; Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, former federal secretary and IG police; Amb (r) Masood Khalid; Prof Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, former chairman, HEC; Dr Syed Tahir Hijazi, former member (governance), Planning Commission of Pakistan; Prof Dr Anwar ul Hassan Gilani, former chairman, Pakistan Council for Science and Technology; Dr Syed Muhammad Junaid Zaidi, former rector, COMSATS University; Dr Masood Mehmood Khan, Curtin University, Australia; Prof Dr Saima Hamid, former VC, Fatima Jinnah Women University; Prof Dr



Asad Zaman, former VC, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics; Amb (r) Maj Gen (r) Dr Noel Khokhar; Naufil Shahruckh, policy analyst and CEO MuComm; and Dr Naveed Butt, former department head, Federal Government Services Hospital. The session opened with the observation that the post-9/11 world had undergone profound transformations, while Pakistan continued to face governance, economic, climate, and security challenges. On governance, participants argued that these problems cannot be resolved merely by creating new provinces or redrawing administrative boundaries. They stressed bringing governance closer to citizens, strengthening metropolitan and local institutions, reducing political interference, and establishing transparent mechanisms for decision-making and service delivery. Charter cities were also discussed as a possible response to rapid urbanization and its associated challenges, subject to political commitment and appropriate institutional arrangements. Agriculture was highlighted for its role in the economy, exports, employment, and food security. Participants discussed dependence on imports, particularly edible oil, and called for improved water and irrigation management, better crop planning, farmer support, regulation of agricultural inputs, action against smuggling, and more efficient value chains. The closely related issues of nutrition and

food security also received attention, with proposed measures including biofortification, food fortification, kitchen gardening, school feeding, stronger food standards, and coordinated action across sectors. On the rapidly evolving landscape of IT and AI, participants called for a coherent national AI roadmap, stronger data architecture, interoperable public digital infrastructure, affordable computing, indigenous language and domain-specific AI capabilities, and practical ethical frameworks suited to Pakistan's needs. Pakistan's maritime potential and its strategic and economic significance also came under discussion. Participants highlighted the limited role of domestic shipping and stressed the need to strengthen national and private-sector shipping capacity. Progress on Maritime Task Force recommendations was noted, with emphasis on implementation, institutional accountability, and a renewed national shipping policy. Regarding the realm of international relations and strategic affairs, participants stressed moving beyond policy formulation towards practical, costed, and measurable implementation. They highlighted the changing global order, Pakistan's regional and maritime potential, balanced relations with major powers, and deeper engagement with the Middle East, Central Asia, and Afghanistan.—DNA

## Call for reforms to make DRAP independent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Establishment Division Senator Ahad Cheema on Tuesday called for comprehensive structural and policy reforms to transform the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) into a stronger, more independent and empowered regulatory and pricing authority, alongside a review of the existing pricing formula for imported medicines. Chairing a high-level meeting on drug pricing, the minister emphasized the need to revisit DRAP's existing institutional and governance framework, including its relationship with the Ministry of National Health Services, its decision-making structure and the role and powers of its Policy Board, said a

press release. Senator Ahad Cheema said the objective should be to establish a regulatory structure that provides DRAP with greater institutional and operational independence and reduces unnecessary ministerial involvement in regulatory and pricing decisions, while ensuring transparency, accountability and appropriate oversight. Referring to the institutional models of NEPRA and OGRA, the Minister said relevant features of these independent regulatory frameworks should be examined while restructuring DRAP, keeping in view the specific requirements of pharmaceutical regulation and public health. He stressed that reforms should not be limited to

isolated procedural changes but should involve a comprehensive review of DRAP's overall institutional structure, mandate, governance arrangements and decision-making mechanisms. The Minister particularly emphasized the need to strengthen and empower DRAP's Policy Board, enabling it to take timely, evidence-based regulatory and pricing decisions within a clearly defined policy framework. He said appropriate changes in the Policy Board, institutional structure and regulatory processes should be examined to enable DRAP to function as an effective and independent regulator. Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Malik and Secretary Ministry of National Health Services Dr. Fakhr-e-Alam Irfan agreed on the need for a broader review of the existing policy and institutional framework and supported examining appropriate changes in DRAP's mandate, governance structure and decision-making arrangements. The meeting also held detailed deliberations on the existing pricing formula for imported medicines. Senator sive to market realities.—APP

## KP strengthen women's access to justice

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has approved a Rs200 million PC-I for the "Institutional Strengthening and Digital Transformation of the Provincial Ombudsperson Secretariat (Khatoon Mohtasib)," under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) 2026-27. The initiative aims to modernize the Secretariat through digital case management, data-driven governance, institutional capacity building and improved public access to services, making the system more transparent, responsive, accountable and efficient. According to an official press release issued here on Tuesday, the project reflects the provincial government's commitment to protecting women's rights, ensuring dignity, improving access to justice and strengthening enforcement of laws related to workplace harassment and women's property rights.—APP

## Parliament urged to legislate for effective migration governance

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik on Tuesday urged Parliament to enact effective legislation to improve migration governance, stressing the need to make the migration process safe, orderly and transparent amid growing displacement caused by climate-related disasters. Addressing a seminar on the role of Parliament in improving migration and migration governance, the minister said Pakistan needed an effective legislative framework to respond to the emerging challenges associated with large-scale displacement. He said climate-induced disasters had forced around 40 million people to relocate during the past five floods, while about 7,000 people had lost their lives and nearly 17,000 had been injured or permanently disabled.

Dr Musadik Malik said the figures illustrated the enormous human cost of climate-related disasters and highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to migration governance. He said the issue should not be viewed merely through statistics, as displacement involved the loss of homes, livelihoods, schools and communities. Referring to the experiences of families affected by floods, he said children, parents and entire communities had been uprooted, while schools and places of worship had also been washed away. "When you take each of those as a story and give it a human face, you start to see what displacement means for a person," he said. The minister said migration governance needed to be strengthened through effective legislation, with Parliament having an

important role in developing the required legal framework. He stressed that migration should be managed in a manner that protected people affected by displacement and ensured that the process remained safe, orderly and transparent. Dr Musadik Malik said his remarks were focused primarily on climate-induced migration in view of his current responsibilities, although migration and displacement could also be examined from security, economic and other perspectives. He said the repeated floods had demonstrated the scale at which climate-related disasters could disrupt human lives and force people to leave their homes. The minister emphasised that the growing scale of displacement required policymakers and legislators to give greater attention to migration governance and develop mechanisms capable of responding to the needs of affected populations. He said Parliament's role was particularly important in providing the legislative basis for a coordinated and transparent migration governance system.—APP

## SECP pushes digital transformation

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu on Tuesday said that digital transformation is essential to expand insurance coverage, improve claim settlement and make affordable insurance products accessible to the public. Speaking at an SECP Talk Series session on the development and digitalization of Pakistan's insurance market, Dr. Sidhu said the industry has assets of approximately Rs four trillion and annual premiums of Rs 708 billion, yet insurance penetration remains only 0.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). "Only 0.85 percent of insurance premiums are currently generated through digital channels, which shows both the scale of the challenge and the substantial opportunity available to the industry," the chairman said. The session brought together senior SECP officials and insurance industry leaders, including Muhammad Aminuddin, Chief Executive Officer of TPL Insurance; Shoaib Javed Hussain, Chief Executive Officer of State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan; and Muhammad Ali Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer of EFU Life Assurance. Dr. Sidhu said the SECP was promoting innovative, affordable and consumer-friendly digital insurance products. He announced that an "Insured Pakistan" digital platform would be established to improve public access to insurance products and information. He said important regulatory reforms were also being introduced to ensure the timely, transparent and fair settlement of insurance claims. Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, he added, were reshaping businesses globally, and Pakistan's insurance industry must adopt them to remain competitive. Highlighting the limited implementation of mandatory third-party motor insurance, the chairman said an estimated 97 percent of vehicles in Pakistan were operating without insurance coverage. He said the SECP was engaging with the Punjab government to strengthen implementation through digital verification and enforcement. Effective enforcement could increase third-party motor insurance coverage by up to 2,000 percent. Muhammad Aminuddin said coordinated regulatory and provincial action could help bring all vehicles under insurance coverage by 2030. Digital integration of insurance records with vehicle registration and enforcement systems would make verification easier and improve compliance. Presenting an overview of the industry, Shoaib Javed Hussain said Pakistan has 42 insurers, while the sector has paid approximately Rs 450 billion in claims.—DNA

## Indonesia Navy chief calls on Admiral Naveed Ashraf



### DNA

RAWALPINDI: Admiral Dr Muhammad Ali, Chief of the Indonesian Navy called on Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the dignity was presented Guard of Honour and laid a floral wreath at the Shuhada Monument. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional maritime security and bilateral naval cooperation were discussed. Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to enhance cooperation through training, reciprocal visits and joint naval exercises. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan Navy's efforts towards regional maritime security. During his visit to Karachi, Admiral Dr Muhammad Ali also interacted with Pakistan Navy Field Commanders, Managing Director Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works, visited Pakistan Navy Fleet Unit and Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC). The visit will further strengthen Pakistan-Indonesia defence and naval cooperation.

# DNA

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Islamabad Metropolitan

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- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Executive Director General, External Publicity Wing, Ms. Raisa Adil, with the visiting 10-member Media Delegation of Uzbekistan during their visit to Islamabad.

Sohail reviews rain response as field teams monitor

The Chairman CDA emphasized that, alongside the development and renovation of Babar Park, special attention must also be given to its green character, aesthetics, landscaping, cleanliness and public facilities

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) conducted an early-morning detailed visit to Babar Park, the Emergency & Disaster Management and Rescue 1122 Headquarters, as well as various areas of Islamabad during heavy rainfall. He reviewed the prevailing situation, drainage arrangements, sanitation, traffic flow and provision of civic facilities on the ground. During his visit to Babar Park, the Chairman CDA, accompanied by concerned officers, reviewed in detail the progress of development works completed so far as well as those currently underway. He was briefed on the ongoing development, renovation, landscaping, green-area improvement and public facility works being carried out at the park. The Chairman CDA inspected various ongoing development works at Babar Park and directed the concerned officers to ensure that all projects are completed according to the prescribed standards and within the required timelines. He further directed that the pace of ongoing works be accelerated to ensure their timely completion. The Chairman CDA emphasized that, alongside the development and renovation of Babar Park, special attention must also be given to its green character, aesthetics, land-

scaping, cleanliness and public facilities. He directed that all necessary measures be undertaken in a coordinated manner to develop the park into a better, beautiful,



green and high quality recreational facility for the citizens. During the heavy rainfall, the Chairman CDA also inspected the drainage arrangements, rainwater situation and sanitation measures at Babar Park. He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely disposal of rainwater and immediate completion of cleaning and restoration works in different parts of the park. During the heavy rainfall, the Chairman CDA also visited the Emergency & Disaster Man-

agement and Rescue 1122 Headquarters, where he reviewed emergency response arrangements, field operations, dewatering activities, rescue operations and measures for providing immediate assistance to citizens during the rainfall. On the occasion, concerned officers briefed the Chairman CDA on ongoing operations in various areas of the city, monitoring of sensitive and low-lying locations, dewatering arrangements and emergency response measures. The Chairman CDA directed all concerned teams to remain fully alert during heavy rainfall and ensure continuous monitoring of sensitive locations. He further directed that immediate response be ensured in case of any emergency and that there should be no delay in providing timely relief and assistance to citizens. During the heavy rainfall, the Chairman CDA also visited various areas of Islamabad, including major roads, low-lying and sensitive locations, and reviewed the situation regarding rainfall, drainage, sanitation and traffic flow on the ground. CDA, officers and field teams of the concerned departments remained fully mobilized across the city. Assistant Commissioners and the Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) also remained present in different areas and continuously monitored the rainfall situation, drainage arrangements and provision of civic facilities. Officers of the District Administration monitored sensitive and low-lying areas, major roads, underpasses and other important locations, while maintaining

coordination with the relevant departments to ensure necessary measures were taken promptly. During the heavy rainfall, teams of the CDA Sanitation Department and Environment Wing also remained fully active across Islamabad. Sanitation teams continued field operations to remove rainwater, soil, mud and debris from roads, major thoroughfares, important locations and drainage points. The Environment Wing and Sanitation Department teams undertook immediate cleaning and restoration measures in green areas, roads and other locations to minimize inconvenience to citizens and facilitate the restoration of normal movement following the rainfall. CDA field teams continued drainage operations while also working to keep major roads clear and maintain smooth traffic flow. Continuous monitoring of roads and important locations was carried out during the rainfall, and immediate action was taken wherever required. The concerned officers CDA remain alert and ensuring continuous monitoring of sensitive and low lying areas during heavy rainfall and immediate dewatering and drainage measures be undertaken wherever rainwater accumulates. Due to close coordination among CDA, Emergency & Disaster Management, Rescue 1122, Sanitation Department, Environment Wing and the District Administration in order to prevent any emergency situation effectively and without delay.

38842 candidates to appear in MDCAT

**PESHAWAR:** A high-level meeting was held at Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar, to review arrangements for the transparent, secure and peaceful conduct of the Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) 2026. The meeting was jointly chaired by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health Khaliq ur Rehman and KMU Vice Chancellor

Prof. Dr. Rubina Nazli. The meeting reviewed in detail the arrangements relating to examination centres, security, traffic management, candidate screening and medical facilities, and finalized all necessary measures for the smooth conduct of the examination. MDCAT 2026 will be conducted simultaneously in 60 air-conditioned halls across Peshawar, Mardan,

Swat, Lower Dir, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohat, Mansehra, Haripur and Abbottabad, 38842 candidate expected to appear. A medical camp and ambulance service will be available at every examination centre to provide immediate medical assistance in case of any emergency. Candidates will be allowed to enter the examination centres with empty pocket-

ets; however, strict security screening will be carried out at all entry points. Mobile phones, watches, smartwatches, earphones, Bluetooth devices, other electronic gadgets, purses, bags, jewellery and other unnecessary items will be strictly prohibited. Candidates are advised to reach their respective examination centres well before the scheduled time and must bring their roll number slip and required identification document. Authorities have made it clear that transparency, merit, discipline and security will not be compromised under any circumstances.—APP

ICT admin enforces PM's fuel relief scheme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration has stepped up implementation of the Prime Minister's fuel relief scheme, ensuring that subsidised petrol is available to eligible citizens through a monitored distribution system and a simplified registration process. According to the district administration, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Memon visited several petrol pumps in the federal capital to review compliance with the government's policy. During the visits, he inspected arrangements at fuel stations and assessed measures taken to provide petrol at reduced prices under the relief scheme. Officials said a digital dashboard was being used for strict monitoring of petrol pumps to ensure that subsidised fuel was being provided in accordance with the government's guidelines. The monitoring system was aimed at improving transparency and ensuring that the benefits of the relief package reached the intended beneficiaries.—APP

Swiss envoy-designate meets addl secy Ayesha

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate of Switzerland, Stéphanie Rey, paid a courtesy call on Additional Secretary Europe, Ambassador Ayesha Ali, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Switzerland and exchanged views on regional dynamics. Discussions also focused on the upcoming Geneva AI Summit in 2027, the implementation of the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on disaster risk reduction, and avenues for enhancing investment and trade between the two countries. Both officials reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening cooperation across all areas of mutual interest.



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PAK HOCKEY TEAM INVITED AT BELGIAN RESIDENCE

CENTRELINE MEET AYESHA ALI

New IGP takes command

ISLAMABAD: Captain (Retd) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry on Tuesday formally took command of Islamabad Police as its new Inspector General, placing public safety, crime prevention and rule of law at the heart of his policing agenda and promising better and timely services for citizens. An official told APP that the new IGP Sohail received a warm welcome from officers and personnel on his arrival at the Central Police Office (CPO), where a formal change-of-command ceremony was held. A smartly turned-out police contingent presented a guard of honour to the new police chief. IGP Sohail held introductory meetings with senior police officers and received detailed briefings on professional and operational matters. He also met staff at the Central Police Office and discussed various policing issues. The IGP Sohail later visited the Police Martyrs' Memorial, laid a floral wreath and offered prayers for the departed souls. He paid tribute to police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty and said their sacrifices would always be remembered. Setting out his priorities, Sohail said maintaining law and order and protecting citizens would remain the foremost responsibility of Islamabad Police. He said timely and effective police services would be ensured for citizens, while there would be no compromise on merit, transparency and the rule of law. The IGP Sohail said measures would be taken to further improve the professional capabilities of Islamabad Police, prevent crime and strengthen protection of citizens' lives and property.—APP

Call for strengthening democratic institutions

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, on Tuesday called for strengthening democratic institutions, empowering Parliament and ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution, saying continuity of democracy is essential for a stable, prosperous and welfare-oriented Pakistan. In her message on the occasion of World Democracy Day, she extended greetings to democracy-loving people around the world. Senator Rubina Khalid said the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was to build a democratic, parliamentary and people-oriented Pakistan. She said Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto laid a strong foundation for the democratic system in Pakistan by giving the country the Constitution of 1973, while Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto made a historic struggle for democracy, people's rights and women's empowerment.—APP

## Briefs

**NDMA warns of flood risk across four provinces**

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday issued a flood alert for vulnerable areas of Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Balochistan, warning that expected rains until September 17 could trigger flash floods, raise water levels in rivers and streams and cause urban flooding, while directing relevant authorities to make advance preparations to protect lives and property. According to the alert issued by NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), rainfall in upper areas could increase flows in rivers, streams and nullahs, creating a risk of sudden flooding in vulnerable locations in Gilgit-Baltistan, areas including Gilgit, Diamer, Ghizer, Ishkoman, Gupis-Yasin, Nagar, Hunza, Shimshal, Skardu and Shigar may face sudden flash-flooding. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, flood risks have been identified in Upper Dir, Swat, Bajaur, Malakand, Kurram, Kohistan, Mohmand and Orakzai. In Balochistan, Zhob, Sherani and Musakhel are among the areas where flooding is expected. The alert also warned of possible urban flooding in Islamabad and several parts of Punjab, including Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Sheikhupura. The NDMA has issued advance alerts to all concerned departments and directed them to ensure preparedness and take necessary measures to deal with any possible flood situation.—APP

**DIG Ali announces open access to G-11 office**

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem on Tuesday announced an open-door policy for citizens, allowing them to visit his office in G-11 daily to directly raise complaints and seek timely resolution of their problems. An official told APP that the initiative was aimed at ensuring direct public access, hearing of complaints and timely redressal of grievances. DIG Ali Waseem said citizens could visit his office without hesitation to present their complaints and problems. Every complaint will be heard on merit and priority basis, he said, assuring citizens that their grievances would receive due attention. The DIG Ali said serving citizens, resolving their problems promptly and ensuring timely justice remained among the top priorities of Islamabad Police. He said the open-door policy would provide citizens with direct access to senior police leadership for the resolution of their complaints and other police-related issues.—APP

# Pak-China initiative trains 200 educators in digital marketing

*Around 200 teachers from public and private sector institutes across Pakistan participated in the training held from August 31 to September 11, 2026, attending two hours of training daily*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A two-week international training program on the Application of Digital Marketing Technologies, aimed at strengthening the digital skills of Pakistani educators, has successfully concluded in Lahore. The training focused on practical applications of modern digital marketing technologies, including search ranking, recommendation engines, social media, app marketing and mini-programs, with particular emphasis on their application in cross-border e-commerce strategies. Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. Around 200 teachers from public and private sector institutes across Pakistan participated in the training held from August 31 to September 11, 2026, attending two hours of training daily. The program was hosted at the newly established Center of Excellence at GTTI Gulberg Lahore under the Silk Road Digital Trade Academy, with classes conducted through both on-campus and online modes. The program was organized by UNI International and ITMC Technology Co. Ltd China in collaboration with Zhejiang Technical Institute of Economics, with the support of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVT-TC), P-TEVTA and the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP).



## OIC, COMSTECH agree to strengthen coop in AI

ISLAMABAD: Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and Coordinator-General of OIC-COMSTECH Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary have agreed to strengthen scientific, technological, academic and healthcare cooperation among OIC member states. The understanding was reached during a meeting between the two officials at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, where they discussed a range of initiatives aimed at advancing science, technology, higher education, healthcare and capacity building across the Muslim world. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary congratulated Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed on his appointment as Secretary-General of the OIC and expressed confidence that his diplomatic and international experience would contribute to greater effectiveness and excellence of the OIC General Secretariat in serving the Muslim Ummah. The OIC Secretary-General appreciated the continued contributions of COMSTECH and Pakistan towards the Palestinian cause, particularly COMSTECH's offer of 5,000 fellowships and scholarships for Palestinian students and scholars. He expressed his desire to meet Palestinian scholars, medical students and biomedical researchers during his upcoming visit to Pakistan and appreciated COMSTECH's continued commitment to supporting the Palestinian scientific and academic community. The Secretary-General expressed particular interest in COMSTECH's initiatives in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and called for COMSTECH to take a leading role in developing an OIC-wide AI initiative. He emphasized that the Muslim world should not remain merely a user of AI but should become a developer, innovator and contributor to emerging AI technologies. He stressed the need for stronger cooperation among OIC member states in developing and applying AI across key sectors, while ensuring that Islamic ethical principles and core values are reflected and protected in the AI era. Emphasizing the strategic importance of science, technology and innovation for the development of the Muslim world, the OIC Secretary-General said he would discuss enhanced support for science and technology with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, who is Co-Chairman of COMSTECH. He underscored Pakistan's important leadership role and longstanding contribution to scientific and technological advancement within the OIC. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary briefed the Secretary-General on COMSTECH's major ongoing and planned initiatives in science and technology, higher education, healthcare, capacity building, AI and support for OIC member states. The meeting also reviewed COMSTECH's Health Africa Programme and initiatives focusing on healthcare, pandemic preparedness, scholars' mobility, women-focused initiatives, water resource management and food security. The officials also highlighted the importance of convening the General Assembly of OIC-COMSTECH along with its Executive Committee at the earliest possible date. The OIC Secretary-General expressed his intention to consult the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Co-Chairman of COMSTECH, on the matter. The OIC Secretary-General reaffirmed the General Secretariat's support for COMSTECH and appreciated its role as a key OIC institution in advancing science, technology, higher education, research, innovation and capacity building across OIC member states.—DNA

## JAL Band's Goher sets PNCA ablaze in electrifying concert

ISLAMABAD: Federal Capital's music lovers were treated to a night to remember as JAL The Band ft. Goher Mumtaz took the stage at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts, PNCA for a power-packed live concert. The venue was packed to capacity by 8 PM, with fans from Islamabad, Rawalpindi and beyond singing along to every lyric. The

moment the lights dimmed and Goher Mumtaz walked out with his guitar, the crowd erupted. Opening with classics like "Aadat" and "Lamhay", JAL immediately struck a chord with the audience. Goher, known as one of Pakistan's most iconic rock vocalists and composers, blended nostalgia with new energy. The setlist moved between JAL's biggest hits and soulful acoustic renditions, keeping the mood both high-energy and intimate. "Woh Lamhay" had the entire hall with phone lights up, singing in unison "Parinda" gave fans a goosebumps moment with stripped-down guitar. Goher's storytelling between songs about JAL's 20+ year journey drew loud cheers. A medley of "Sajni" closed the main set before a 2-song encore. The sound engineering and stage lighting at PNCA added to the experience, with warm amber tones during ballads and dramatic beams during rock numbers. Speaking briefly to the crowd, Goher thanked fans for their "unconditional love" and said, "Islamabad always gives us the warmest welcome. Music is what keeps us connected." The concert, organized as part of PNCA's live music series, ended around 11 PM with fans demanding "one more song.—APP

## Mushahid 9/11 promoted Greater Israel agenda, caused America's decline

Another major consequence of 9/11 which Senator Mushahid Hussain termed as 'worrisome' is the rise of Islamophobia as well as right wing racism in most Western countries which has resulted in widening of the gulf between Islam and the West, a confrontation that has also expanded due to US support for Greater Israel through its Israel First foreign policy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain said that 25 years after 9/11, the United States has emerged weaker, conceding space to China, Muslim middle powers in the Middle East becoming relevant in a transformed world. The biggest change is that before 9/11, US was the 'sole superpower' but now that's no longer the case. The talk was hosted by a prominent think tank, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) here in the Federal Capital. In his comprehensive presentation, Senator Mushahid Hussain presented a Fact Sheet on '9/11 in 25, the date that changed the world', which quoted a study of the Brown University stating that the United States squandered \$ 8 trillion in 20 years after 9/11, resulting in 38 million people displaced and early 5 million direct or indirect deaths as well as 324,000 drones, bombs and missiles expended in battle-front countries like Afghan-



Muslim countries including Iraq, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia and Sudan. He also quoted the prominent American journalist, Tom Friedman, who wrote in The New York Times on 8 May, 2003 that "If 25 men working in the vicinity of the White House had been exiled to an Island, there

would have been no Iraq war", implying that this war was pushed and promoted by a selected and influential group of pro-Israel lobbyists and journalists. Senator Mushahid Hussain also cited a book by a British author, Lawless World, which stated that prior to the American invasion of Iraq, US President Bush had shared with Prime Minister Tony Blair his plan to target Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on the ostensible plea of nuclear proliferation. Senator Mushahid Hussain also said that one of the biggest mistakes of 9/11 was that during a meeting in Bonn in December 2001, the opportunity of reconciliation with the defeated Afghan Taliban as well as the opportunity to restore the Afghan monarchy, which had been the centre of gravity of the modern Afghan state, was missed. He compared the situation with Cambodia where after the devastating civil war, the return of the monarchy restored stability in that state, while in Afghanistan, there was a reverse process which

led to the creation of a 'Republic' that crumbled with the American military exit. Discussing the implications of 9/11 on Pakistan, he said that in comparison to other Muslim countries, Pakistan survived the American onslaught in Afghanistan nextdoor, but Pakistan also suffered tremendous destabilization, especially in the former FATA which led to the formation of TTP in 2007, the collapse of Pakistan's Afghan policy and Pakistan's inability to prevent Indian ingress into Afghanistan under the cover of the US military occupation. Talking about the global consequences of 9/11, Senator Mushahid Hussain said that 9/11 was a major turning point in modern history and it marked the beginning of American decline and the rise of China, both events being irreversible, leading to a multi-polar world marked by a resurgence of Russia, the rise of major Muslim Middle Powers like Pakistan and the formation of new regional organizations like SCO and BRICS.

## PPP's struggle marked by sacrifices: Shazia

SANGHAR: Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Central Information Secretary Shazia Mari has said that the PPP's identity is rooted in its struggle for democracy, which forms an integral part of the party's history, ideology and sacrifices. In a message issued on the occasion of Democracy Day, she said the PPP had given the country the Constitution of 1973, while Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had laid a strong foundation for democratic principles by declaring the people to be the source of power. She said Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had also sacrificed her life for democracy. From Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the party's leadership had paid the price for democracy with their blood, while thousands of party workers had endured hardships for its restoration. Ms Mari said the PPP's democratic struggle had been written in prisons, on the streets and in parliament. The Constitution, parliament and the rights of the people remained the fundamental pillars of the party's democratic struggle. She said the PPP believed in constitutional supremacy, the dignity of parliament and the sovereignty of the people. "The people are the source of power, while parliament is the voice of the people," she said—APP

## Renowned writer Hajra remembered

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Pakistani Urdu writer Hajra Masroor was remembered on Tuesday as her 14th death anniversary was observed. Born on January 17, 1930, she migrated to Pakistan following independence in 1947 and later settled in Lahore. She was the sister of noted writer Khadija Masroor. Hajra Masroor made a significant contribution to Urdu literature through her short stories, highlighting issues related to women's social, political, legal and economic rights. Her famous short stories include Chand Ki Doosri Taraf, Teesri Manzil, Chori Chupey and Andhera Ujale. In recognition of her literary services, she received several awards, including the Pride of Performance in 1995 and the Aalimi Frogh-e-Urdu Adab Award. She died in Karachi on September 15, 2012, leaving behind a rich literary legacy and a lasting contribution to Urdu literature.—APP

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## Bridging tradition and strategic horizons

DR. GUILLERMO GUTIERREZ-NIETO

AS Mexico marks the 216th anniversary of the beginning of its fight for independence on Sept. 15, the occasion invites far more than mere historical remembrance. It is a profound moment to reflect on the kind of nation Mexico has become, the bedrock principles that shape its national life and the crucial international partnerships that define both its present and its future. In its current chapter, Mexico is witnessing historic domestic milestones. The nation has welcomed its first female president, Claudia Sheinbaum, signaling a deep political and social evolution. Alongside her historic leadership, the government has consolidated a broad social commitment to its citizens, driving tangible improvements in wages, housing and healthcare. The most prominent result of these structural reforms is that 13.4 million individuals have successfully risen out of poverty in recent years. From that perspective, Mexico's relationship with Saudi Arabia deserves greater international attention. The two countries are distant geographically but they are increasingly close in strategic relevance. Both occupy vital leadership positions in their respective regions and face the unique pressures of a swiftly changing international environment. Today, both nations are navigating profound economic transformations, complex energy transitions, rapid technological disruptions and the overarching challenge of securing sustainable development in a splintered global landscape. These shared conditions create a solid basis for meaningful bilateral dialogue and cooperation. There is no doubt that relations with Saudi Arabia fit naturally within Mexico's broader vision of constructive engagement with the world. G20 membership offers a privileged platform for both countries to engage in meaningful discussions regarding international financial stability, growth and prosperity. Relations with Saudi Arabia fit naturally within Mexico's broader vision of constructive engagement with the world. From this outlook, Saudi Arabia is a country of immense economic weight, regional influence and global importance. Its role in international energy markets remains central, while its ongoing transformation under Vision 2030 has placed diversification, innovation, infrastructure and human development at the absolute center of its national strategy. This ambitious process is being

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watched closely around the world, not only because of its sheer scale but because it reflects a broader global truth: states that wish to remain relevant must actively adapt, modernize and invest in the future. Simultaneously, Mexico remains committed to a long-term strategy aimed at reinforcing its economic pillars, boosting manufacturing capacity and elevating its presence in the global marketplace through its hallmark industrial policy, "Plan Mexico." This structural momentum is matched by active diplomacy — negotiations persist to refine North American trade dynamics, while the recently finalized Modernized Global Agreement with the EU has successfully rejuvenated ties with Europe. These efforts are further bolstered by strategic, sector-specific alliances with regional heavyweight partners such as Canada and Brazil. Another vital aspect to recall is that Mexico's foreign policy has long rested on principles that remain highly valuable in this current period of global uncertainty. These pillars include strict respect for international law, sovereign equality, the peaceful settlement of disputes, nonintervention, and robust international cooperation for development. These are not abstract ideals, they are the foundation of a diplomatic tradition that seeks stability without dependence and openness without subordination. In line with this tradition, Mexico actively participates in international organizations to address major contemporary challenges, notably stabilizing volatile global shipping corridors and advocating for peaceful resolutions to Middle Eastern conflicts. Mexico's foreign policy has long rested on principles that remain highly valuable in this period of global uncertainty. As shown here, this structural momentum creates a useful complementarity with other global partners. That is why the relationship between Mexico and Saudi Arabia should not be understood merely as a symbolic diplomatic tie but as a potentially productive partnership across several concrete sectors. Trade, investment, energy, infrastructure, tourism, education, culture, science and technology all offer substantial room for expansion. Because the ultimate value of this relationship cannot be measured solely by economic metrics, these diplomatic ties must become durable, supported by genuine familiarity, trust and cultural understanding. This is an area where Mexico-Saudi Arabia ties still have room to grow. Academic exchanges, cultural cooperation and people-to-people contact will give true substance to a relationship that is still developing, helping both societies know each other beyond stereotypes and formalities. Thus, as Mexico celebrates its independence, the message should be clear: sovereignty is not isolation. A confident nation does not withdraw from the world, it engages with clear purpose, choosing partners based on shared interests and mutual respect. Saudi Arabia is one such partner.

## Pakistan's Military: A Potential Engine of High-Value Exports

Qamar Bashir



This question has become particularly important in the Middle East, where Israel maintains a longstanding policy of nuclear ambiguity and is widely understood to possess nuclear weapons. Middle Eastern states confronted by severe regional instability naturally seek credible protection against existential threats. Pakistan's deterrent gives it a special position in such discussions—not as a promoter of nuclear war, but as a possible counterbalancing power intended to prevent one

PAKISTAN'S armed forces have frequently attracted international attention, sometimes for their military performance and sometimes because of controversies surrounding their domestic influence and use of national resources. Those political debates are important, but they are not the subject of this article. The purpose here is to examine a different question: can Pakistan transform the capabilities accumulated by its Army, Navy, Air Force and defense-industrial institutions into a powerful source of strategic influence, exports and foreign exchange? Pakistan possesses one of the developing world's most extensive military ecosystems. It includes experienced personnel, military academies, defense manufacturers, aviation and shipbuilding facilities, research organizations, and an expanding base of expertise in missiles, radar, electronic warfare and unmanned systems. Properly governed and commercially developed, this ecosystem could become an important pillar of Pakistan's economy. Pakistan already exports textiles, sporting goods, surgical instruments, rice and other traditional products. These industries remain essential, but many operate in highly competitive markets with narrow profit margins. Defense and aerospace products belong to a different category. They are technologically sophisticated, command higher prices and generate continuing revenue through maintenance, training, spare parts and modernization contracts. A successful defense sale can create economic activity lasting decades. The JF-17 Thunder combat aircraft is Pakistan's most visible defense product. Jointly developed with China, it demonstrates Pakistan's ability to manufacture, assemble, maintain and modernize an advanced aviation platform. It offers countries with limited budgets a multirole aircraft supported by training, simulators, maintenance facilities and weapons-integration options. Pakistan Aeronautical Complex can build on this achievement by becoming a regional center for aircraft maintenance, component production and technical training. Many developing countries cannot afford the cost or political conditions attached to the most advanced Western aircraft. Pakistan can serve part of this market with affordable systems, provided that it delivers consistent quality, transparent contracts and reliable after-sales support. Land systems provide another significant opportunity. Pakistani industries manufacture or maintain tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, small arms, ammunition, communications equipment and specialized military vehicles. The Al-Khalid tank demonstrates the country's ability to integrate complex armored-platform technologies. Export packages can combine equipment with crew instruction, maintenance training, spare parts and upgrades tailored to each customer. The maritime sector should receive equal attention. Pakistan's naval institutions have experience in shipbuilding, vessel maintenance, maritime surveillance and coastal defense. Karachi Shipyard and associated organizations can

pursue markets for patrol vessels, auxiliary ships, fast-attack craft and support services. Many developing states require affordable platforms to protect their ports, fisheries, sea lanes and exclusive economic zones. Drones may offer the greatest potential for future growth. Modern armed forces need unmanned systems for surveillance, border monitoring, communications, logistics and, where legally authorized, combat operations. Pakistan has experience developing and operating several classes of unmanned aircraft. It should cultivate a connected industry involving universities, private technology companies and state institutions. Sensors, secure communications, navigation, artificial intelligence, electronic protection and counter-drone systems can all become valuable exports. The most strategically important dimension of Pakistan's military power, however, is its nuclear deterrent. Pakistan is the only Muslim-majority country possessing nuclear weapons. That capability was developed primarily to deter existential aggression against Pakistan, but its significance now extends beyond South Asia. This strategic weight must not be confused with the commercial sale or transfer of nuclear weapons, materials or sensitive technology. Pakistan's nuclear capability is not an ordinary export commodity. Its potential value lies instead in extended deterrence: the possibility that Pakistan's strategic strength could reinforce collective-defense commitments and discourage a major attack upon its closest partners. This question has become particularly important in the Middle East, where Israel maintains a longstanding policy of nuclear ambiguity and is widely understood to possess nuclear weapons. Middle Eastern states confronted by severe regional instability naturally seek credible protection against existential threats. Pakistan's deterrent gives it a special position in such discussions—not as a promoter of nuclear war, but as a possible counterbalancing power intended to prevent one. Pakistan could therefore develop an extended-deterrence doctrine under strict national command and control. Such a doctrine would make clear that its purpose is to prevent existential aggression, not facilitate adventurism or provide a license for offensive war. It would involve no transfer of nuclear weapons and no surrender of Pakistan's decision-making authority. Any strategic response would remain subject to Pakistan's sovereign leadership, rigorous safeguards and the gravest possible threshold. This protective role could strengthen wider economic and defense relationships. Countries benefiting from credible security cooperation are more likely to enter long-term arrangements for conventional weapons, air and missile defense, joint exercises, intelligence coordination, maintenance services and military training. Strategic deterrence would consequently serve as an umbrella beneath which lawful conventional-defense partnerships and industrial cooperation could grow. Pakistan's most immediately exportable

military asset may still be its human capital. Its armed forces have accumulated experience in conventional operations, counterterrorism, mountain warfare, aviation, maritime security, engineering, logistics, disaster relief and peacekeeping. Pakistani personnel have served extensively in United Nations missions. Military academies and specialist schools can translate this experience into structured programs for partner countries. Foreign officers already attend Pakistani institutions, but professional military education could be expanded into a coordinated service-export sector. Courses could cover staff planning, pilot instruction, naval operations, cybersecurity, military medicine, engineering and peacekeeping. Mobile training teams and advisory missions could supplement instruction delivered inside Pakistan. The economic benefits would extend far beyond the armed forces. Defense production supports engineers, technicians, software developers and skilled industrial workers. It can stimulate metallurgy, electronics, telecommunications, precision machining, aviation services and advanced materials. Military technologies can also generate civilian applications in transportation, agriculture, emergency response and communications. Success will require dependable quality, punctual delivery, warranties, documentation, intellectual-property protection and continuing customer support. Pakistan also needs transparent civilian laws, parliamentary oversight, end-user safeguards and anti-corruption standards. Weapons must not be supplied where there is a serious risk of unlawful aggression, terrorism or abuse against civilians. Private companies and universities should be integrated into this national enterprise. A productive defense economy should generate civilian innovation and employment rather than remain a closed commercial domain. Its earnings should help finance education, research, infrastructure and broader industrial development. Pakistan therefore has an opportunity to build something greater than a conventional arms-export business. It can offer a layered security ecosystem comprising strategic deterrence, combat aircraft, land systems, maritime platforms, drones, maintenance, training and joint production. Its nuclear capability can provide a defensive counterbalance at the highest level, while conventional exports and professional services address the practical requirements of partner states. If managed responsibly, Pakistan's military ecosystem can protect the country, reinforce the lawful defense of its allies and become a formidable foreign-exchange engine. Its governing principle must remain unambiguous: strength exists to deter aggression and preserve peace, with force reserved for the last resort when Pakistan or an ally confronts a genuine existential threat.

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## September 15 – 108th Anniversary of the Liberation of Baku

Saifullah Ansar

The transformation of Baku has been a central component of Azerbaijan's development strategy under President Ilham Aliyev. Successive programmes have focused on urban renewal, infrastructure, environmental improvement, transportation, tourism and the creation of modern public spaces. The transformation of the former industrial area known as Black City into Baku White City is one prominent example of this approach. President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly emphasized the importance of combining Baku's ancient heritage with modern development

SEPTEMBER 15 holds a special place in the history of Azerbaijan. On this day in 1918, Baku was liberated by Ottoman-Azerbaijani forces, marking a decisive moment in the struggle to secure the capital of the newly established Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The liberation of Baku was not merely a military victory; it became a powerful symbol of national sovereignty, sacrifice, solidarity and the determination of the Azerbaijani people to defend their homeland. As Azerbaijan commemorates the 108th anniversary of the Liberation of Baku in 2026, the occasion provides an opportunity not only to remember the events and sacrifices of 1918 but also to reflect on how dramatically the country and its capital have transformed over the past century. Today, Baku stands out as one of the thriving, dynamic and beautiful capitals of the world, combining a rich historical heritage with modern architecture, sophisticated infrastructure and an increasingly important role in international diplomacy and business. Under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has pursued a development strategy focused on modernization, infrastructure, economic diversification, connectivity and the strengthening of its international standing. The roots of the 1918 conflict lay in the collapse of the Russian Empire following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The resulting power vacuum in the South Caucasus turned Baku into a fiercely contested strategic prize. Baku was important not only because it was the political and economic centre of Azerbaijan but also because of its enormous oil resources. The city had emerged as one of the world's major petroleum centres, making control of Baku a matter of considerable strategic importance for regional and international powers. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, established in May 1918, faced enormous challenges. Its leadership sought to establish an independent state while confronting competing political and military forces seeking control of Azerbaijan and its resources. In these circumstances, Ottoman-Azerbaijani forces organized under the Islamic Army of the Caucasus, commanded by Nuri Pasha, advanced towards Baku. The fighting intensified during the summer of 1918, culminating in a decisive offensive in September. The defenders included forces associated with the Centrocaspian

Dictatorship and the British-led Dunsterforce commanded by Major-General Lionel Dunsterforce. After fierce fighting and the collapse of defensive positions, Ottoman-Azerbaijani forces entered Baku on September 15, 1918. The liberation came at a heavy human cost. The event nevertheless became deeply embedded in Azerbaijan's national consciousness as a defining moment in the country's struggle for sovereignty. Although the Ottoman forces' control of Baku was short-lived, particularly after the Armistice of Mudros and the subsequent arrival of British forces, the historical significance of September 15 endured. The liberation of Baku represented much more than the capture of a city. It demonstrated the importance of national unity at a moment when Azerbaijan's independence was under severe pressure. It also highlighted Baku's enormous strategic value because of its location on the Caspian Sea, its oil resources and its position at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. For Azerbaijanis, September 15 consequently became associated with national survival, independence and the determination to protect the country's sovereignty. The memory of those who fought for Baku has continued to influence Azerbaijan's national narrative. It is a reminder that independence, once achieved, requires constant efforts to preserve and strengthen it. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of today's September 15 commemoration is the transformation of Baku itself. A visitor arriving in Baku today encounters a city where centuries-old heritage exists alongside striking modern architecture. The historic Icherisheher (Old City), the Maiden Tower and the Palace of the Shirvanshahs co-exist with the Heydar Aliyev Centre, the Flame Towers, the Caspian waterfront, modern business districts, extensive parks and major cultural institutions. The transformation of Baku has been a central component of Azerbaijan's development strategy under President Ilham Aliyev. Successive programmes have focused on urban renewal, infrastructure, environmental improvement, transportation, tourism and the creation of modern public spaces. The transformation of the former industrial area known as Black City into Baku White City is one prominent example of this approach. President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly emphasized the importance of combining

Baku's ancient heritage with modern development. Government planning has sought to preserve the historical character of the city while developing new infrastructure and urban spaces. This combination of history and modernity is perhaps Baku's greatest attraction. The city does not attempt to choose between its past and its future; instead, it increasingly presents both as complementary elements of its identity. The transformation is not limited to Baku's skyline. Azerbaijan has also emerged as an increasingly significant regional player, benefiting from its strategic location between Europe and Asia and its role in energy, transportation and connectivity. Baku's growing international profile was demonstrated spectacularly when the city hosted COP29, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, in November 2024. Nearly 200 countries participated in the conference, which culminated in an agreement on a new climate-finance goal for developing countries. Hosting an event of such global importance reflected the evolution of Baku from a strategically contested city in 1918 into a venue capable of bringing together world leaders, diplomats, negotiators and international organizations. The men who fought for Baku more than a century ago could hardly have imagined the city that would eventually emerge from the struggles of their time. Yet the central principle remains the same: the right of a nation to determine its own destiny. The Baku of 1918 was a city at the centre of an intense geopolitical struggle. The Baku of 2026 is a modern international capital, a centre of diplomacy, commerce, culture, tourism and major international events. September 15 is consequently both a day of remembrance and a day of reflection. It reminds Azerbaijanis of the sacrifices made for national sovereignty while also highlighting what has been achieved through decades of state-building and development. As Azerbaijan marks the 108th anniversary of the Liberation of Baku, the occasion honours the past while looking confidently towards the future. From the battlefields of 1918 to the shining skyline of contemporary Baku, the story is ultimately one of resilience, national determination and transformation. Baku has changed dramatically, but its historical spirit remains intact: a city that has repeatedly stood at the crossroads of history and continues to look towards the future.

## Briefs

## US military confirms Iran war has led...

FROM PAGE 01  
requires "significant lead time." The shortfall is likely to cause concern among governments like Ukraine and Taiwan, who rely on weapons purchases from the United States to fight or deter much larger, hostile neighbors. Ukraine urgently needs more interceptor missiles for US-made Patriot air defense systems in its war against Russia, while Taiwan depends on arms agreements with Washington to ward off China, which claims the self-ruled island as its own. Trump has repeatedly brushed off concerns of depleted weapons stores during the six months of war in the Middle East, saying recently that the US has "virtually unlimited" ammunition. On Monday he posted on his Truth Social platform that the US is producing "more Exquisite and Elite Weapons than at any time in our History."

## Ukraine launches attack...

FROM PAGE 01  
"The 3rd Army Corps has launched an offensive operation called Vivaldi in this sector," the Commander of Ukraine's 3rd Army Corps, Andriy Biletsky, said in a video on Telegram. Ukrainian units have cleared Russian infiltrators from an area "about 75 square kilometers", he added. DeepState, a battlefield map linked to the Ukrainian army, showed Ukrainian troops had made a small pocket of gains north of the town. There was no immediate public comment from Russia to Ukraine's claims. Widespread drone use at the front has made large-scale troop movements almost impossible, preventing either side from gaining a clear advantage in the grinding conflict. Russia's advance in east Ukraine gained pace in August, but remained far slower than in previous years of its invasion, an AFP analysis of data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) showed earlier in September.

## Bangladesh sentences...

FROM PAGE 01  
The court also ordered that half the assets of five of the men be distributed as compensation to the families of those killed or injured in the uprising. Tuesday's sentencing brings the total number convicted in trials connected to the 2024 protests to 68. Of those, 22 have been sentenced to death, though only four are in custody. Hasina has refused to accept the authority of the court. The government of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, which won a landslide victory in February in the first elections since Hasina was ousted, has requested her extradition. But Hasina, 78, has said she will return of her own volition to Bangladesh in December, despite the death sentence she faces.

## FCC summons...

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facilities to the three Adila inmates, originated from the Aug 18 SC order, the court was summoning the entire case record from the SC under Article 175-E (5) of the Constitution. The bench also said it would frame constitutional questions for final determination in its order, which will be issued later. The record was summoned after the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan appeared before the court on Tuesday and said that after the passage of the 27th Amendment, the SC no longer enjoyed the authority to protect fundamental rights; rather, he argued, such powers now rested with the FCC. After the insertion of Article 175(F), any matter relating to constitutional interpretation or constitutional rights would now be heard by the FCC, AGP said. Within this context, AGP Awan contended that it would be prudent for the FCC to call for the complete record of the case pending before the SC.

## NA body calls for FIFA reforms, expresses concern over hockey, cricket

*The recommendations came during a meeting of the committee, chaired by Mehreen Razzaq Bhutto at Parliament House, where members reviewed the development of football and the overall state of sports in Pakistan*



## OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) has recommended strict implementation of FIFA reforms and amendments to the Pakistan Football Federation's (PFF) laws, while expressing serious concern over the declining state of hockey and cricket in the country. The committee also proposed bringing the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) back under the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, with Convenor Mehreen Razzaq Bhutto saying Pakistan had faced embarrassment internationally over its cricket affairs. The recommendations came during a meeting of the committee, chaired by Mehreen Razzaq Bhutto at Parliament House, where members reviewed the development of football and the overall state of sports in Pakistan. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani briefed

the committee on the federation's ongoing initiatives, saying FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) were appreciating Pakistan's efforts to develop football. He said the AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa recently visited Pakistan and held meetings with the Prime Minister and other senior government officials, while Pakistan's plans for the promotion and development of football had also been presented at the United Nations. Gilani said the FIFA Arena pitch had been completed and would be inaugurated by the Prime Minister. He acknowledged the government's strong support and expressed confidence that the federation's initiatives would produce positive results. "Football in Pakistan remained in a state of decline for a long time. We now have to work together to bring the sport back to its former glory," Gilani said. He highlighted Pakistan's recent achievements, saying the country had won a foot-

ball trophy after 74 years and had also participated in a FIFA event for the first time. Gilani said the PFF had requested FIFA to establish a youth academy in each province and was preparing to organise inter-school football competitions for the first time in the country. He also said a comprehensive five-year strategy had been prepared for the development of women's football. According to Gilani, Pakistan's women's national team currently has a better FIFA ranking than the men's team, reflecting the growing potential of women's football. The committee recommended reforms in the PFF's laws and directed the federation to ensure full implementation of FIFA reforms. Mehreen Razzaq Bhutto assured the football federation of all possible support for the promotion of the sport, saying parliamentarians and all stakeholders wanted to see sports develop in Pakistan. The committee members also expressed concern over the declining standards of hockey

and cricket. Waseem Qadir said the lack of proper grounds was one of the major reasons behind the decline of hockey. He noted that hockey and football could not be played in streets in the same way as cricket and called for provincial governments to be made responsible for developing sports grounds. Committee member Anjum Aqeel also expressed concern over the decline of cricket in Pakistan. Mehreen Bhutto said Pakistan had faced international embarrassment over its cricket affairs and proposed that the PCB be removed from the Cabinet Division and placed under the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination. The Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination stressed that all Pakistani sports federations must comply with the rules and regulations of their respective international governing bodies. He said FIFA had also introduced reforms to its regulations, while international sports bodies had increased women's representation in their structures.

## Sudan's Darfur faces driest rainy season in four decades: WFP

Emergency Response Room in North Darfur's Kutum warned of a "mounting crisis of livestock and livelihoods caused by scarce rainfall and a lack of water and pasture"

KHARTOUM: Sudan's Darfur region is experiencing its driest rainy season since the 1980s, according to the World Food Programme, as climate change worsens famine conditions in the middle of a brutal war. "Darfur hasn't been this dry since 1984," WFP deputy chief Carl Skau said on Monday after travelling through the region during the rainy season, which runs from June to

September. "Everywhere I stopped, what people wanted to talk about was the drought," he continued. "Everyone is frightened that this will have a serious hit on agriculture and the agriculture outcome." Darfur, already ravaged by decades of conflict, has faced some of the worst violence of the war in Sudan between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which has raged

since 2023 and killed more than 200,000 people. The region hosts 5.6 million displaced people, according to UN figures, many of them facing severe hunger. Much of the vast region usually turns green during the rainy season as its many valleys and seasonal rivers overflow, irrigating farmland crucial for keeping starvation at bay. But this year marked the driest on historical record,

according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network. This week, local responders across Darfur warned the drought was forcing new waves of displacement and the collapse of local agriculture. The Emergency Response Room in North Darfur's Kutum warned of a "mounting crisis of livestock and livelihoods caused by scarce rainfall and a lack of water and pasture". Even before the war, Darfur was often rocked by deadly violence between rival groups over water sources. — APP

## Zverev hails mother's unwavering belief after US Open triumph

## DNA

NEW YORK: Family was at the heart of Alexander Zverev's US Open triumph on Sunday as the German saluted the members of his inner circle and paid a heartfelt tribute to his mother for refusing to let diabetes define his future. The top seed beat American Ben Shelton 6-3 7-6(2) 5-7 6-2 at Flushing Meadows to finish a spectacular year at the Grand Slams in which he proved his doubters wrong by going from perennial nearly man to two-time major champion. Shortly after his victory, Zverev reserved special praise for his mother Irina, a former professional tennis player, and credited her with ensuring type 1 diabetes never limited his ambitions in life. "When your 4-year-old son is diagnosed with diabetes and doctors in the office tell you that life and sports will be very limited for that child, it takes a very strong mother to say 'my son will be whatever he wants to be'," Zverev said.

## Leeds thrash Newcastle to go third in the Premier League

## DNA

LEEDS demolished Newcastle 4-1 to climb up to third in the Premier League table on Monday and inflict a punishing first defeat for Magpies boss Matthias Jaissle. A Lewis Miley own goal opened the floodgates before Jayden Bogle, Dominic Calvert-Lewin and Noah Okafor completed the rout at Elland Road. Newcastle had made a positive start under Jaissle despite the upheaval of losing manager Eddie Howe and key players Anthony Gordon, Bruno Guimaraes and Sandro Tonali in the off-season. Despite being owned by the financial might of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund, Newcastle targeted rising stars to fill the void of those that left and were outmuscled by a more experienced Leeds. "It was clear from the start and I said that many times that we will have up and downs, challenges along the way," said Jaissle. "We faced that challenge and it's tough, it's really tough."

## UN urges access for investigators to Gaza

GENEVA: The United Nations called Tuesday for international investigators to be granted to access to all of Gaza "to assist with evidence-gathering" as hundreds of bodies are pulled from the rubble. The ongoing recovery of extensive human remains in Gaza, mostly of women and children, nearly three years after Israel heavily bombed their homes, highlights the possibility that war crimes have been committed, the UN warned. "The remains of what appears to be entire families are now being unearthed at locations that were pulverised by Israeli attacks," UN rights chief Volker Turk pointed out in a statement. "I worry the remains recovered so far may only be the tip of the iceberg," he said, pointing to how "much of Gaza has been flattened by Israeli bombing or demolition and clearing by heavy machinery and explosives". "Today, many areas in Gaza where the Israeli military is deployed continue to be levelled by bulldozers with no respect for the dead under the rubble," he lamented. +The rights office said it was critical that evidence of violations, including at destroyed sites, calling for "international investigators to be allowed into all

parts of Gaza to assist with evidence-gathering".

It pointed out that the Palestinian Civil Defence had reported that more than 630 bodies and other human remains had been recovered from beneath destroyed buildings across Gaza since last November. "It estimates the total number of missing under the rubble at over 8,000," it said. Turk insisted that "every feasible effort must be taken to document and identify these victims, preserve forensic information and biological samples, record their burial locations and inform their families". "The discovery of extensive remains under the rubble in Gaza city reservoirs (the) concerns of war crimes and other atrocity crimes," he warned. Israel's full-scale war on Gaza — which began after a Hamas attack inside Israel on October 7, 2023 — reduced much of the Palestinian territory to rubble. The relentless Israeli bombardment and ground offensive has killed more than 73,000 Palestinians, including more than 1,350 since a ceasefire agreed last October, according to Gaza's health ministry, which is under Hamas authority. Hamas's October 7 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,221 people, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures. — APP

## Al-Qadsiah the sole Saudi victors on opening day of AFC Champions League Elite

## DNA

DAMMAM: Another season of change has arrived in Asian football, as the expanded AFC Champions League Elite kicked off its 2026/27 competition on Monday. Six matches from the West League Stage took place, with narrow victories the order of the day as exhausted squads head into the international break this weekend. "We just played our (Saudi Pro League) match against Al-Taawoun 48 hours ago," Al-Hilal head coach Simone Inzaghi said ahead of their clash against Al-Gharafa of Qatar on Tuesday. This concern about player fatigue, just seven matches into the league season, was a recurring theme; Al-Nassr head coach Ange Postecoglou noted during the press conference before his side take on Al-Ain in the UAE: "We've already played eight games in the hottest part of the year." The club that will perhaps be feeling the relentless nature of the schedule most acutely are defending ACL champions

Al-Ahli, who emerged from their opening fixture against Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan with a 1-1 home draw. TV pundit Obeidallah Al-Essi said that, according to his research, Al-Ahli have played the most games of any team in the world since the start of the season. While cross-checking that claim across every country would be a monumental task indeed, it is certainly hard to imagine there can be many teams, if any, that have played 10 competitive games in the past 31 days, with an 11th to come against South African side Mamelodi Sundowns in the FIFA Intercontinental Cup on Saturday. The optimism surrounding that game has faded somewhat, especially after three defeats in their past five SPL fixtures, followed by the draw with Pakhtakor on Monday. In fact, Al-Ahli were on the brink of defeat, after the visitors broke through their defense on the counter in the 86th minute and Flamaron put the ball past Edouard Mendy to open the scoring. However, Firas Al-Buraikan, scorer of Al-Ahli's winning, and only, goal in last sea-

son's ACL final, pounced on a rebound in the third minute of stoppage time, after goalkeeper Vladimir Nazarov had parried the ball into his path, to rescue a point. Earlier in the day, Neftchi Fergana of Uzbekistan welcomed Al-Quwa Al-Jawiya of Iraq in the opening fixture of this season's tournament. The visitors were unable to find a way past their hosts and Neftchi claimed a 1-0 victory thanks to Zoran Marusic's 83rd-minute winner. Al-Ittihad traveled to Doha to face Al-Shamal, who were playing in the competition for the first time and took the lead in the 63rd minute through Baghdad Bounedjah. The game appeared to be heading toward defeat for the Tigers, until Georginio Wijnaldum snatched an equalizer in the dying moments of injury time for a 1-1 draw. In Dubai, a 22nd-minute Yuri Cesar strike was enough for last season's semifinalists Shabab Al-Ahli to claim a narrow 1-0 victory over Tractor of Iran. Another Iranian side, Esteghlal, claimed the biggest victory of the day as they triumphed 3-0 against Al-Sadd of Qatar at Al-Basra International

Stadium in Iraq. Finally, Al-Qadsiah's debut in the competition could scarcely have gone better as they defeated Emirati side Al-Wasl 2-1 in Dammam. Brendan Rodgers' side delivered a performance that precisely matched the coach's strategic template, featuring assists from wing-backs Mohammed Abu Al-Shamat and Christopher Bonus Baah for second-half goals from Julian Quinones and Mateo Retegui. Al-Wasl did pull one back through Leandro Leite deep into stoppage time but it was too little, too late. After Quinones grabbed the opener in the 57th minute, Al-Qadsiah posted a message on social media platform X, saying: "He opened the scoring at the World Cup, and he's also opened our account in Asia." The Mexican talisman, top-scorer in the SPL last season, will be hoping the goal kick-starts a return to his top form as Al-Qadsiah set their sights on a deep run in the competition. On Tuesday, Al-Nassr travel to the UAE for a mouthwatering encounter against Al-Ain at 7 p.m., Saudi time, then Al-Hilal host Al-Gharafa at 9:15 p.m.

## KP CM alleges police abuse

FROM PAGE 01  
large number of Lahore residents had joined the movement on Monday despite his party not having issued a formal call for a protest. "We had not told anyone where we were going. The people of Lahore came out themselves," he said. According to the KP CM, police detained several party workers in prison vans. He said he stood on top of one of the vehicles in protest and was later taken away in another police van after sitting inside it. Afridi described the episode as his "abduction", alleging that he was driven around Lahore for about 15 minutes without any security before being left on the roadside.

## Saudi Arabia vows to...

FROM PAGE 01  
Makkah, Jeddah and Taif governorates, before quickly cancelling them. Saudi civil defence had earlier issued short-lived air-raid alerts in six regions. The Houthis have also targeted the oil infrastructure of Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, pushing global oil prices above the \$100 threshold. A Houthi strike in western Yemen on Monday killed eight government soldiers, according to two military sources. The group also claimed a new large-scale attack using "dozens of ballistic missiles and drones" on King Khalid airbase in Khamis Mushait, in southern Saudi Arabia. A Khamis Mushait resident told AFP he heard "intense blasts" which left fires burning for a "long time", adding "Honestly, we couldn't sleep at all." The Riyadh-led coalition confirmed on Tuesday there had been missile and drone attacks the previous day on Khamis Mushait, Abha and Taif, reporting 13 civilians wounded and damage to seven houses and two vehicles. Saudi Arabia responded with more than 50 strikes, as it had the day before, according to the Houthis. As attacks continue, the United Nations Security Council is due to meet to discuss the Houthis' offensive, diplomatic sources said.

## OIC lauds Pak support for Palestine

FROM PAGE 01  
He appreciated his distinguished diplomatic and international experience and expressed confidence that his leadership would contribute to greater effectiveness and excellence of the OIC General Secretariat in serving the Muslim Ummah. He also briefed the Secretary-General on COMSTECH's major ongoing and planned initiatives in science and technology, higher education, healthcare, capacity building, AI and support for OIC member states. The OIC Secretary General, in his remarks, particularly praised COMSTECH's offer of allocating five thousand fellowships and scholarships for Palestinian students and scholars. He expressed his desire to meet Palestinian scholars, medical students, and biomedical researchers during his upcoming visit to Pakistan. The OIC Secretary-General also appreciated continued commitment of COMSTECH to supporting the Palestinian scientific and academic community. He expressed particular interest in COMSTECH initiatives in Artificial Intelligence and called to take a leading role in developing an OIC-wide AI initiative. He emphasized that the Muslim world should not remain merely a user of AI, but also become a developer, innovator and contributor to emerging AI technologies. Emphasizing the strategic importance of science, technology and innovation for the development of the Muslim world, the OIC Secretary-General said he would discuss enhanced support for science and technology with the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Co-Chairman of COMSTECH during his visit to Pakistan.

## Briefs

PSX turns  
bullish, gains  
over 1,421  
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 1,421.67 points, a positive change of 0.85 percent, to close at 169,392.33 points against 167,970.66 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 372.016 million shares, compared to 570.472 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value stood at Rs17.210 billion, down from Rs24.672 billion. Market capitalisation increased to Rs18.857 trillion from Rs18.728 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 494 companies that traded in the ready market, 280 posted gains, 166 suffered losses, while 48 remained unchanged, reflecting an overall bullish momentum in the market. Cnergycio PK led the volume chart with 56,229 million shares, followed by Media Times Ltd with 39,882 million shares and Pak Refinery with 22,510 million shares.

Among the top gainers, Pakistan Services Limited surged by Rs95.17 to close at Rs1,291.39, while Sapphire Fibres Limited gained Rs32.31 to settle at Rs1,064.44.

On the losing side, Nilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs174.51 to close at Rs23,934.71, while Buxly Paints Limited declined by Rs75.11 to Rs676.02.—APP

Gold prices  
fall by  
Rs4,000 per  
tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a sharp decline in the local market on Tuesday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs4,000 to settle at Rs449,336, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs3,429 to Rs385,233, whereas 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs3,143 to Rs353,143. In the international market, the price of gold fell by \$40 to \$4,268 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola remained stable at Rs6,802, while the price of 10 grams of silver also saw no change and settled at Rs5,831. The price of silver in the international market traded flat at \$63.23 per ounce, the association added.—APP

Pakistan, Canada agree to  
accelerate expand trade coop

The Canadian High Commissioner reaffirmed Canada's interest in diversifying its international trade and strengthening engagement with Asian markets. Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination, facilitate business delegations and pursue tangible outcomes from the forthcoming investment negotiations

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, H.E. Tarik Ali Khan, discussed accelerating negotiations on the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) and expanding bilateral cooperation in agriculture, mining, clean energy, aviation and value-added industries. The Canadian High Commissioner called on the Commerce Minister at the Ministry of Commerce. Senior ministry officials, including Secretary Commerce Jawad Paul, also attended the meeting, said a release issued here on Tuesday. Both sides welcomed the growing momentum in Pakistan-Canada relations and expressed their resolve to translate political goodwill into stronger commercial and investment partnerships. They agreed that the upcoming round of FIPA negotiations, expected in the first week of October, would provide an important opportunity to address outstanding issues and make substantive progress towards concluding the agreement. The Canadian High Commissioner described FIPA as a foundational step for increasing Canadian investment in Pakistan. He said the agreement would provide investors with greater confidence through legal protection, arbitration and dispute-resolution mechanisms, while paving the way for more joint ventures and, eventually, broader trade



arrangements.

He noted that Canadian companies increasingly recognised the scale and potential of Pakistan's large consumer market, but a predictable and secure investment framework

was essential to encourage greater participation. He added that the agreement would also send a positive signal to more than 300,000 Canadians of Pakistani origin who could play an important role in investment and business

linkages. Minister Jam Kamal Khan assured the High Commissioner of Pakistan's full support for advancing the negotiations and said the government was committed to addressing legitimate concerns of investors. He directed the relevant officials to hold preparatory consultations ahead of the next negotiating round to narrow differences and identify practical solutions. "We are as ambitious as Canada in taking this process forward. Our objective is to resolve outstanding matters and establish a strong, mutually beneficial framework for long-term economic cooperation," the Minister said. The meeting also reviewed opportunities in clean and renewable energy. The Canadian side highlighted progress on a proposed hybrid renewable-energy project in Jhimpir and shared details of Canadian companies offering solar and green-energy solutions for Pakistani industries. In mining, the Canadian High Commissioner said a strong delegation of companies working in exploration, mining services, equipment and supply chains was expected to participate in an upcoming minerals investment forum in Pakistan. Minister Jam Kamal Khan welcomed the interest and highlighted mining as one of the government's priority sectors. Agriculture and food security featured prominently in the discussions.—DNA

Pak, China, Africa can build  
trilateral eco coop framework

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at an event held at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Capital House in Islamabad have emphasized that the Pakistan Africa Economic Council (PAEC) could play the role of a catalyst in expanding trade and investment ties between Pakistan, Shenzhen and African markets. They said that the development strategies of Pakistan, China and African countries create considerable room for cooperation, as China's industrial capabilities, technology and market demand can complement the resources, industrial priorities and market potential of Pakistan and African countries. The event was organized in recognition of the services of President of the Shenzhen Government Procurement Association and Chairman of the Industrial Globalization Alliance, Feng Qiang, and to highlight the potential of Shenzhen in promoting international economic cooperation among China, Pakistan and the African region. Addressing the ceremony, Feng Qiang said Pakistan, China and African countries could build a practical triangular cooperation framework by linking industrial capacity, investment opportunities, procurement demand and regional markets. He particularly appreciated the vision of Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan, Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Africa Economic Council, for promoting economic and commercial linkages between China, Pakistan and Africa. Feng Qiang also paid tribute to Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan and Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of FPCCI, for organizing the event and promoting initiatives aimed at integrating emerging and potential economies. "We come from Shenzhen, a city with strong industrial and technological capabilities, and we see significant potential for cooperation with Pakistan and Africa," he said. The President noted that Pakistan's "Uraan Pakistan Economic Transformation Plan" places emphasis on export growth and digital development, while Africa's Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provide important frameworks for industrialization, regional integration and market expansion. "China is advancing high-standard opening-up, promoting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and improving comprehensive services for companies operating overseas," Feng Qiang said. The President of the Shenzhen Government Procurement Association and Chairman of the Industrial Globalization Alliance called for stronger digital connectivity and industrial cooperation among China, Pakistan and Africa, saying that the three regions possess complementary resources, markets and industrial capabilities that can generate new opportunities for trade, investment, employment and sustainable development. Speaking about the iGlobal Platform, Feng Qiang said the platform being developed by the Industrial Globalization Alliance is designed as a digital and intelligent international cooperation platform focused on real industrial demand. According to him, iGlobal would use artificial intelligence to support country analysis, multilingual communication and supply-and-demand matching, while professional teams and local partners would help convert opportunities into executable projects.—DNA

Ukraine launches  
offensive against  
Russia near key  
town

KYIV: A Ukrainian army unit has launched a counter-offensive against Russian forces near Lyman, an embattled town in Ukraine's east that Moscow has been edging toward for months, the unit's commander said Tuesday. Russia has seized around three-quarters of the Donetsk region since invading in February 2022, with Lyman one of the few urban areas in the region still under Ukraine's control. Its capture could pave the way for Moscow to sweep further south and threaten

the Ukrainian-held strongholds of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, according to military analysts. The area has been the site of intense battles throughout the four-and-a-half-year war. "The 3rd Army Corps has launched an offensive operation called Vivaldi in this sector," the Commander of Ukraine's 3rd Army Corps, Andriy Biletsky, said in a video on Telegram. Ukrainian units have cleared Russian infiltrators from an area "about 75 square kilometers," he added. DeepState, a battlefield map linked to the Ukrainian army, showed Ukrainian troops had made a small pocket of gains north of the town. There was no immediate public comment from Russia to Ukraine's claims. Widespread drone use at the front has made large-scale troop movements almost impossible, preventing either side from gaining a clear advantage in the grinding conflict. Russia's advance in east Ukraine gained pace in August, but remained far slower than in previous years of its invasion, an AFP analysis of data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) showed earlier in September.—Agencies

Oman, US discuss  
de-escalation as talks  
over Hormuz stall

DUBAI: The foreign ministers of the US and Oman have discussed ways to contain the escalating tensions in the Gulf region and create conditions for renewed diplomacy. Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Al-Busaidi and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke over the telephone on Tuesday about the need to tackle "outstanding issues" in ways that support regional security and stability, Oman's state news agency reported. Oman has played a central mediating role in the US-Iran conflict and is leading diplomatic efforts over the Strait of Hormuz, where disruptions to commercial shipping have heightened concerns over global trade and energy supplies. Muscat earlier postponed a planned meeting in Salalah between Iran and Gulf Arab states to discuss arrangements for commercial navigation through the strait. But Al-Busaidi said that the meeting, scheduled for Monday, had been postponed to allow more time to secure regional consensus. The talks were expected to bring Iran together with Gulf states to discuss a temporary shipping arrangement aimed at easing tensions and restoring safer passage through the strategic waterway. Against this backdrop, Al-Busaidi and Rubio stressed the importance of maintaining coordination between their countries and building on existing cooperation to "entrench security and stability at both the regional and global levels," the report said. On Tuesday, Oman said it was searching for two missing crew members who were aboard a tanker targeted in the Strait of Hormuz that was now being towed. Vessels in the vital strait have come under repeated attack as Tehran seeks to maintain a stranglehold on the waterway in its war with the United States. Washington has also kept up a counterblockade of Iranian ports. The Omani Maritime Security Center said it was overseeing a towing operation for the Panama-flagged oil tanker ELGAIA to a port in Oman after a fire was extinguished in its engine room following an attack northeast of Musandam. The center, which is affiliated with Oman's ministry of defense, added in a statement on X that "a Royal Navy of Oman vessel evacuated 23 crew members from the tanker and provided them with the necessary medical care." A search continues for two crew members who remain missing, it added. Oman did not say when the ship was attacked. However, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), a marine monitor, said a vessel had been on fire on Saturday after it was struck by an "unknown projectile" in the Strait of Hormuz. British maritime security firm Vanguard Tech also reported that a Panama-flagged tanker had been struck that day and that the Omani navy was evacuating the crew.—APP

Syrian  
Kurds aim  
to preserve  
Kurdish  
schooling

QAMISHLI, Syria: Syrian Kurds are seeking to preserve schooling in their mother tongue as Damascus reasserts authority over Kurdish regions that governed themselves during years of war, welcoming a decree that allows some subjects to be taught in Kurdish but saying it falls short of their demand for a fully Kurdish-language curriculum. The issue has come to the fore at the start of the first school year since Syria's Kurdish-majority areas were reintegrated into the Syrian state under agreements between Damascus and Kurdish-led authorities. Pupils in Kurdish regions have protested over the roll-out of a new curriculum in Arabic. The role of the Kurdish language is a sensitive matter for Kurds. Kurdish was banned in schools under the Assads, who espoused a Baathist ideology rooted in Arab nationalism, but flourished during years of Kurdish self-rule in northern Syria. President Bashar Assad was ousted in 2024. Now, Syria's Kurds face a rapidly changing reality after the state under President Ahmed Al-Sharaa seized Kurdish-run regions in an offensive in January, paving the way for negotiations on how to merge their security and civilian institutions, with the Kurds trying to preserve as many of their gains as possible.—APP

Thousands  
demonstrate  
in Costa  
Rica over  
proposed  
legal reforms

SAN JOSE: Thousands of people have demonstrated across Costa Rica, protesting against President Laura Fernandez's proposed judicial reforms, which experts warn could undermine democracy. Carrying lanterns and waving the national flag, demonstrators gathered on Monday in San Jose's central Morazan Square and chanted "democracy" as they called for the separation of powers. Fernandez, who took office in May, campaigned on a promise to crack down on the wave of crime sweeping what was once Central America's safest country. The right-wing leader also vowed to overhaul what she has described as an overly permissive judiciary. She has sought to cut the judiciary's budget and supports giving the legislature power to appoint the attorney general. Tensions with the judiciary have escalated in recent months, with Fernandez calling the judges "putschists.—APP

Protecting children, protecting dreams:  
The urgent need for child protection

NABEELA ASLAM

At 13, Bushra should have been sitting in a classroom, preparing for her next examination, turning the pages of her science books and imagining a future in which she would one day wear a white coat and become a doctor. A bright class 8 student in Quetta, she loved learning and was among those young students who had begun to see education as a pathway to a better life. Her ambitions were still taking shape, but they were clear enough: she wanted to study, move forward and build a future through her education. Instead, her childhood ended with a family decision she had little power to influence. Bushra was married to her uncle's son, an unemployed young man whom her wealthy uncle believed would become more responsible after marriage. The marriage was arranged within the family, apparently with the expectation that it would help secure the young man's future. But for Bushra, the consequences were very different. She was taken away from her classroom, separated from the routines of childhood and forced to put aside the dream she had nurtured through years of schooling. When I met Bushra, the consequences of that decision were painfully visible. She was suffering from serious health problems, including impaired kidney function and high blood pressure. The emotional impact was equally severe. At an age when a child should be developing confidence and independence, Bushra was struggling to understand and cope with circumstances she had never chosen for herself. Yet, amid these difficulties, one place continued to connect her with the girl she once was: her school. Her teachers had not forgotten their bright student. They continued to encourage her, support her and give her the confidence to think about education again. Their response was particularly important because

married young girls are often discouraged, directly or indirectly, from returning to school. Some institutions fear that a married student may be considered unsuitable for the school environment or that her presence could influence other girls. Bushra's school chose a different path. It did not close its doors on her simply because she had been married. Instead, the school administration welcomed and supported her, giving her an opportunity to continue her education. For Bushra, the classroom is therefore much more than a place where lessons are taught. It is a reminder that her life can still contain possibilities beyond the circumstances imposed upon her. It offers a connection to the ambitions she was forced to leave behind and, perhaps, a pathway towards rebuilding the future she once imagined. Her story is deeply personal, but it is not unique. Across Pakistan, thousands of girls face circumstances that interrupt their education and limit their choices long before they are old enough to make decisions about their own lives. Child marriage, poverty, malnutrition, child labour, violence, lack of legal identity and exclusion from education are often discussed as separate problems. In reality, they are closely connected and frequently reinforce one another. A child who grows up without a birth certificate or other legal identity documents can face difficulties accessing education, health care and other public services. A child who is malnourished may struggle to learn and remain in school. A girl who leaves school early may become more vulnerable to child labour or early marriage. Once married, a young girl may face early pregnancy, economic dependency, domestic violence and further exclusion from education. Each vulnerability can deepen another, creating a cycle that is difficult to break. Pakistan's child-rights situation makes this cycle particularly urgent. Approximately 6-7 percent of children die before reaching the age of

five. Around 40 percent of children under five are stunted, 17 percent are wasted and 29 percent are underweight, while approximately half of children aged 6-59 months suffer from anaemia. These figures are not simply indicators of poor health. Malnutrition affects children's physical and cognitive development, their ability to learn and, ultimately, their capacity to participate fully in society. The protection environment is equally troubling. Violent forms of discipline remain widespread, exposing children to physical punishment and psychological aggression. Children also face sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence. Sahil documented 1,828 cases of child sexual violence in Pakistan in 2024. But documented cases represent only the incidents that reach reporting and support systems. Stigma, fear, family pressure, social norms and limited access to justice mean that many cases remain hidden. For girls, gender inequality adds another layer of vulnerability. Approximately 18 percent of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18. Early marriage can bring an abrupt end to education and increase a girl's dependence on others, while exposing her to early pregnancy, health complications and domestic violence. At the same time, around 11 percent of children aged 5-17 are engaged in child labour. Girls also perform substantial amounts of unpaid domestic and care work, much of which remains invisible in official statistics. Children are also deeply affected by violence and harmful practices within the household, even when they are not the direct targets. Growing up in an environment of fear, coercion or insecurity can have lasting consequences for a child's emotional wellbeing, behaviour, ability to concentrate and educational development. Bushra's story brings this reality painfully close to home. It was not a stranger or an outside force that ended her education at

13; the decision to marry her was made by her own family. Her parents, who should have been protecting her childhood and supporting her ambitions, became part of a decision that took her away from the classroom and interrupted her dream of becoming a doctor. Her experience demonstrates how deeply entrenched social norms, family pressures and gender inequality can shape decisions that have lifelong consequences for children. Ms. Asiya Arif, Executive Director of the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), said a recent study conducted by her organisation had identified an alarming rise in violence against children perpetrated by their primary caregivers, highlighting the urgent need for stronger family support, child-protection mechanisms and greater awareness among caregivers about the long-term impact of violence on children. Bushra's experience illustrates this wider reality. Her marriage did not simply change her marital status. It disrupted her education, affected her physical and emotional wellbeing and altered the course of a future she had begun to imagine. Her story reminds us that when a girl leaves school prematurely, society loses far more than a student. It loses potential, talent and the contribution that young woman might have made to her family, community and country. This is why schools and teachers matter so much. Education is not only about textbooks and examinations. For vulnerable children, a school can provide safety, confidence, social connection and a sense of possibility. A teacher can become the person who tells a girl that her life is not defined by the circumstances into which she was born or the decisions others have made for her. Bushra's teachers demonstrated precisely this kind of commitment. By keeping the door of the classroom open, they challenged the idea that marriage must automatically mean the end of a girl's education.

Their support cannot undo what has happened to her, but it can help ensure that marriage does not become the final chapter of her story. Pakistan's Constitution provides an important foundation for protecting children and promoting women's equality. Article 25 guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the law, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and allows the State to make special provisions for the protection of women and children. Article 34 calls for steps to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of national life, while Article 35 places a responsibility on the State to protect the marriage, the family, the mother and the child. The challenge, therefore, is not merely to recognise children's rights on paper, but to ensure that those rights are protected in the homes, schools and communities where children live and grow. This requires effective institutions, accessible and responsive services, adequate resources, stronger child-protection mechanisms and clear accountability for violations. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have therefore called for the establishment of a dedicated Ministry for Child Protection at the federal level, with a clear mandate to coordinate and strengthen child-protection policies, services and institutions across the country. Such an institution could provide much-needed leadership and coordination among government departments and ensure that issues such as child marriage, violence, abuse, child labour, malnutrition, lack of legal identity and school exclusion are addressed as interconnected child-rights concerns rather than as isolated problems. For children like Bushra, meaningful protection must go beyond laws and policies; it must ensure that their families, institutions and communities protect their right to education, safety, dignity and the freedom to shape their own future.

## Briefs

Businessmen  
split over  
interest rate

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: The business community on Monday gave a mixed response to the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) decision to keep the policy rate unchanged at 11.5 per cent, with some backing the move while others called for further cuts to revive investment and industrial activity. The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has expressed disappointment over the decision of the SBP's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to maintain the policy rate at 11.5pc, saying trade and industry are in dire need of some breathing space amid the current stagnation-prone economic environment. The apex trade body has termed the decision as highly contractionary and counter-productive – warning that holding the benchmark interest rate at an oppressive level will continue to severely stifle economic activity and undermine industrial revival efforts across the country. "Monetary policy was the only, but potent, tool available to the authorities to provide some relief at the moment, but it remained unutilised," it added. FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh said the business community had demanded a reduction in the policy rate to single-digit to help bring down the exorbitant cost of doing business. He elaborated that the central bank's overly cautious approach directly contradicts current economic realities – and, denying much needed support to trade & industry as trade deficit has climbed by 18.1pc in July-August 2026 on year-on-year basis. – APP

JI rejects  
govt petrol  
scheme

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami on Tuesday categorically rejected the government's special fuel relief scheme, saying that the package cannot be a substitute for the petroleum levy. Speaking to the media following a delegation-level meeting with the government's team, comprising ministers Ali Pervaiz Malik, Azam Nazir Tarar and Bilal Azhar Kayani in Islamabad, JI Deputy Emir Liaqat Baloch said: "The JI and the government had held technical negotiations on independent power producers (IPPs) and the petroleum levy.

Tightly-controlled  
election in Russia

MOSCOW: Russia will this week hold tightly-controlled elections in a vote seen by the Kremlin as a barometer of public opinion on the war with Ukraine which is dragging through its fifth year. Some Russians have grown weary of economic stagnation and intensifying Ukrainian retaliatory attacks and there is fear in some quarters that Putin could order a mass call-up of new soldiers after the election. The parliamentary vote – held from September 18 to 20 – will be the first since Russia launched its offensive in February 2022, and only the second nationwide poll after a presidential contest that re-elected Putin in 2024. Voting is also due to take place in parts of Ukraine occupied by Russia's army. The war has killed hundreds of

thousands, brought huge censorship at home, devastated eastern Ukraine and seen Moscow hit with unprecedented Western sanctions. With Moscow having banned criticism of the war, no real opposition parties will be on the ballot paper and Putin's ruling United Russia party is assured to scoop a majority of seats in the State Duma. Even if the results are "predefined", voting still matters, exiled Russian political scientist Nikolai Petrov said. For Putin – in power for 26 years – it is important to "demonstrate to elites that he is still supported, still trusted by ordinary people", Petrov said. Half of the 450 seats up for grabs will be decided by a nationwide vote for party blocs, with the other half allocated to single-member districts across the country. Only parties that support Putin and the war have been permitted to stand on the national ballot: the ruling United Russia party, the Communist Party, A Just Russia, nationalist LDPR and New People. – APP

China FM urges US to 'stop  
preparing for war in outer space'

China's foreign ministry opposed the move, warning against the "weaponisation of outer space, turning it into a battlefield, as well as an arms race there"

DNA

BEIJING: China urged the United States on Tuesday to "stop preparing for war" in space, after the US Space Force confirmed it had deployed weapons into orbit for the first time. Beijing and Washington are key geopolitical rivals and have long sought to expand their interests – and strategic footprints – in space. The US Space Force said on Monday that it had deployed "on-orbit space control weapons capable of defending... against hostile adversary action", without providing specifics. China's foreign ministry opposed the move, warning against the "weaponisation of outer space, turning it into a battlefield, as well as an arms race there". "We urge the US side to stop expanding its military capabilities and preparing for war in outer space," ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told a news briefing.



The US Space Force singled out China as a threat in its announcement, saying Beijing "develops and operates space and counterspace capabilities as part of a military modernization strategy". It also named Russia, another geopolitical rival, which it said "believes space supremacy will be a decisive factor in future conflicts". The militarisation of space is as old as the space race itself – as soon as the Soviet Union launched the world's first artificial satellite, Sputnik, into orbit in 1957, Washington and Moscow began exploring ways to both arm and destroy such spacecraft. The biggest worry was once about nuclear weapons in space, but the superpowers and other countries signed the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, banning weapons of mass destruction in orbit. Since then, the United States, China, Russia and India have explored ways to fight in space outside of that treaty, including by targeting rivals' satellites, which are key for military communications, surveillance and navigation.

Auto sales fall sharply in August  
amid EV, hybrid tax uncertainty

Pama urges govt to announce next  
auto policy without further delay to  
protect manufacturing capital

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's automobile sector saw a sharp month-on-month decline in August 2026 as uncertainty over taxation of hybrid and electric vehicles affected manufacturers and consumers. Passenger car production fell 23% and sales dropped 20% in August compared to July, Pama said. Commercial vehicles, jeeps and pickups posted a steeper decline, with production down 40% and sales down 29% over the same period. Farm tractor production fell 23% and sales dropped 15% MoM. According to Pama's data, total car production slipped to 13,267 units in August from 17,307 units in July, while sales fell to 13,717 units from 17,216 units. In the jeeps and pickups segment, production dropped to 2,636 units from 4,361 units, and sales fell to 1,841 units from 2,602 units over the same period. In a statement, Pama Director General Razi-ur-Rahman said the slowdown stemmed from prolonged regulatory uncertainty following the expiry of the Automotive Industry Development and

Export Plan (AIDEP 2021-26) in June, which has left the industry without a follow-up policy framework. He said the lack of clarity on sales tax treatment for hybrid, plug-in hybrid and range-extended electric vehicles has brought trading to a near standstill, with billions of rupees in sales lost as buyers postpone purchase decisions. "The delay in policy announcement has engineered a loss-loss situation," Rahman said, "with manufacturers left holding unsold inventory while the government continues to forgo tax revenue." He said the sharp drop in monthly car and jeep sales reflects a consumer base in a "wait and see" mode, wary of prices shifting once a new policy is unveiled. Pama urged the government to announce the next auto policy without further delay to protect manufacturing capital and restore consumer confidence before the monthly declines harden into a recessionary trend. Despite the monthly slump, cumulative figures for the July-August period showed a strong year-on-year (YoY) recovery. Passenger car production rose 36%, and sales surged 80% compared to the same period last year, while commercial vehicles, trucks and buses posted growth of 84% in production and 73% in sales. Two- and three-wheelers expanded 29% across both production and sales. Farm tractor sales grew 5.0% YoY even as production fell 17%, with the segment still adjusting to the end of a government tractor subsidy scheme; a replacement scheme has been announced but is yet to be rolled out, leaving buyers on hold.

Govts worldwide are way  
behind, says Bill Gates

NEW YORK: No government in the world is ready for the changes artificial intelligence will bring to society, Bill Gates said in an interview, as he warned of the risks ahead. The Microsoft co-founder and billionaire philanthropist had until recently been optimistic about AI, but has changed his position, warning of the threats to jobs, concerns about attacks and the dangers of addiction to AI companions. "I don't think any government is nearly as deep on this as they have to be," he said. However, he added that the technology has great potential to help the world's poorest if managed properly and accessed equally – and his namesake foundation said on Tuesday that it plans to spend at least \$1 billion in the next two years on expanding access to AI. Gates said he has been talking to world leaders about his concerns, including President Donald Trump and his team in the US, and said he aims to meet China's President Xi Jinping later this year. "Governments are way behind on this one," he added. But despite his concerns, Gates and his foundation hope AI can help narrow gaps between the richest and poorest, rather than widening them. The foundation's \$1 billion spending plan, part of its previously announced plans to spend \$9 billion annually, will go to partners working in education, healthcare and agriculture, the foundation said. It also aims to help build the data foundations AI is built on, such as ensuring that large language models work in every language people speak. – APP

FIA plans  
immigration  
automation

Official data shows 22,650,199  
passenger movements were  
processed during 2025

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan handled more than 22.65 million international passenger movements during 2025, reflecting the scale of cross-border travel through its airports. The official data showed that 22,650,199 passenger movements were processed during the year, comprising 11,097,240 arrivals and 11,552,959 departures. On the day covered by the report,

Pakistan's international entry and exit points recorded 51,517 passenger movements across 295 arriving and departing flights. The six airports together accounted for 49,181 passenger movements and 285 flights, with the remaining 2,336 passenger movements and 10 flights recorded at other international entry and exit points. Against this backdrop, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) is introducing greater automation and digital verification at immigration counters. FIA Additional Director General Immigration Nouman Siddiqui told The News that under Director General Dr Usman Anwar, a comprehensive plan is being implemented to facilitate genuine travellers while strengthening checks against illegal travel and fraudulent documents. Siddiqui said the FIA, he said, was working to make immigration processing faster, safer and more convenient for legitimate travellers. A key component is the introduction of automated e-gates, initially as a pilot project. Eligible travellers, including work-permit holders and others whose credentials can be digitally verified, will be able to complete immigration formalities through automated systems. Siddiqui said automated processing was expected to make immigration clearance for eligible passengers 70 to 80% faster. The FIA is also improving mechanisms for handling passenger complaints and identifying operational bottlenecks.

ISLAMABAD: Lebanon Interior Minister calls on Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in Islamabad. – DNA

Imran Khan detention  
7 Australia cricket captains  
want their FM to intervene

"The group makes clear it takes no position" on the legal or political case against Imran, describing that as a matter for Pakistan alone, the report said

NEWS DESK

SYDNEY: Seven former Australia cricket captains have written to the country's foreign minister, Penny Wong, to raise concerns over PTI founder Imran Khan's incarceration, terming it a matter of "basic humanity", Cricinfo reported on Tuesday. Imran, 73, has been imprisoned since 2023 and was sentenced late last year along with his wife to 17 years on corruption charges they both deny. According to Cricinfo, the signatories of the letter include Allan Border, Greg Chappell, Ian Chappell, Belinda Clark, Kim Hughes, Mark Taylor and Steve Waugh. In the letter, they said they were writing "not as diplomats or political figures, but as former captains who felt compelled to speak up". "The group makes clear it takes no position" on the legal or political case against Imran, describing that as a matter for Pakistan alone, the report said. Their concern, they wrote, was with the treatment of any person in detention, calling it "a matter of basic humanity, whatever their politics". According to the Sydney Morning

Herald, a spokesperson for Wong said that Australia "regularly raises" Imran's case in discussions with Pakistan. "We continue to encourage authorities to ensure appropriate medical care is available to him," the spokesperson was quoted as saying. Last month, 22 international cricketers – including the Chappell brothers, Border, Waugh, Clark and Hughes – had penned an appeal to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, calling for Imran's medical treatment in line with Supreme Court directives. On August 18, the Supreme Court directed the government to move Imran to Islamabad's Shifa International Hospital, a private facility, within two days for examination and treatment by a multidisciplinary medical board. However, it later emerged that Imran was instead taken to the government-run Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences. In February, Indian cricket greats Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev had joined a dozen other former international captains, including the Chappell brothers, Border, Waugh, Clark and Hughes, in demanding better prison treatment for Imran, who they called "one of the finest all-rounders" of the game.

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