



Islamabad POST

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Nation will never forget sacrifices of soldiers: Tarar

Detailed News On Page-08

Drive to end polio starts in Sindh: CM

Detailed News On Page-02

IT, telecom exports see growth: Shaza

Detailed News On Page-07



Tit-for-tat response

Pakistan strikes terror camps in Afghanistan

Maximum precautions were taken and it was ensured that no collateral damage occurs, says info ministry; An explosive expose of nexus between RAW, Afghan Taliban, Fitna Al Hindustan and Fitna Al Khawarij under Haibatullah

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani jet fighters carried out airstrikes Monday on what security officials described as suspected militant hideouts in eastern Afghanistan and claimed 28 of them were killed. Authorities in Kabul said at least three people were killed. The strikes near the frontier between the two countries marked a renewed escalation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, raising the prospect of further cross-border hostilities and threatening to complicate efforts by regional countries including China to mediate between Islamabad and Kabul. They came after Pakistan warned it could target militants inside Afghanistan following two deadly attacks in recent days on its security forces near the border. Militant attacks targeting Pakistan's police and security forces have surged in recent years. The escalation follows months of military action. Hundreds of people have been killed in cross-border fighting since February, when Afghanistan launched retaliatory strikes after Pakistan carried out airstrikes inside Afghan territory. Authorities in Islamabad have blamed the Pakistani Taliban and allied militant groups for most of the violence. The Pakistani Taliban are separate from but allied with the Afghan Taliban that returned to power in 2021. Two Pakistani security officials said 28 suspected militants were killed in Monday's airstrikes. Afghanistan's government, however, said the strikes killed three civilians and wounded four others. The claims from either side could not immediately be independently verified. The ministry reiterated Pakistan's resolve to always strive for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

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Four India-backed terrorists killed

Large cache of sophisticated weapons, ammunition recovered from killed militants, say security sources

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: Security forces have killed four Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists during an operation conducted in Balochistan's Panjgur district, security sources said on Monday. The operation was conducted in Aphan-e-Koh and Prom areas of Panjgur following information about the presence of India-backed militants, they added. According to the sources, security forces engaged the militants in an intense exchange of fire during the operation, killing four terrorists. A large cache of sophisticated weapons and ammunition was recovered from the militants killed in the operation, the sources said. Security forces will continue operations until the last terrorist is eliminated, they added. The operation comes just a day after security forces foiled an attempt by terrorists to disrupt public movement on the N-25 highway near Kalat, killing five

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Voting at Russian Embassy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Voting at the polling station established at the Embassy of Russia in Pakistan has successfully concluded, Ambassador Albert P. Khorev announced in a comment following the close of the ballot. According to the Ambassador, a total of 130 people cast their ballots, including the leadership and staff of the Embassy and the Trade Mission, their family members, as well as Russian citizens residing in or temporarily staying in Pakistan. Observers from the Civic Chamber of Russia who were present at the polling station confirmed that voting was conducted in full compliance with established procedures, with no violations identified. The Ambassador noted that the voting took place amid a challenging social situation,

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EU fines google

NEWS DESK

DUBLIN: Ireland's data protection watchdog, acting on behalf of the European Union, said Monday it had fined Google 403 million euros (\$462 million) for improperly using users' location data, eight years after consumer groups complained. The fine is the fourth largest imposed by the Data Protection Commission, the regulator said in a statement. The DPC is responsible for overseeing Google at the European level because, like most tech giants, the company has its European headquarters in Ireland. Google infringed the EU's General Data Protection Regulation between May 2018 and February 2020, the DPC said.



ISLAMABAD: The European Union and Pakistan have signed three Financing Agreements worth sixty-five million euros to advance Global Gateway investments, enhance energy and environmental resilience, and strengthen the rule of law and business environment. – DNA

Govt vows to tackle protests 'once and for all'

"This time we will find a permanent solution. We cannot tolerate such a situation again and again," says Naqvi

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the government will adopt a permanent strategy to handle the planned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) long march towards Islamabad, warning that the country will not be allowed to remain shut for 10 to 20 days due to demonstrations. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Naqvi said the government would take measures "once and for all" to prevent a repeat of such situations. "This time, it will not happen that they [protesters] come and the country remains closed for 10 or 20 days," he said. Naqvi's remarks came as the PTI prepares for a nationwide protest and march towards Islamabad on September 27, demanding the release of its incarcerated founder Imran Khan and supremacy of the Constitution. Addressing the presser, the interior minister said the government could not repeatedly tolerate such a

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Mohsin Naqvi meets Iranian leaders

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran on Monday thanked Pakistan's military and civilian leadership for its efforts for regional peace and stability. The development came as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who headed to Tehran earlier in the day, met with Iranian counterpart Eskandar Momeni. According to the interior ministry, the two exchanged views on "Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations and the latest situation in the region". The statement said the Iranian minister thanked Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for their

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Dar meets French minister in New York



DNA

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France Jean-Noël Barrot on sidelines of the 81st Session of UNGA in New York. Both sides reviewed Pakistan-France bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and global developments. The DPM/FM reiterated Pakistan's desire to further strengthen bilateral ties, including through enhanced political engagement, trade and investment, educational linkages and people-to-people exchanges.

US media houses to sui Trump

DNA

WASHINGTON: MS NOW, CNN and Politico said on Monday they were suing the Trump Administration to protect their First Amendment rights after President Donald Trump's announcement that he would ban the news outlets from the White House's building grounds. The three news organisations said they had notified the government that they were filing their lawsuit in the US District Court for the District of Columbia and could see emergency hearings in the case as soon as this week.

Amid long march call

PTI claims govt contacts 'ongoing'

Barrister Gohar urges restraint as tensions rise following recent developments

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar has claimed that contacts with relevant people at the federal level have been "ongoing since last night", adding that the party has conveyed its message regarding the recent arrests. Barrister Gohar's remarks came as the PTI prepares for a nationwide protest and march towards Islamabad on September 27, demanding the release of its incarcerated founder Imran Khan and supremacy of the Constitution. The Imran Khan-founded party has maintained that it will proceed with its planned protest, with preparations for the mobilisation continuing across the country. Speaking to the media in Peshawar, the PTI chairman said that the party had urged the relevant authorities to refrain from taking such measures, warning that the treatment being meted out to the former premier's family members and party leaders was regrettable.

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Imran sisters Uzma, Noreen detained

Aleema's sons, Shahrez Khan and Sher Shah, released following brief detention, says lawyer

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's sisters Noreen Niaz and Uzma Khan have been detained under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order, 1960 (MPO), an official said on Monday, a day after Aleema Khan was detained and shifted to Kot Lakhpat jail. Lahore deputy commissioner issued the detention orders under the 3-MPO following a recommendation from the police, according to the DC Office. The two sisters of Imran, who remains incarcerated in Adiala jail, have been

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US refuses visa to Iranian President

US VP Vance insists 'substantial amount of oil and gas' shipments flowing via Strait of Hormuz

NEWS DESK / DNA

TEHRAN: The United States has refused to issue visas for members of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's delegation, including his communications team, for this week's trip to the UN General Assembly, Iranian state media reported Monday. Pezeshkian will be the highest-ranking Iranian official to enter the United States since the Middle East war began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February. "In an unprecedented hostile move by the US government, (US President Donald) Trump has denied US visas to certain members of the president's high-level delegation, including members of his communications team," state news agency IRNA reported. The Mehr news agency also carried the story, citing a spokesperson for the Iranian presidency, and added that

Continued on Page 06

US claims Iran airline to shut by 30th

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent warned Monday that Iranian airlines will have trouble functioning globally in two days under the weight of American sanctions — as the Trump administration seeks to keep pressure on Tehran. On September 23, "all the Iranian airlines will be shut down around the world," Bessent told CNBC in an interview. "If they land, you cannot provide them with fuel, you cannot provide them with landing services, you cannot sell them tickets, or you will be knocked out of the dollar system," he added

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Commissioner Kohat urges reluctant parents to vaccinate kids

PESHAWAR: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Moatasim Billah Shah on Monday inspected the on-going polio vaccination campaign in Kohat and persuaded some reluctant parents to get their children vaccinated. On the first day of the campaign, the commissioner visited several areas to monitor the performance of vaccination teams, security arrangements and efforts to administer polio drops to children under five.

Accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Kohat Muhammad Nawaz Wazir, District Health Officer Dr. Nasir Hassan Afridi and representatives of the World Health Organization, he observed vaccination activities and checked finger marks on children's hands to verify vaccination.

During the visit, the commissioner held discussions with parents who had initially declined polio vaccination for their children and explained the importance of the drops. The parents subsequently agreed to have their children vaccinated.

Shah appreciated the efforts of polio workers and stressed the need to ensure that every child under five was reached during the campaign. He directed vaccination teams to continue awareness efforts and engage with parents to address their concerns.

He also reviewed security arrangements for the vaccination teams and appreciated the police personnel deployed for their protection.—APP

Govt committed to providing better healthcare

FAISALABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister on Political & Public Affairs Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan on Sunday said that the government's priority was to ensure that people, particularly those from low-income communities, could access better health, education and livelihood facilities without discrimination.

He was addressing a large gathering after inaugurating the newly constructed building of Rural Health Center (RHC) at Chak No.30JB, Aminpur, where the facility was also equipped with a modern ultrasound machine. Senator Rana Sanaullah said that provision of basic amenities including healthcare, education and employment opportunities, remained among foremost priorities of the government. The Punjab government under dynamic leadership of Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz was taking various initiatives for extending public welfare benefits directly to ordinary citizens, he added. He stressed that improving infrastructure alone was not enough unless public healthcare facilities also ensured dignified treatment and quality medical care to every patient. "The poor patient must receive the same attention, respect and quality of treatment as an influential or affluent person", he said, urging doctors, paramedical staff and administrative officials to fulfill their responsibilities in letter and spirit. Rana Sanaullah said that the existing RHC had been revamped while different proposals regarding outsourcing of health facilities were under consideration to improve their performance.—APP

CM launches urges collective effort to eradicate polio virus

He noted that Pakistan and Afghanistan were the only two countries in the world where the polio virus continued to circulate

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday launched a seven-day National Polio Eradication Campaign in Sindh, reaffirming the provincial government's commitment to eliminating the crippling disease and calling upon parents, community leaders, religious scholars, civil society, and the media to play an active role in ensuring that every child receives the life-saving vaccine. The Chief Minister inaugurated the campaign during a visit to the Rotary Club Community Centre in Gulistan-e-Jauhar, where he also administered polio drops to children. Secretary School Education Zahid Abbasi, Health Secretary Tahir Sangi, Polio Programme In-Charge Shehryar Gul, representatives of partner organisations Aziz Memon of Rotary International, and others attended the ceremony. Prior to the inauguration, the Chief Minister reviewed various facilities at the Rotary Club Community Centre and was briefed on ongoing efforts to support children affected by polio. He visited the prosthetics unit, where children disabled by polio are being provided with artificial limbs and callipers, and reviewed physiotherapy services being offered for their rehabilitation. During the visit, the Chief Minister met Huma, a polio worker who had lost both legs due to the disease. Aziz Memon informed him that Rotary International had facilitated the provision of artificial limbs to her. He also interacted with children affected by polio and reviewed the support and rehabilitation services being extended to them. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the Chief Minister said that in the entire world, only two countries are left where the polio virus is still affecting children, but stressed that significant challenges still remained. He noted that Pakistan and Afghanistan were the only two countries in the world where the polio virus continued to circulate. He said that 31 polio cases were reported in Pakistan and 21 in Afghanistan last year. In 2026, Pakistan has so far reported four cases, including one from Sujawal district in Sindh and three from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while Afghanistan has recorded 29 cases. "Considerable progress has been made towards eliminating polio, but our task is not yet complete," he said, adding that the presence of the virus anywhere in the world continued to pose a threat to children everywhere. The Chief Minister credited the progress made in Sindh to the collective efforts of the provincial government, frontline workers, parents, community leaders, development partners, and civil society organisations. He noted that environmental surveillance indicators in Sindh had shown encouraging improvement. According to the Chief Minister, the pro-



portion of positive environmental samples has declined significantly since January 2026. He said the positivity rate dropped from 62 per cent to 20 per cent in August. Of the six positive environmental samples detected during the month, four were reported from Karachi Division and two from Hyderabad Division, while all samples collected outside these divisions tested negative. Shah stressed that targeted and coordinated interventions could further reduce virus transmission. "There is no room for complacency in the fight against polio," he said, warning that every unvaccinated child creates an opportunity for the virus to spread. He described Pakistan's anti-polio campaign as being at a decisive stage and expressed confidence that interrupting virus transmission by the end of 2027 was an achievable goal, provided that high-quality vaccination campaigns and sustained commitment continued. "The final phase of polio eradication is often the most difficult," he said. "Reaching every child in every household without exception is the

key to our success. Every vaccinated child brings us closer to a polio-free Sindh and Pakistan." The Chief Minister announced that the sub-national immunisation campaign would continue from September 21 to 27 across Sindh. The drive aims to vaccinate nearly 10 million children under the age of five in all 30 districts of the province. Full campaign coverage will be provided in 23 districts, while seven districts will receive partial coverage based on programme requirements. He said more than 80,000 trained vaccinators, social mobilisers, and supervisors would participate in the campaign, conducting door-to-door visits to administer polio drops. To ensure security, over 26,000 police personnel, including around 2,300 women police constables, have been deployed throughout the province. The Chief Minister paid tribute to health workers, vaccinators, police personnel, and security agencies for their dedication and sacrifices in protecting children from the disease. He emphasised that polio eradication was not solely the responsibility of the government or health workers but a shared national obligation. Appealing directly to parents, he urged them to ensure that all children under five years of age receive polio drops during every campaign. He reiterated that the vaccine was safe, effective, and essential for protecting children from lifelong disability.

Talking to media representatives after the ceremony, the Chief Minister said he makes it a point to personally inaugurate anti-polio campaigns to demonstrate the government's commitment to the cause. He appreciated the contributions of international and national partners, including the Gates Foundation, UNICEF, Rotary International, and other organisations supporting the programme.

He noted that Sindh's only polio case this year was reported in Sujawal in February and commended the Health Department, under the leadership of Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, for its hard work in reducing virus transmission. Mr Shah disclosed that the provincial government had recently increased the remuneration of polio workers by 28 per cent, acknowledging their role as frontline defenders of children's health. He also appealed to religious scholars, elected representatives, journalists, civil society organisations, and media houses to help counter misinformation and strengthen public awareness regarding vaccination. "Media support is crucial in overcoming propaganda and ensuring that every family understands the importance of immunisation," he said. Referring to broader public concerns, the Chief Minister expressed worry over rising petroleum prices and their impact on inflation, saying that both the Sindh Government and the Pakistan Peoples Party were deeply concerned about the increasing burden on citizens. He noted that the Sindh Assembly had passed a resolution urging the federal government to take measures to reduce petroleum prices. Concluding his address, the Chief Minister said that protecting every child from polio was essential for securing a healthier and brighter future for Sindh and Pakistan. "Together, through determination and collective action, we can achieve a polio-free future for our children," he said.—DNA

KP govt supplies 6,39,762 flour bags to consumers

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Food Dr Muhammad Israr Khan has said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is continuing the release of wheat from its stocks to flour mills, which has contributed to a decline in wheat and flour prices. He said there was no shortage of wheat or flour in the province, adding that the Food Department was continuously monitoring the supply and distribution of flour to ensure its availability to consumers at the official rate. The Special Assistant said the provincial government was providing a 20-kilogram bag of government-supplied flour at Rs2,520, while its distribution at the official rate was continuing through active sale points across the province. According to weekly figures released by the Food Department,

a total of 639,762 flour bags were supplied to consumers through 2,000 active government flour sale points across the province during the week from Sept 12 to 18, 2026. The divisional breakdown showed that 180,283 bags were supplied in Peshawar Division, 68,738 in Mardan, 129,669 in Malakand, 118,465 in Hazara, 60,549 in Bannu, 45,645 in Dera Ismail Khan and 36,413 in Kohat Division. The Food Department officials said the supply and distribution of government flour was being continuously monitored and action was being taken against violations of the prescribed policy and standard operating procedures. According to the weekly report, action was taken against nine flour mills, of which four were sealed, while further legal proceedings had also been initiated.

Dr Israr said the objective of releasing government wheat and supplying flour at the prescribed rate was to provide relief to consumers and help maintain stability in flour prices in the market. He said monitoring of flour production, flour mills, sale points and the distribution process was being further strengthened to ensure the availability of quality flour to consumers at the prescribed rate. Food Department officials said monitoring at the district level was continuing to ensure transparency in the sale of government flour, compliance with allocated quotas and public facilitation.

They added that action would be taken against flour mills and dealers in accordance with the rules and regulations in case of violations.—DNA

Excise Intelligence Bureau seizes one ton of narcotics

PESHAWAR: The Excise Intelligence Bureau of the Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has carried out the largest anti-narcotics operation in the department's history, recovering approximately one ton (960 kilograms) of narcotics in Peshawar. The seized narcotics include 18 maunds (720 kilograms) of hashish and 6 maunds (240 kilograms) of opium. The operation was conducted under the special anti-narcotics campaign launched in accordance with the zero-tolerance policy of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi and the directives of Provincial Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Con-

trol Syed Fakhar Jehan. According to details obtained from the Excise Department, Provincial In-charge of the Excise Intelligence Bureau, Aakif Nawaz Khan, received confidential information regarding the movement of narcotics. Acting on the intelligence, three special Excise Intelligence teams were deployed in Peshawar around midnight. During a checkpoint operation near Jahaz Chowk, the teams signaled a suspicious Toyota Revvo to stop. However, instead of stopping, the driver attempted to flee at high speed and opened fire on the Excise personnel. During the pursuit, the vehicle collided with other vehicles

and roadside structures, sustaining significant damage. The Excise teams continued the chase and eventually intercepted the Toyota Revvo bearing registration number SB-5069 (Sindh) on Double Road near Peshawar Ring Road. The driver, however, continued firing at the Excise personnel and managed to escape under the cover of darkness. The vehicle was subsequently shifted to the Excise Police Station (EPS), Peshawar, where a search resulted in the recovery of 720 kilograms of hashish and 240 kilograms of opium. A case has been registered at the Excise Police Station, Peshawar. Further legal proceedings and investigation are underway to apprehend the fugitive accused and identify other individuals involved in the incident. Provincial Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Syed Fakhar Jehan described the operation by the Excise Intelligence Bureau as a major achievement and commended the team for its successful action.—APP

Punjab moves to control antibiotic misuse in poultry

ISLAMABAD: Punjab is intensifying efforts to promote responsible antibiotic use, strengthen biosecurity and improve hygiene at poultry farms to curb antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and protect poultry health. Dr Farhan Afzal, Director of Poultry Research Institute (PRI), told Wealth Pakistan that raising awareness among poultry farmers about the judicious use of antibiotics, farm hygiene and effective biosecurity was essential for maintaining healthy and sustainable poultry production. "The Punjab Livestock Department has always remained at the forefront of awareness campaigns and other initiatives aimed at ensuring healthy poultry production in the province," he said. Punjab accounts for around 70 per cent of Pakistan's more than 15,000 poultry farms, making improvements in farm practices in the province particularly important for the country's poultry meat and egg supply. Dr Farhan said the Punjab government is also participating in activities under the Fleming Fund, an international initiative aimed at tackling antimicrobial resistance in humans and animals. He said misuse and overuse of antibiotics could enable bacteria to develop resistance to medicines, underscoring the importance of responsible antibiotic use for both animal and human health. He rejected the notion that a "superbug" is currently prevalent in Pakistan's poultry sector, explaining that the term is non-scientific and generally used to describe bacteria resistant to multiple antibiotics. Good production practices, including proper farm management, effective biosecurity, accurate diagnosis and timely treatment, could substantially reduce disease risks at poultry farms, he said. "Currently, no major zoonotic disease is prevailing in Pakistan's poultry sector, particularly in Punjab," Dr Farhan said. He said common bacterial diseases such as E. coli and Salmonella could be controlled through basic sanitation measures at the poultry-production level and during the handling of poultry products. He added that poultry meat in Pakistani households was generally consumed fully cooked, which helped eliminate harmful germs. Dr Farhan said diagnostic and surveillance capacity was also being strengthened. The Bacteriology Laboratory at PRI Rawalpindi had recently been accredited by the Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC). "This prestigious accreditation reflects the laboratory's commitment to international standards of quality, technical competence and excellence in diagnostic services," he said. According to Dr Farhan, the accreditation would strengthen avian disease diagnostics, AMR surveillance and quality-assured laboratory services for Pakistan's poultry sector.—DNA

Free Wi-Fi facility to be extended to entire Peshawar

Modern technology would be used to improve public facilities and create new employment opportunities for the youth, he added

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Science and Technology Muhammad Shafi Jan has visited the Directorate General Science and Technology Peshawar, where Director General Sajid Hussain Shah gave him a detailed briefing on various projects and initiatives related to science, technology, research, innovation, and digital connectivity. The briefing covered promotion of modern technology, development of technology at the local level, research and innovation, digital infrastructure and improvement of public facilities through modern technology. Talking on the occasion, the minister said modern technology was vital for self-reliance and economic stability of the province. He directed that effective measures be taken to extend the free Wi-Fi facility to the entire Peshawar so that maximum citizens could benefit from it. He also issued directives to expedite work on the establishment of the province's first Science and Technology Museum in Peshawar and the e-bus project. He was informed that for the first time in Pakistan, artificial skin was being developed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while local production of different vaccines for diagnosis of various diseases was also underway. Work was in progress on various projects to reduce dependence on imported raw materials, including production of three important enzymes at the local level. He was further informed that

liquid oxygen (LOX) technology was being experimented as a clean alternative to traditional explosives, with further work underway on a successful basis, while SSI technology was being used for the eradication of dengue larvae. The minister was told that free internet facility was being provided at major government hospitals and public places in the city. A central Digital Data Center Hub and Management Information System had been established, and under the e-bus project, 2,500 tablets would be distributed to students along with digital educational content aligned with the Textbook Board curriculum. A technology incubation centre was also being established at the university level. He was informed that 210 research grants had been provided for science and technology students and researchers, while 18 students and researchers had been sent abroad for research. Work was also underway on the production of more than 10 products related to medicine, agriculture, and energy sectors. Speaking on the occasion, Shafi Jan said that, under the leadership of Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi, bringing the benefits of historic measures in the science and technology sector to the people was a priority of the government. Modern technology would be used to improve public facilities and create new employment opportunities for the youth, he added.—DNA

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- Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day
- Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day
- Sept16/Mexico National Day
- Sept16/Papua New Guinea Independence Day
- Sept18/Chile National Day
- Sept21/Malta Independence Day
- Sept23/Saudi Arabia National Day

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- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers trimming grass at the roadside greenbelt at Zero Point in the Federal Capital.

IESCO privatisation receives strong investor interest

The Privatisation Commission appreciates the investor community’s extensive engagement during the domestic and international roadshows and welcomes their confidence in Pakistan’s power-sector reform agenda

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Privatisation of DISCOs Batch1 enters next phase with continued strong investor interest in IESCO The Privatisation Commission (PC) has received an overwhelming response from domestic and international investors for the privatisation of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO). Today, on the closing date for submission of Expressions of Interest (EOIs), the Commission received ten (10) EOIs from prospective investors seeking to acquire 51% to 100% shareholding in IESCO together with management control. The names of interested parties are as follows: 1. Aktor Elektrik Enerji Yat r mlar San. ve Tic. A.Ş. - Türkiye 2. Genvera Enerji A.Ş. - Türkiye 3. Cengiz Enerji Sanayii ve Ticaret A.Ş. - Türkiye 4. En-gro Energy Limited 5. Artistic Milliners (Private) Limited Consortium - The Lake

City Holdings, Fatima Capital Limited, Din Ventures (Pvt) Limited and Fazal Cloth Mills Limited 6. Hub Power Holding Limited Consortium - Lucky Cement Limited, Kohat Cement Limited and Metro Ventures (Private) Limited 7. Sapphire Fibers Limited 8. Novatex Limited 9. Bestway Cement Limited 10. Hasnaat Brothers Construction Co. (Pvt) Limited Constorium - Dhilal Holding Group, Pak Steel, Bio-Labs (Pvt) Limited and Farid Steel Casting (Pvt) Limited Investors from Türkiye and several of Pakistan’s leading business groups have submitted their interest. The Privatisation Commission appreciates the investor community’s extensive engagement during the domestic and international roadshows and welcomes their confidence in Pakistan’s power-sector reform agenda. “This is an important milestone in the privatisation of DISCOs. The strong response received for IESCO

reflects that investors have confidence in the potential of Pakistan’s electricity distribution sector and in the Government’s commitment to a transparent, competitive and professionally managed process,” said Muhammad Ali, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and Chairman, Privatisation Commission. “The Commission now looks forward to engaging constructively with the prequalified investors through the due-diligence process and to seek alignment on an equitable, transparent and predictable post-privatisation regime. The privatisation is intended to improve operational efficiency, modernise distribution infrastructure, strengthen customer service, reduce losses to support a more financially sustainable power sector, which Over time, will lead to more affordable and reliable power for consumers,” he added. The Expressions of Interest and Statements of Qualification (SOQs) sub-

mitted by the interested parties will now undergo a comprehensive evaluation against the approved prequalification criteria. Applicants meeting the prescribed requirements will be prequalified and invited to the next stage of the transaction, where they will be granted access to the Virtual Data Room (VDR) to undertake detailed buy-side due diligence. IESCO is among the three electricity distribution companies in DISCOs Batch-I, alongside Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) and Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEP- CO). Ten (10) interested parties have been prequalified for FESCO, whereas eleven (11) EOIs were received for GEP- CO, which are currently under evaluation for prequalification. The Privatisation Commission remains committed to an open, transparent and competitive privatisation process, undertaken in the public interest and in support of the Federal Government’s wider power-sector reform agenda.

Over 1,000 cops for polio campaign in Pindi

RAWALPINDI: Police have put in place comprehensive security arrangements for the four-day anti-polio vaccination campaign by deploying more than 1,000 police officers and personnel across the district. According to police spokesperson, security is being provided to 689 polio vaccination teams working in different areas of the district. In addition, 352 transit points and 232 vaccination centres have also been placed under security cover. Police mobile units, the Elite Squad and Dolphin Force are conducting regular patrolling in various areas to ensure the safety of vaccination teams. Foolproof security arrangements had been made for the duration of the polio drive, with personnel deployed at key locations and along routes used by vaccination teams. The police spokesperson said that it is prime duty of police to protect the lives and property of citizens and ensure a secure environment for the successful completion of the vaccination campaign.—APP

PFA to intensify food safety measures

RAWALPINDI: Director Foods North, Punjab Food Authority (PFA), Chaudhry Ijaz Ahmed has said that ensuring safe and quality food for consumers, curbing adulteration and improving compliance with food safety standards are among the authority’s key priorities. Talking to APP, he said the PFA was further strengthening field monitoring and inspection mechanisms in the North Region to ensure effective implementation of food safety regulations. He said PFA teams were nducting inspections of restaurants, bakeries, sweet shops, milk outlets and other food businesses, adding that the objective was not merely to take enforcement action but also to guide food business operators and help them comply with prescribed hygiene and food safety standards. Chaudhry Ijaz Ahmed said special attention was being given to checking adulterated and substandard milk and other food items. Where necessary, action would also be taken against the sources of adulteration and relevant supply chains in accordance with the law.—APP

Parliament effectively highlighting Kashmir issue

ISLAMABAD: A 130-member delegation of the National Security and War Course of the National Defence University (NDU), comprising senior civil and military officers from Pakistan and friendly countries, visited Parliament House. The delegation, headed by General Muhammad Naeem Akhtar, met with Speaker National Assembly

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Welcoming the delegation, Ayaz Sadiq said that the National Defence University is a prestigious educational institution of the country, and its graduates are serving in key civil and military institutions of Pakistan. He informed the participants about Pakistan’s parliamentary system, the composition and function-

ing of the National Assembly (NA), the legislative process and the role of Standing Committees in legislation. NA Speaker said that matters of national importance are discussed in the National Assembly and that Parliament is a representative institution of the 250 million people of the country. He said that Pakistan is an active member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and other international parliamentary organisations, adding that the Parliament of Pakistan is effectively highlighting the Kashmir issue at international forums. Ayaz Sadiq said that the Speaker’s discretionary powers regarding recruitment of employees in the National Assembly had been transferred to the Finance Committee.—DNA

DIG reviews ADRC work

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad Ali Waseem on Monday held an open court to hear citizens’ complaints, reviewed the Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC) mechanism and launched a tree plantation drive as part of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police initiatives for public service, peaceful dispute resolution and a greener environment. An official told APP that a large number of citizens attended the open court at the DIG’s office and presented their complaints and problems. Ali Waseem listened to them and issued directions to the concerned officers on the spot for their prompt resolution.—APP

Gilani for greater global investment in peace

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday called for greater global investment in diplomacy, dialogue, justice, education, development and human dignity. Referring to this year’s theme, “Invest in Peace – For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day,” he stressed diplomacy before confrontation, dialogue before escalation, education before extremism and development before despair. Addressing the 1st International Peace Summit 2026 of the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC) on the International Day of Peace, he said peace was not merely the absence of war, but the presence of security, justice, dignity, opportunity and hope. He expressed concern over conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Haiti and other regions; he said geopolitical considerations must not overshadow human suffering. “Behind every statistic is a human life; behind every displaced family is a home, and behind every destroyed school is a child’s interrupted future,” he said. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani emphasized that peace, security and development were inseparable, calling for a broader concept of security that protects human dignity, education, economic opportunity and social inclusion. Highlighting parliamentary diplomacy, he said dialogue was an instrument of responsible statecraft and parliaments could provide platforms for resolving differences through debate rather than violence. Referring to the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers’ Conference, he said parliamentary diplomacy could strengthen cooperation, conflict resolution and trust among nations. The Chairman Senate reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to peaceful dispute resolution, respect for sovereignty and international law, multilateral cooperation and UN peacekeeping efforts. He urged the international community to choose dialogue over confrontation, education over extremism, development over despair and humanity over hatred, emphasising that peace must be built “every day, everywhere, for everyone.”—DNA

CDA’s anti-encroachment action continues

Action initiated against 377 structures, including 281 commercial structures

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has continued its comprehensive anti-encroachment and building control operation along Islamabad Expressway East, in line with its policy of ensuring an encroachment-free Islamabad, maintaining planned development and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and building

regulations. In pursuance of the vision of the Honourable Federal Minister for Interior, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, to streamline and regulate the Islamabad Expressway, the Building Control Section (BCS), CDA, in coordination with the Enforcement Directorate and District Administration, commenced a comprehensive sealing, regularization and demolition drive. Action has been initiated against a total of 377 identified structures, including 281 commercial structures, along the designated stretch of Islamabad Expressway East. The action is being undertaken under the applicable building control regulations, land-use provisions and other relevant laws to address unauthor-

ized construction, unauthorized commercial activities and other violations. As per the applicable by-laws, approximately Rs. 3 billion is recoverable on account of land conversion charges, unauthorized construction and violations relating to setback, FAR and covered area. During the previous enforcement drive, approximately Rs. 720 million was recovered, while around Rs. 100 million has so far been recovered during the ongoing operation. More than 140 violative structures have so far been proceeded against under the applicable Building Control Regulations. The operation covers the stretch from Soan Dehati through Iqbal Town, Khanna Pull and Koral Bridge towards Koral/ Gulberg Greens.

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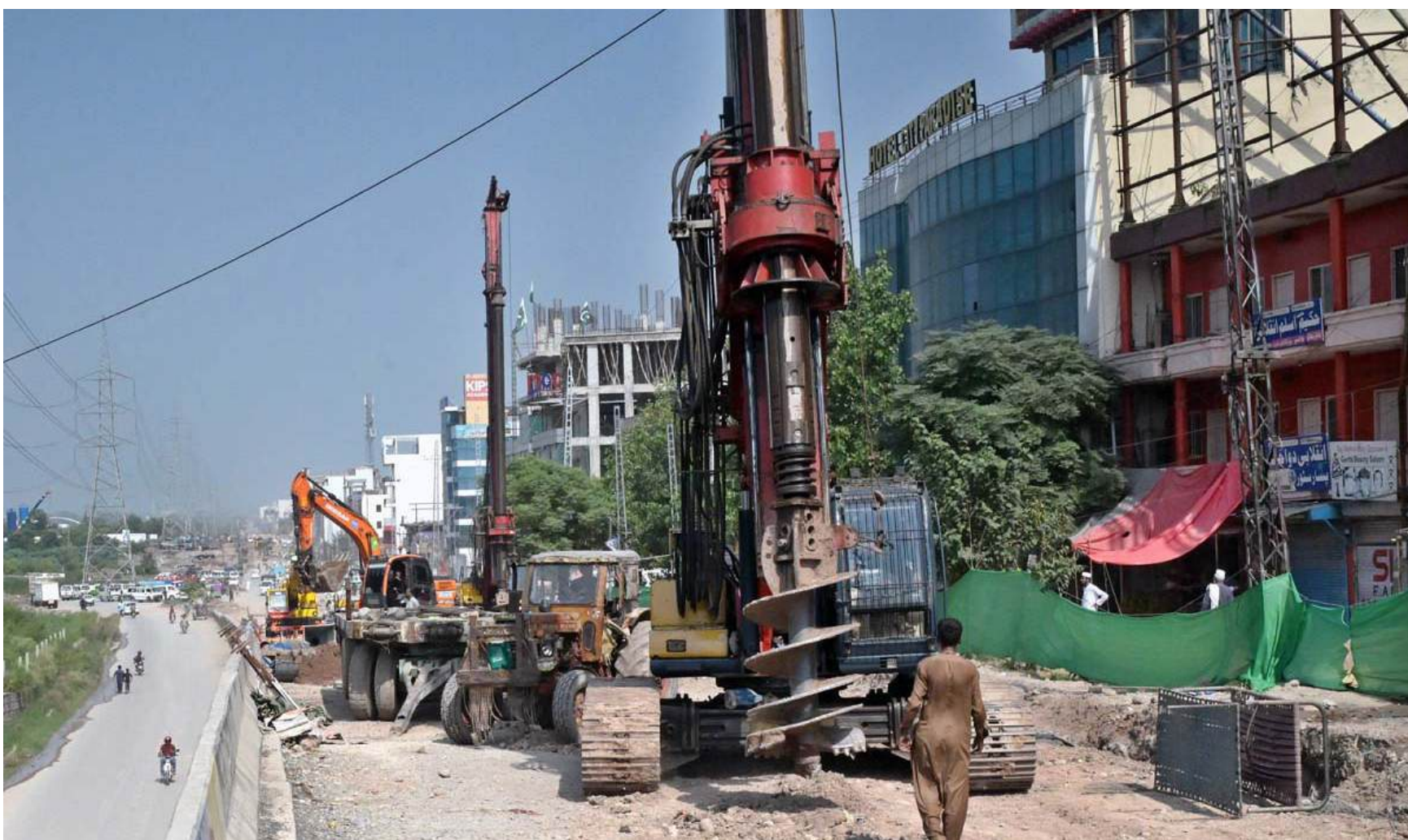
Briefs

Workshop on multimodal dataset development for local languages

ISLAMABAD: Experts at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) emphasized that in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) the development of high-quality linguistic datasets is essential for the preservation, documentation and effective representation of Pakistani languages in modern technologies. They expressed these views during one-day international workshop on "Development of Multimodal Datasets for Pakistani Languages," organised by the university. The inaugural session of the workshop was chaired by Professor Dr Syed Amir Shah, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. He said that the development of standardized multimodal datasets for Pakistani languages would not only help ensure their effective representation in the digital world but also provide a strong foundation for linguistic research, education and the advancement of language technologies. He congratulated the Department of English and the Forum for Language Initiatives (FLI) for undertaking this important and timely initiative, adding that such research and academic projects would play a significant role in bringing Pakistani languages in line with modern digital requirements. Fakhruddin Akhonzada, Executive Director of the Forum for Language Initiatives (FLI) said that around 80 languages were spoken in Pakistan, many of which face challenges to their survival. He stated that data on six Pakistani languages had already been collected under the project, while local communities were also being trained in language documentation and preservation.—APP

KIIR urges UN action over property seizure in Kupwara

ISLAMABAD: The Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), led by Chairman Altaf Hussain Wani, has urged the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to intervene over the reported attachment of ancestral properties in Kachama, Kupwara, under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). According to a press release received here on Monday, the appeal concerns around 15 kanals of land and residential properties belonging to Abdul Majid Qureshi and Parvaiz Ahmad Qureshi. Recent reports citing a Jammu and Kashmir Police order say the properties include 15 kanals and seven marlas of land and two houses and were attached in connection with FIR No. 276/2022 registered at Police Station Kupwara. Police documents reportedly describe the properties as alleged "proceeds of terrorism".—APP



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery and construction crews working on the rehabilitation, expansion, and dualization of the eastern service road along the Islamabad Expressway.

Ihsan calls for faster shift towards electric mobility

Rana Ihsan said localization must go beyond domestic production and be strategically aligned with global competitiveness, affordability, quality and reliability. He stressed that consumers must be provided with greater choice and confidence through a competitive and technologically advanced automotive ecosystem

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Commerce and Industries Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan on Monday underscored the need for competitive localization, technological advancement and a faster transition towards electric mobility to secure the future of Pakistan's automotive industry. He expressed these views while addressing automotive industry leaders, government stakeholders and representatives of academia as chief guest at the PAAPAM Symposium, held on the second day of the Pakistan International Auto Show 2026 at the Lahore International Expo Centre. Organized by the Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts and Accessories Manufacturers

(PAAPAM), the symposium was held under the theme, "Competitiveness, Localization and Electric Mobility," said a news release. Rana Ihsan said localization must go beyond domestic production and be strategically aligned with global competitiveness, affordability, quality and reliability. He stressed that consumers must be provided with greater choice and confidence through a competitive and technologically advanced automotive ecosystem. Highlighting the sector's substantial economic footprint, the Coordinator said every vehicle produced in Pakistan supports an extensive value chain comprising manufacturers, vendors, engineers, technicians and workers. The automotive sector, he noted,

contributes nearly four per cent to the national GDP and provides employment to millions of Pakistanis. He reaffirmed the government's resolve to work closely with industry stakeholders in developing policies that are inclusive, future-oriented, consistent and fair. Commending the automotive industry for its resilience and continued growth despite challenging economic conditions, Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan said the time had come for the sector to prepare decisively for emerging technologies, particularly electric vehicles. "The future of Pakistan's automotive industry lies in competitive localization, innovation and electric mobility. The Government remains committed to creating an enabling environment in which industry

can grow, invest and compete internationally," he said. The coordinator's participation in the PAAPAM Symposium reaffirmed the government's commitment to sustained engagement with stakeholders and to building a competitive, innovative and future-ready automotive industry in Pakistan. The coordinator also visited the stalls of local and international exhibitors and held discussions with industry representatives. He toured PAAPAM's pavilions and the stalls of leading automobile companies, including emerging electric vehicle manufacturers. He appreciated the exhibitors and manufacturers for their vital contribution to the growth, innovation and development of Pakistan's automotive industry.

Jinnah Peoples Train rolls out from Carriage Factory

ISLAMABAD: The Jinnah Peoples Train rolled out from the Carriage Factory under the direction and supervision of Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, marking a significant step towards improving affordable and safe transportation facilities for the people of Balochistan. The coaches of the Jinnah People's Train were manufactured at the Carriage Factory in a record period of just four months, reflecting the commitment and hard work of Pakistan Railways' workers, said a news release. The workers of the Carriage Factory bid farewell to the train with pride and enthusiasm, expressing satisfaction over the successful completion of a project accomplished through their collective efforts. The restoration of the Jinnah Peoples Train is a practical manifestation of the special cooperation extended by the Government of Balochistan and the efforts of Pakistan Railways, the minister said. Hanif Abbasi expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister of Balochistan and the provincial government for their cooperation in making the project possible. The minister said that, for the first time in the history of Pakistan Railways, public welfare projects were being given practical shape through collaboration among the provinces. "Pakistan Railways is not the institution of any single province; it belongs to the entire country and serves as a strong link connecting all parts of Pakistan," he said. The Jinnah People's Train will soon commence operations from Sariai to Kuchlak, providing affordable, safe and improved travel facilities to the people of Balochistan, particularly students, women, children, workers and other citizens. As part of the initiative, facilities at Sariai, Kuchlak, Sheikh Manda, Balleli, GOR Halt and Quetta railway stations have also been improved and upgraded. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi said the train would play an important role in facilitating public mobility and further strengthening the connectivity of Balochistan with the national railway network. He said the government was expanding the scope of public service and national connectivity through Pakistan Railways with the cooperation of the provinces.—APP

IRSA releases 186,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 186,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 131,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1536.55 feet, which was 134.55 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 79,000 cusecs and 125,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1218.15 feet, which was 168.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 13,200 cusecs and 22,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu.—APP

US, UK & China, top 3 destinations of exports

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first two months of the current financial year 2026-27, followed by the United Kingdom (UK) and China. The US remained the largest market for Pakistani products, with exports totalling US\$1.118 billion, compared with US\$1.112 billion in the corresponding months of last year, showing a growth of 0.53 per cent. This was followed by the UK, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$413.801 million against the exports of US \$385.224 million last year, showing an increase of 7.41 per cent. China was the third-largest export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$397.758 million during the months under review, against exports of US \$354.470 million, SBP data revealed.—APP

IGP reviews public facilitation projects

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry reviewed public facilitation projects and directed senior officers to further improve traffic management and make police services easier and more accessible for citizens. An official told APP on Monday that the IGP Sohail held a meeting with DIG Headquarters Muhammad Jawad Tariq and other senior officers to discuss professional and administrative matters and measures for providing timely and effective police services to citizens. The meeting reviewed different citizen facilitation projects being undertaken by Islamabad Police and discussed ways to further improve service delivery. Sohail directed officers to focus on measures that could make it easier for citizens to access police services and get their issues addressed without unnecessary delay. The IGP Rizvi also issued directions to further improve traffic management in the federal capital and introduce practical measures to facilitate commuters. He stressed effective coordination among concerned officers to improve public services and ensure that citizen facilitation remained a key focus of Islamabad Police.—APP

NPF MD reviews housing, testing service projects

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director National Police Foundation (NPF) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi reviewed progress on key projects, including housing, NPF Testing Service, agri-business and information technology initiatives, and discussed their future strategy. An official told APP on Monday that Rizvi chaired an important meeting of senior NPF officers, where progress on various ongoing projects and plans for their further development were discussed in detail. Rizvi directed officers to bring the organisation in line with modern requirements and make effective use of technology to improve its working and services. He also stressed providing better facilities and greater confidence to investors and directed the concerned officers to make NPF projects more efficient and result-oriented. Rizvi said particular attention should be given to strengthening police welfare initiatives so that their benefits could effectively reach police personnel and their families.—APP

Tennis Great Rashid Malik Honoured by Jamal Group

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Jamal Group has honoured Pakistan's leading ITF senior player and former Davis Cup player Rashid Ahmad Malik for his outstanding services to tennis and consistent international success, while naming him its Brand Ambassador. The recognition comes after Malik received the prestigious Sitara-i-Imtiaz in acknowledgement of his services to the sport. He has remained one of Pakistan's most prominent senior tennis players, combining his international playing career with coaching, administration and efforts to develop the game at grassroots level. ITF records show Malik reached a career-high No. 46 in the world in the 60+ singles category in October 2024. Jamal Group CEO Sami Farooq and Director Usman Farooq appreciated Rashid Malik's contribution to Pakistani tennis and his continued success on the ITF Masters circuit. Malik also thanked the Jamal Group leadership for the honour and said he remained committed to representing Pakistan and promoting tennis despite dealing

with injuries. "I am struggling with injuries, but I remain hungry and mentally tough to win more titles for my country," he said. Malik is now preparing for his next ITF Masters event in Thailand from November 14, determined to add another international title to his already decorated cap. He said balancing competitive tennis with coaching and administrative responsibilities was

challenging but remained committed to the sport's development. "It is not easy to train players, run an association, play for myself and work for the development of tennis in Pakistan," he said. The renowned tennis coach also appreciated the Sports Board Punjab for developing a professional sports system and academies, while praising the Punjab government for its initiatives to

promote sports. Malik also praised the Punjab government for taking steps to promote sports across the province, saying Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz had demonstrated a clear vision for the development of different sports disciplines and that sports were making rapid progress under her leadership.



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Will China play a role in ending Iran war

DR. DANIA KOLEILAT KHATIB

It was reported last week that China wants Iran to use its influence with the Houthis to prevent the conflict from spiraling. At the same time, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Iranian counterpart, who was on a visit to China, that Beijing is willing to “safeguard Iran’s legitimate rights and interests,” while urging the US and Iran to go back to the negotiating table. These developments came a few days after Chinese President Xi Jinping called on the members of the BRICS grouping to work jointly to bring peace and stability to the Gulf region. While he did not specifically offer to mediate between the US and Iran, many said he insinuated that Beijing could act as an intermediary. China is exceptionally well positioned to conduct or facilitate mediation because it can present itself as a guarantor. So far, China has not been diplomatically engaged in the conflict. It has only opposed the war while observing events as they unfold. China has been able to shield itself from the conflict. To start with, it has a policy of buying huge amounts of oil when the price is low. Hence, when the conflict erupted and the price skyrocketed, Beijing decreased its imports. However, this cannot last forever. At some point, the conflict is going to affect China. It needs closure and this is probably what has enticed it to take a more active role in efforts to end the war. Since the beginning, China has been against the US’ war on Iran. It rejected the “economic D-Day” sanctions imposed by President Donald Trump in August, even deeming them to be illegal. From my discussions with Chinese experts and academics, China does not seek to replace the US in the Middle East. It does not want to have military bases across the region. However, it wants to make sure its interests are protected. It wants to make sure the region is stable and there is a secure and steady flow of oil. This is why it has a vested interest in ending the current conflict and preventing it from spreading. Xi will visit the US this week. It is expected that he will bring up the issue of Iran with his counterpart. Trump will probably ask Xi to pressure Iran, knowing that he has the capability to do so. It is difficult for Tehran to butt heads with China because Beijing is

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its lifeline, especially amid the crisis After all, China – like the US, the Arab Gulf and the rest of the international community – has a vested interest in ensuring freedom of navigation in the region’s waterways. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait can trigger a crisis for everyone. Though Iran is showing defiance, it is a totally different story when it comes to China. It is difficult for Tehran to butt heads with China because Beijing is its lifeline, especially amid the crisis it is currently facing. As Wang has said, China wants to “safeguard Iran’s legitimate rights and interests.” Beijing can present itself as a guarantor. It can guarantee that Iran will comply. Most importantly, it can make sure the American blockade on Iran is lifted and the bombing does not resume after the Israeli elections in October and the US midterms in November. China should not only mediate between the US and Iran, it should also seek to broker talks between the Arab Gulf – Saudi Arabia in particular – and Iran. China has leverage with both countries and has already brokered the Beijing Agreement of March 2023, through which diplomatic relations were restored after seven years. China can capitalize on this agreement. Again, it can play an important role not only by mediating but also, because of its leverage, it can play the role of guarantor. In any mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, a guarantor is needed because the two parties do not trust each other. While the US and Israel want to see Iran and the Arab Gulf states fighting each other, China wants to see them getting along. If Iran and the Gulf states are on good terms, it will be more difficult for the war to resume. However, the main point of contention between the Gulf and Iran is the latter’s nonstate actors and sleeper cells. Iran has always called its proxies allies and has used them as leverage against countries in the region. Today we see the Houthis attacking Saudi Arabia from the south, while the pro-Iran militias in Iraq attack from the north. China can push the Kingdom and Iran to fully normalize by solving the issue of nonstate actors in the framework of a regional security architecture. The Chinese are known to take a measured approach in their foreign policy. They are very careful in their state-to-state relations and adopt a strict policy of noninterference. However, they know that if this war does not end soon, the situation could spiral out of control, with consequences that would be disastrous for the world economy. So, Beijing might now be thinking of throwing the weight of the Chinese dragon behind efforts to bring this conflict to an end.

How Trump Ditched Saudi Arabia?

Qamar Bashir



Saudi Arabia is suffering from a war it neither initiated nor initially wanted. Disruption around the Strait of Hormuz threatens its eastern export routes, while Houthi pressure jeopardizes infrastructure and navigation toward the Red Sea. Any sustained interruption of the East-West Pipeline or ports serving those routes would damage Saudi revenue, increase global oil prices and undermine the kingdom’s ambitious development programme. The kingdom must now ask a difficult question...

RIENDSHIP is tested not during ceremonies, state dinners or commercial negotiations, but in moments of danger. When a country faces missiles, drones and attacks on its critical infrastructure, it discovers whether its powerful partner’s security promises carry real weight or are merely diplomatic language. The contrasting treatment of Israel and Saudi Arabia by the United States has now brought this uncomfortable reality into sharp focus. Washington has repeatedly mobilized its intelligence, naval, air and missile-defence capabilities to protect Israel. Yet when Saudi Arabia requested direct American military assistance against escalating Houthi attacks, President Donald Trump declined to open another front and limited American support largely to intelligence and targeting assistance. Neither Israel nor Saudi Arabia has a NATO-style mutual-defence treaty with the United States. In practice, however, Israel enjoys something approaching an operational American defence guarantee, while Saudi Arabia remains principally a customer, investor and regional partner whose protection is conditional. For decades, Israel has received approximately \$3.8 billion annually under the ten-year US-Israel security assistance memorandum signed in 2016. That agreement provides \$33 billion in Foreign Military Financing and \$5 billion for missile defence through fiscal year 2028. After the October 7, 2023, attacks, additional emergency appropriations, weapons transfers and regional US military deployments expanded American support considerably. This relationship goes far beyond selling weapons. The United States shares high-level intelligence with Israel, replenishes its military stocks, deploys forces to the region and has directly helped intercept missiles and drones aimed at Israeli territory. Regardless of the economic or military cost, Washington has demonstrated that it is prepared to participate actively in Israel’s defence. Saudi Arabia’s relationship with Washington is fundamentally different. The kingdom receives negligible conventional foreign aid because it is a wealthy country. Instead, it purchases American weapons, finances military cooperation and hosts or supports US strategic infrastructure. Its importance rests on energy, investment, arms contracts, intelligence cooperation and its geographical position—not on an unconditional promise that American forces will defend it. Saudi Arabia pledged hundreds of billions of dollars in investments, purchases and commercial cooperation with the United States. The White House announced a \$600 billion Saudi commitment in May 2025, including a defence-sales framework valued at nearly \$142 billion. These headline figures, however, combine investments,

procurement plans, memoranda and long-term commercial intentions; they should not all be interpreted as money already transferred into the American economy. Nevertheless, the scale of Saudi economic engagement is enormous. Riyadh has purchased American aircraft, air-defence systems, missiles, training and technical support while investing in American technology, energy and infrastructure. Yet when the kingdom faced a direct security emergency, commercial importance did not translate into the level of military protection routinely extended to Israel. The recent Houthi escalation has demonstrated that distinction. Missile and drone attacks have threatened Riyadh, Yanbu and Saudi energy infrastructure. Saudi authorities reported intercepting an attempted ballistic-missile attack on the capital, while the Houthis claimed strikes against several sensitive and petroleum-related targets threatening to Saudi cities and oil-export capacity. But when Saudi Arabia, which has done much more than Israel has ever done for the USA, sought direct US military action against the Houthis, Trump refused point blank to undertake offensive strikes. President even when attacks unsettled Saudi and other Gulf markets. Whereas, while defending Israel, Trump is ready to sacrifice its own soldiers and prestige and billions of billions of dollars of expensive military hardware, but when it comes to helping Saudi Arabia against legitimate targets, it started giving lame excuses such as it does not want to become trapped in another prolonged Yemen campaign, risk greater confrontation with Iran or expend scarce interceptors and precision weapons indefinitely. But from Riyadh’s perspective, the refusal exposes the limitations of decades of dependence upon the American security umbrella. Saudi Arabia is suffering from a war it neither initiated nor initially wanted. Disruption around the Strait of Hormuz threatens its eastern export routes, while Houthi pressure jeopardizes infrastructure and navigation toward the Red Sea. Any sustained interruption of the East-West Pipeline or ports serving those routes would damage Saudi revenue, increase global oil prices and undermine the kingdom’s ambitious development programme. The kingdom must now ask a difficult question: were American bases and deployments in the Gulf established primarily to protect Gulf states, or to protect wider US interests—including Israel, shipping routes and Washington’s regional military position? The evidence suggests that these facilities do not constitute an automatic guarantee that America will fight whenever a host government comes under attack. There is an immense possibility that the United States or Israel could have secretly enabled Houthi attacks in order to weaken Saudi Arabia, which is the signature mo-

duis of operandi of Israel to fracture and weaken any Muslim country in the middle east which now or in distant future could threaten implementation of Israel’s greater Israel project. Riyadh must therefore avoid falling into an escalation trap. A widening confrontation with the Houthis would impose greater costs upon Saudi cities, infrastructure and development than upon a movement experienced in surviving air campaigns and operating from difficult terrain. A simultaneous confrontation with Iran would be more dangerous still. The United States has shown Saudi Arabia the precise limits of their relationship. Washington will sell weapons, provide intelligence and cooperate when American interests coincide with Saudi needs. It may not, however, fight Saudi Arabia’s wars. That realization should not lead Riyadh toward reckless confrontation. It should lead to strategic independence. If even the world’s greatest military power cannot impose a sustainable solution through force, Saudi Arabia should not sacrifice its economy and national transformation by attempting the same. Its strongest response is to escape the trap, mend regional fences and prevent other powers from deciding when, where and against whom the kingdom must fight. The most appropriate immediate initiative would be for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to convene an emergency summit, bringing together Iran, Saudi Arabia, the GCC states, Yemen’s internationally recognized government, representatives of the Houthis and other influential Muslim countries. The OIC should provide a neutral platform on which every party can state its security concerns, political objectives and conditions for ending hostilities. Through mediation, compromise and reciprocal concessions, the participants could formulate a practical roadmap for de-escalation. Whenever two or more Muslim countries fight, the result is not merely an individual national loss but a collective loss for the entire Muslim ummah. Even if one side gains more in a negotiated settlement, its gains remain within the Muslim world; continued warfare, by contrast, destroys Muslim lives, economies and strategic strength for the benefit of outside powers. The Muslim countries must therefore stop exhausting one another and redirect their combined diplomatic, economic and political influence toward securing justice for the Palestinian people, including a viable two-state solution that enables Palestinians to live in freedom, security and dignity. – Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC | Michigan, USA

The Turkey-Iran-Pakistan Triangle

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The three countries could begin with regular security consultations, counterterrorism cooperation, maritime security discussions, border management, intelligence exchanges and joint efforts to address instability in Afghanistan. Economic cooperation could provide the foundation for wider strategic coordination. Transport links connecting Pakistan with Iran and Turkey could eventually give the relationship...

THE idea of a new security order in the Middle East is no longer confined to diplomatic conferences or academic seminars. The wars and rivalries of recent years have exposed the limits of the existing arrangements and encouraged regional powers to think about security without relying on the United States. Among the more striking proposals now being discussed is the possibility of strategic cooperation between Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Sami Al-Arian, a Palestinian-American academic based in Turkey, has recently put this idea forward in unusually explicit term. In the a webinar on the conflict involving Iran, Israel and the United States, he argued that the traditional Gulf security arrangement, built substantially around American military protection, had reached a turning point. His proposed alternative is a regional security structure led principally by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Once a senior Turkish decision-maker about Ankara’s “grand strategy” said that Turkey should develop close relations with Iran and Pakistan. There is disappointment that no Arab country had been included. There is no public confirmation of the identity of the Turkish official or of the circumstances in which the alleged conversation took place. Nor has Ankara formally announced a grand strategy based on a Turkey-Iran-Pakistan security bloc. The important is that the idea is increasingly being discussed in political and intellectual circles. For decades, the security architecture of the Gulf depended heavily on American military power. Washington maintained bases, naval forces, air capabilities and defence partnerships across the region. Gulf monarchies are pursuing their own national interests, generally regarded the American presence as an important insurance against regional threats. Regional governments have often complained that American policy is unpredictable, while Washington has repeatedly urged its partners to assume greater responsibility for their own security. The wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, together with the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, have further complicated the picture. The latest confrontation involving Iran has added another layer to these doubts. Supporters of greater regional autonomy argue that the conflict demonstrated the vulnerability of states that depend too heavily on external protection. They should develop mechanisms for consultation, deterrence and crisis management

without waiting for Washington to decide when and how to intervene. A region cannot indefinitely outsource its security to an external power and expect the arrangement to remain politically sustainable. Turkey and Iran are neighbours, competitors and occasional partners. They cooperate on trade, energy and diplomacy, but their interests have frequently diverged over Syria, Iraq, the South Caucasus and the wider regional balance. Ankara has supported forces opposed to the Assad government, while Tehran was one of Damascus’s principal supporters. Turkey and Iran have also competed for influence in Iraq and among different political constituencies across the Middle East. Pakistan’s position is different. Islamabad has traditionally maintained friendly relations with both Ankara and Tehran, but it has avoided becoming part of an explicitly anti-American or anti-Western bloc. Pakistan’s economic interests, security requirements and relations with the Gulf States make such a choice particularly difficult. The three countries could begin with regular security consultations, counterterrorism cooperation, maritime security discussions, border management, intelligence exchanges and joint efforts to address instability in Afghanistan. Economic cooperation could provide the foundation for wider strategic coordination. Transport links connecting Pakistan with Iran and Turkey could eventually give the relationship an economic dimension that goes beyond political declarations. Such cooperation would also have an important geographical advantage. Turkey connects Europe, the Middle East and the Caucasus. Iran occupies a central position between South Asia, Central Asia and the Gulf. Pakistan provides access to the Arabian Sea and sits at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. Their geographical positions alone make closer cooperation strategically significant. But there is another missing element in the proposed formula is the Arab world. A Middle Eastern security architecture that excludes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Qatar, Oman and other Arab states would remain incomplete. The Gulf States have their own interests and pursue more diversified foreign policies. They maintain relations with Washington but have simultaneously expanded engagement with Beijing, Moscow, Ankara and Tehran. Iran’s reconciliation with Saudi Arabia demonstrated that regional diplomacy does

not necessarily have to follow the old pattern of permanent confrontation. This experience may be more important for the future than the creation of another rigid bloc. Indeed, the Middle East does not necessarily need another “axis”. It needs a system in which rival states can talk to one another before crises become wars. Islamabad should welcome any development that reduces the possibility of conflict in the Gulf and encourages regional cooperation. Pakistan has strong relations with Turkey, shares a long and complicated border with Iran, and has deep economic and political ties with the Arab Gulf. Its strategic interest is therefore better served by maintaining working relations with all sides rather than becoming an instrument in a confrontation between competing camps. Pakistan can also contribute something that is often missing from discussions of regional security: geographical connectivity. The proposed relationship could begin not with military commitments but with trade corridors, energy cooperation, railway links, ports, academic exchanges and diplomatic consultations. Gwadar, Chabahar and Turkish transport networks could eventually become components of a broader economic geography linking South Asia, the Gulf, Iran, Central Asia and Europe. Such an approach would be more sustainable than an alliance constructed primarily around opposition to the United States or Israel. The same caution applies to Turkey. Ankara is a member of NATO and has substantial economic relations with Europe. It may criticise Western policies and pursue closer relations with Russia, Iran and China, but it has not abandoned its wider economic and strategic interests in the West. Iran, meanwhile, has its own conception of regional influence, built over decades and shaped by its rivalry with Israel and the United States. Tehran may welcome closer relations with Turkey and Pakistan, but that does not mean that either country would accept the Iranian model of regional security. The opportunity is real, but so are the obstacles. The wisest course is to begin with what the three countries can actually agree upon trade, connectivity, counterterrorism, energy, border security and diplomatic consultation and allow political trust to develop gradually. – The writer is Assistant Professor Imperial College of Business Studies Lahore muhammad.akram@imperial.edu.pk

Briefs

Pakistan strikes terror camps in...

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However, it said that the safety and security of Pakistani citizens remained the government's foremost priority. "It is a matter of grave concern that Afghanistan continues to remain a hub of terrorism," the ministry said, adding that threats to Pakistan emanated from Afghanistan. "In this context, our action precisely targeted the terrorist hubs. Maximum precautions were taken and it was ensured that no collateral damage occurs," according to the ministry. The precision targeting of militant hide-outs comes amid a wave of attacks in KP and Balochistan, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban came into power. At least 22 people, including 16 police officials, were martyred and over 100 others injured after explosions targeted Kohat Police Lines during the Friday prayer on September 18. The attack began when an explosives-laden vehicle rammed into the gate of the Old Police Lines before exploding, KP Inspector General of Police Zulfiqar Hamid told Geo News following the attack. Gunfire also erupted after the blast, while another suicide explosion occurred at the Special Branch building during an exchange of fire between security personnel and the militants, he said.

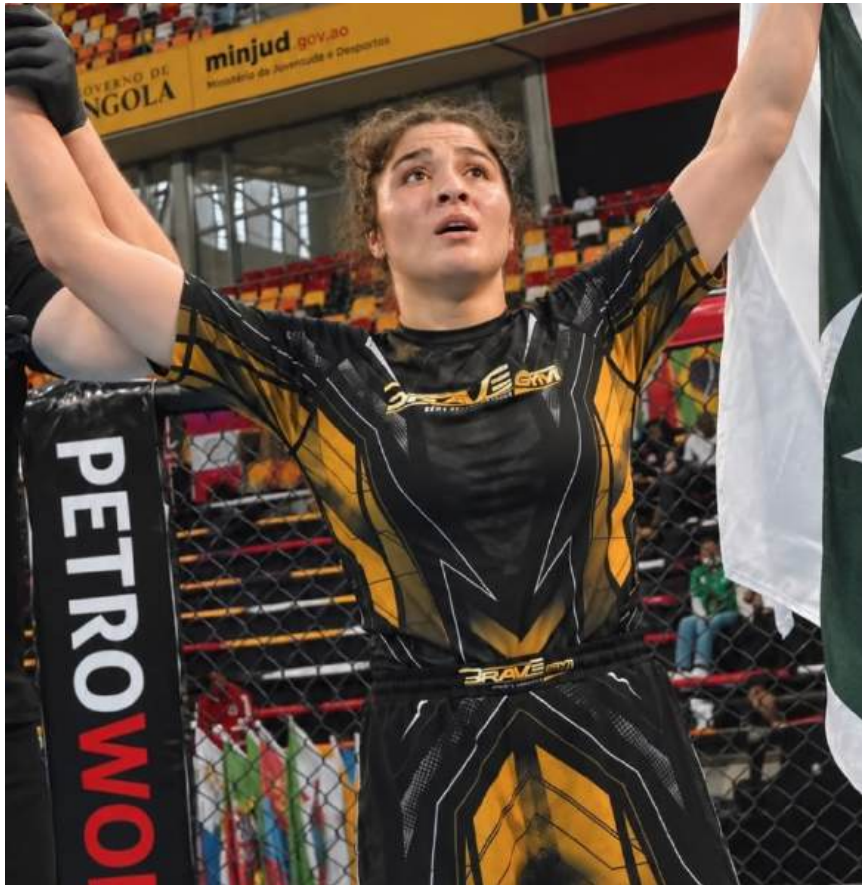
Four India-backed terrorists...

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militants and safely recovering 23 hostages. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the terrorists had established a checkpoint on the highway to abduct people, extort money and seize vehicles. Security forces responded promptly and killed five terrorists during the operation, while a large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives was also recovered from the militants' hideout. Six trucks, three buses and two cars were recovered from the site, according to the ISPR. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban came into power. A day earlier, security forces killed eight militants while six Pakistan Army personnel embraced martyrdom during the exchange of fire in KP's Hangu, according to the military's media wing. The ISPR said that the exchange of fire took place between the security forces convoy and Fitna al-Khawarizj in Hangu District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Resultantly, it said eight terrorists were killed due to effective engagement by the troops.

PTI claims govt contacts 'ongoing'

FROM PAGE 01
He said further arrests would aggravate the situation and stressed that the time had come to prevent conditions from deteriorating further. He also emphasised the need to reduce tensions. Meanwhile, following Aleema Khan, Imran Khan's sisters, Noreen Niazi and Uzma Khan, have also been placed under detention and transferred to Kot Lakhpat Jail for 30 days. A petition has also been filed in the Lahore High Court challenging Aleema's detention. Earlier in the day, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the government will adopt a permanent strategy to handle the planned march, warning that the country will not be allowed to remain shut for 10 to 20 days due to demonstrations. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Naqvi said the government would take measures "once and for all" to prevent a repeat of such situations. Meanwhile, the Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Ayin-e-Pakistan condemned the arrest of Aleema, saying that first Imran was "unjustly" kept in jail, and now the women of his family are also being "targeted for political revenge".

Manesha strikes gold for Pak at IMMAF World Cup



Hailing from Gilgit-Baltistan and training at BRAVE Gym Lahore, Manesha delivered a commanding performance in the final against the Angolan champion on her home ground. She secured victory in second round with a standing guillotine, completing an impressive finish to claim the gold medal for Pakistan.

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Manesha Ali produced a stunning performance at the IMMAF World Cup in Angola, defeating the host nation's two-time African champion to win the gold medal and raise the national flag on the international stage. Hailing from Gilgit-Baltistan and training at BRAVE Gym Lahore, Manesha delivered a commanding performance in the final against the Angolan champion on her home ground. She secured victory in the second round with a standing guillotine, completing an impressive finish to

claim the gold medal for Pakistan. The IMMAF World Cup featured 15 top-ranked teams, with Pakistan competing against some of the leading nations in international mixed martial arts. Manesha's victory over the highly accomplished Angolan fighter on home soil marked a significant achievement for Pakistan's MMA programme and highlighted the growing presence of Pakistani fighters on the international stage. Her gold-medal triumph also provided a major boost to women's MMA in Pakistan, with the Gilgit-Baltistan-born fighter emerging as the country's latest international combat-sports success story.

Nada and Elsaidy to headline PFL Mena 11 in Riyadh

DNA

RIYADH: The Professional Fighters League returns to the Kingdom when PFL Mena 11 takes place at the Global Theater in Boulevard City, Riyadh, on Friday, Oct. 2. The card is headlined by Saudi Arabia's Mostafa Nada meeting Egypt's Osama Elsaidy for a third and final time in a light heavyweight showcase bout. The two first clashed in 2016 with the Desert Force Light Heavyweight Championship on the line, splitting their first two meetings and setting off one of Arab MMA's most heated rivalries, complete with tense press conferences and weigh-in scuffles.

For Nada, the bout also marks his return to the cage following a broken arm that sidelined him after his last outing, while Elsaidy looks to settle the score for good with no title, only legacy, on the line.

Two semifinal bouts will determine who advances toward the PFL Mena Welterweight Championship Final. Morocco's Badreddine Diani, a Sambo black belt and nine-time African Combat Sambo Champion, meets Jordan's Hazem Kayyali, a BJJ black belt and two-time World Cup Amateur Champion, in a clash the promotion is billing as veteran experience against rising-star ambition. In the other semifinal, Palestine's Omar Hussein, fresh

off a statement knockout in the quarterfinals and training under Arab MMA legend Jarrah Al-Silawi, takes on Algeria's Abdelkrim Zouad, who shocked the bracket by submitting grappling specialist Wissame Akhmouch at his own game. The featherweight tournament semifinals pit two Brave Combat Federation veterans against each other, as Bahrain's Hamza Kooheji faces Algeria's Elias Bouedgme, the first-ever Brave CF Featherweight Champion with 21 career wins, 17 by submission. The other featherweight semifinal sees Tunisia's Mehdi Saadi, back from a two-year layoff and riding a strong tournament debut, meet Syria's Shadi Kabbani,

the first Syrian fighter ever to compete in PFL Mena. Lightweight semifinal action features Algeria's Ylies Djiroun, who stopped 2025 champion Salah Eddine Hamli by first-round TKO, against Egypt's alternate-turned-contender Basel Shalaan. Iraq's Mohammad Fahmi, last year's runner-up looking to finish what he started, squares off with Egypt's Ahmed El-Sisy, who has been training wrestling alongside the Egyptian national team ahead of the bout. A showcase lightweight bout rounds out the tournament action as Lebanon's Hassan Shaaban meets Egypt's Assem Ghanem, both alternates looking to punch their way back into the bracket.

Messi, Miami frustrated in 2-2 draw with San Diego

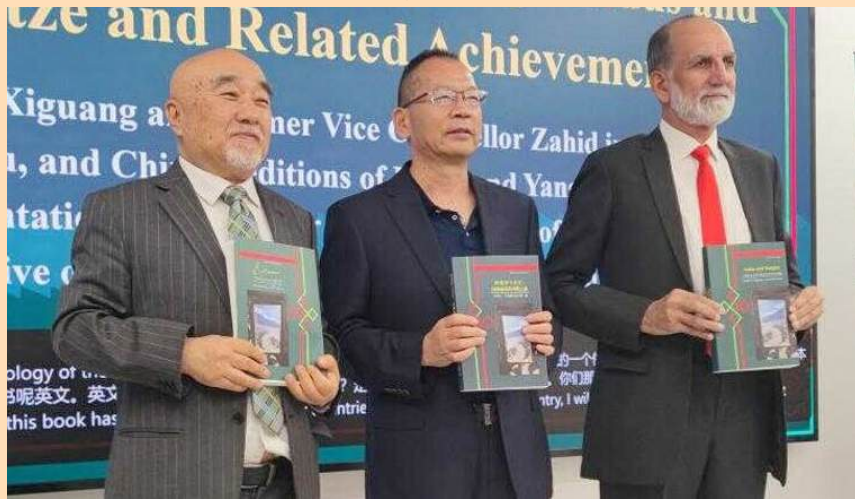
DNA

MIAMI: Lionel Messi and Inter Miami's hopes of overtaking Nashville at the top of Major League Soccer's Eastern Conference suffered a blow on Sunday after the champions were held to a 2-2 draw by San Diego in Florida. Two goals from Danish forward Anders Dreyer secured a share of the points for San Diego at Miami's Nu Stadium – a result which left Miami 11 points adrift of Nashville with eight regular season games remaining. Denmark international Dreyer fired San Diego into a shock lead after 12 minutes, latching on to a superb through ball from compatriot Jeppe Tverskov before lifting a delicate chip over Miami goalkeeper Dayne St. Clair. But Miami, who dominated territory and possession for long periods thereafter, were back on level terms in the 24th minute when Messi curled in his 101st goal for Miami. Messi's wicked curling free-kick from the edge of the area somehow threaded its way through a crowded six-yard box and clipped the inside of the post before ending in the net. From there Miami laid siege to the San Diego goal and it seemed only a matter of time before they took the lead. Messi, Luis Suarez, and Rodrigo De Paul all had good chances but somehow San Diego managed to hold on.

China-Pakistan scholars trace centuries-old links through Indus, Yangtze

BEIJING: New research into ancient river civilizations, historical routes and the first-hand memories of Karakoram Highway builders is offering fresh perspectives on the long history of exchanges between China and Pakistan, as the two countries mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. The research was showcased at a dialogue held at Tsinghua University, where scholars presented the multilingual book *Indus and Yangtze: A Journey of Two Rivers from One Origin*, research on ancient routes in the Yarkand River Valley, an oral history of Karakoram Highway builders, and doctoral research on Pakistan. The event was attended by Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi and Shi Anbin, Party Secretary and Chair of the School Board of Tsinghua University's School of Journalism and Communication, along with scholars, researchers and representatives from academic and cultural institutions in China and Pakistan. It was hosted by the Pakistan Center for Culture and Communication at Tsinghua University.

In his remarks, Hashmi said strategic trust had been a defining foundation of Pakistan-China relations,



describing it as a product of decades of exchanges among political leaders, diplomats, scholars, media professionals and people from different sectors. As his 34-month tenure in China draws to a close, the ambassador reflected on his extensive travels across the country, saying he had been privileged to "travel the length and breadth" of China and visit almost all of its regions and municipalities. "These experiences gave me insights and opportunities to learn from the transformation that has occurred in China," he said, adding that his travels had also deepened his understanding of what China's leaders mean when they speak of "harmony between humanity and nature," as well as the broader concepts of "harmony, shared development, shared prosperity and shared future." Shi Anbin said the role of academic and communication institutions extended beyond the transmission of knowledge and skills. – APP

HBL, UnionPay sign MoU to expand digital payment services in Pakistan

SHANGHAI: Habib Bank Limited (HBL) and UnionPay International signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Shanghai to expand digital payment and card services in Pakistan, marking a new step in financial and digital connectivity between the two sides. The agreement was signed at UnionPay International's headquarters, with HBL President and CEO Muhammad Nassir Salim and UnionPay International CEO Larry Wang representing the two institutions. Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The cooperation will focus on expanding digital payment options, increasing the availability of UnionPay cards for customers in Pakistan and facilitating smoother domestic and international transactions. The agreement will connect HBL's extensive banking network in Pakistan with UnionPay's international payment infrastructure, providing customers with greater access to electronic payment services for transactions within Pakistan and abroad. The partnership builds on the longstanding relationship between the two institutions and comes as Pakistan seeks to expand digital financial services and encourage wider adoption of electronic payments. The collaboration is expected to support the development of more connected payment services while providing additional options for customers and businesses operating across domestic and international markets. The initiative also adds a financial-services dimension to the broader Pakistan-China economic and technological relationship, particularly as digitalisation becomes an increasingly important component of bilateral cooperation. One-Window Facility Launched at Rawalpindi Excise Department to Facilitate Citizens RAWALPINDI: Director Excise and Taxation Rawalpindi, Nauman

Khalid, has formally launched a One-Window Facility after assuming charge, in line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, aimed at providing greater convenience to citizens in accessing government services. Under the new system, dedicated staff have been deployed at the reception gate of the Excise and Taxation Office to receive applications and complaints from citizens and forward them to the relevant sections for necessary action. Efforts will be made to resolve citizens' applications and issues within two days, enabling them to avoid repeated visits to the of

Director Excise and Taxation Nauman Khalid will personally supervise the One-Window Facility to ensure timely action on public applications and complaints. He said that providing relief and facilitating citizens was the department's top priority, adding that the entire process would be made more transparent, efficient and effective. Nauman Khalid further stated that, after the initial phase, the One-Window Facility would be fully computerized. This would improve the monitoring of applications, accessibility of records and timely resolution of citizens' issues. He said, "The doors of my office are always open to every applicant. Anyone who comes with a genuine problem will be heard, and every possible effort will be made to provide immediate relief." He expressed his commitment to transforming the Excise and Taxation Department Rawalpindi into a citizen-friendly institution where people are treated with respect and provided convenient and timely services. He added that practical measures would continue to be taken through the One-Window system to save citizens from unnecessary visits to government offices and long waiting times. – APP

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Voting at Russian Embassy

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with heightened protest activity and partial traffic restrictions in Islamabad. Nevertheless, the Embassy, in close coordination with Pakistani authorities, took additional measures to inform Russian citizens and arranged convenient transportation to the polling station. All necessary conditions were created to enable Russian citizens residing in Islamabad and the surrounding areas to exercise their right to vote. "I would like to personally thank all Russian citizens who exercised their right to vote in the elections of deputies to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the ninth convocation, demonstrating a strong sense of civic responsibility," Ambassador Khorev said.

Mohsin Naqvi meets Iranian...

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efforts towards advancing peace in the region. "We are grateful for Pakistan's continuous efforts to establish peace in the region," Momeni was cited as saying, adding that the visit from the Pakistani side was "beneficial". The ministers also reviewed progress on the ongoing cooperation between their interior ministries in various sectors, the statement added.

US refuses visa to Iranian...

FROM PAGE 01
Pezeshtkian will address the UN General Assembly on Wednesday. The US has authorised the Iranian delegation to travel for the UN General Assembly but will, like last year, put restrictions in place. Iran's delegation will not, for instance, be allowed to purchase luxury goods or other items, the State Department said on Thursday. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, part of the delegation to the UN, left Iran on Sunday evening for a stopover in Qatar. Iran says it has conveyed to the US, via Qatar as mediator, conditions for reopening the strategic Strait of Hormuz oil and gas shipping route, which it has choked off since the war began. The United States, in turn, is imposing a counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

Govt vows to tackle protests...

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situation and would seek a permanent solution. "This time we will find a permanent solution. We cannot tolerate such a situation again and again," he said. Naqvi said the government would fully implement the Islamabad High Court's orders if the PTI proceeded with the march. "If they hold a long march, the Islamabad High Court's order will be implemented in letter and spirit," he vowed. Naqvi also urged the PTI leadership to reconsider its approach: "Do not cause harm to yourselves and your people through the approach you are taking." He said the PTI leadership itself was divided over whether to hold the long march, adding that many within its leadership did not want to proceed.

Imran sisters Uzma...

FROM PAGE 01
detained for 30 days. Following their detention, Noreen and Uzma were shifted to Kot Lakhpat jail, where their other sister, Aleema Khan, had been transferred following her detention. The detentions came ahead of PTT's nationwide protest, including a planned long march on Islamabad on September 27 to demand the release of Imran and supremacy of the Constitution. Sources had said earlier that Aleema's two sons, Shahrez Khan and Sher Shah, were also taken into custody in Lahore. Lawyer Rana Mudassir later confirmed that Aleema's sons were released following their brief detention. According to Mudassir, Noreen and Uzma were transferred to Kot Lakhpat jail at around 2am.

Briefs

Gold price falls by Rs2,700 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a decline in the local market on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola falling by Rs2,700 to settle at Rs457,536, 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 Rs2,315 to Rs392,263, whereas 10 grams of 22-karat gold declined by Rs2,122 to Rs359,587. In the international market, the price of gold fell by \$27 to \$4,350 per ounce, the association reported. Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola remained unchanged at Rs7,100, while the price of 10 grams of silver also stood unchanged at Rs6,087. The price of silver in the international market also remained unchanged at \$66.22 per ounce, the association added.—APP

Rupee gains 03 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.22, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.25. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 277.90 and Rs 278.25, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee increased by Rs 0.07 and closed at Rs 318.34 against the previous day's closing of Rs 318.27, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.76, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of Rs 0.55 and closed at Rs 371.11 compared to the previous day's Rs 370.56. The exchange rates of the Emirate and the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged at Rs 75.48 and Rs 73.80, respectively.—APP

Hundreds of flights cancelled as Typhoon Dujuan nears Japan

BAKU: Typhoon Dujuan forced the cancellation of at least 275 flights in Japan on Monday and prompted warnings of potentially record-breaking rainfall as the storm nears Tokyo, according to the Economic Times. The typhoon, which is accompanied by high winds, has also led to the early closure in the capital of one of the world's biggest video game trade fairs and knocked out power for thousands. The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) warned on Sunday that rain and winds were expected to intensify even before the typhoon's arrival. "The total rainfall through Tuesday could exceed the average monthly rainfall for September, resulting in record-breaking heavy rain," the agency said. The typhoon's wind speeds were at 144 kilometres (89 miles) per hour as the storm was approximately 110 kilometres from Hachiojima, one of Tokyo's farthest islands.—APP

Syria steps up efforts to return 2m children to education

DAMASCUS: Syria is stepping up efforts to reintegrate an estimated 2 million children into the education system through assessment programs, measures to address learning loss, and plans to expand access to education. As part of these efforts, the Education Ministry said on Sunday that it conducted knowledge assessments for out-of-school children in Hasakah province to evaluate their educational levels and identify their learning needs. The assessments aim to determine learning loss and place children in grades and educational levels appropriate to their actual abilities, paving the way for their return to school and helping them make up for missed learning.—APP

IT, telecom exports growing 20-21pc annually: Shaza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Monday that Pakistan's IT and telecom sector had recorded strong growth in recent years, with technology exports increasing by 20 to 21 per cent annually. Speaking at the USEFP Innovation Hive Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, she said more than half of Pakistan's technology exports were directed to the United States, making it the country's strongest technology partner. She said the presence of US technology companies in Pakistan had also grown in recent months, calling it an encouraging development for the country's technology ecosystem. "Physical presence of all these big tech companies coming in is a testament to the kind of market, people and the strength that our youth holds," she said. Shaza Fatima said Google had welcomed a Chromebook assembly line in Pakistan last year and opened its office in the country this year. Apple, she added, had appointed its first head of government affairs for Pakistan, who was based in the country. She also mentioned Plug and Play's presence in Pakistan as an accelerator and support organisation for the technology and startup ecosystem. The minister said the growing presence of global technology companies showed their confidence in Pakistan's market, people and young population. She expressed hope that more US technology companies would establish a presence in Pakistan. Shaza Fa-

tima Khawaja said the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication was working on several initiatives to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among young Pakistanis. She said Ignite was serving as the country's research and development fund and supporting startups and innovation. The government had also launched the Pakistan Startup Fund about two years ago to provide financial support to startups, she said. She noted that global venture capital funding had declined sharply during 2022-23, with Pakistan among the countries hit hardest by the reduction in startup funding. She said work on the Pakistan Startup Fund had begun in 2023, when she was serving as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs. At the time, she had worked with the Ministry of IT to prepare the first document for the fund. The minister said the government had now started disbursing funds to some startups. She said the second round would be more ambitious and would seek to establish a baseline anchor fund. The government would provide a minimum \$10 million seed grant, while the World Bank and other development partners would support the creation of a larger fund in Pakistan. The aim, she said, was to attract more international capital and eventually develop the initiative into a fund of funds. She said the government would not manage the fund itself. "I am quite adamant that the government of Pakistan will not be managing the fund," she said.

She said some of the world's leading fund managers would be brought in to manage the initiative. This, she added, would help build confidence among international venture capital investors. The government was also working to diversify risks and improve access to capital for Pakistani startups, she said. The minister said the Ministry of IT was operating around eight National Incubation Centres across the country. A new incubation centre had also recently been established specifically for women founders, providing them with a dedicated platform to develop their businesses and ideas. She said entrepreneurship had significant potential to create jobs and contribute to economic growth. "Programs like the Hive really allow for that entrepreneurial activity to thrive," she said. The minister said the value of Innovation Hive went beyond providing physical space to entrepreneurs. According to the briefing she received, the programme would offer mentorship and help young entrepreneurs gain access to markets and build partnerships. "We need to go end to end," she said. She said different organisations often worked in silos, creating gaps in support for young entrepreneurs. "Sometimes we work in silos and that is where the connections break," she said. Organisation might mentor young people at one stage but leave them to find partners and opportunities when they entered the wider market, she added. Shaza said the Innovation Hive model could

help bridge this gap by providing support throughout an entrepreneur's journey. She said it was better to support a smaller number of people from start to finish than to work with a large number and leave many without support midway. "I am of the opinion that we should do lesser number of people but make sure that we take them to the full end rather than doing a lot of people but then leaving most of them in the middle," she said. She said the Hive's ability to provide entrepreneurial space and connect startups with real-world markets was the project's main value. The minister said Pakistan's partnerships with international partners covered technology, education, social development and entrepreneurship, as well as wider global issues. She also credited cooperation over the previous year and a half with helping create an environment in which initiatives such as Innovation Hive could be celebrated safely. She said when the present government assumed office, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed that digital technology, IT and telecommunications should become a core foundation for the country. She recalled that the prime minister had called ministers to his office shortly after they took oath and directed them to treat digital technology not as a separate sector but as an enabler across all sectors. "The first directive that came up was that digital IT and telecom will become the core foundation, not just as a vertical, but as an enabler across all sectors.—DNA

Envoy visit boosts Pak's eco, engagement with Rwanda

DNA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Pakistan to Rwanda, Angola and Burundi, Naeem Khan recently concluded a successful visit to Burundi, marking an important step toward further strengthening diplomatic, economic and people-to-people relations between Pakistan and Burundi. During his tour of duty, Ambassador Naeem Khan held a series of productive meetings with senior government officials, business leaders, members of the diplomatic community, civil society representatives, academics, artists, students and members of the Pakistani community, said a release issued here on Monday. The engagements provided an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest and explore new avenues for



cooperation between the two countries. A key focus of the Ambassador's visit was the promotion of trade and economic relations. The envoy met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burundi and other senior officials from relevant ministries, where bilateral relations and opportunities for expanding cooperation

were discussed. Particular attention was given to enhancing commercial exchanges, encouraging business-to-business contacts and identifying areas where Pakistan and Burundi can benefit from greater economic collaboration. Ambassador Naeem Khan also engaged with Burundi's development authorities,

Chambers of Commerce and Industries, businesspersons, importers and exporters. These interactions highlighted the considerable potential for increasing trade between the two countries. Discussions explored opportunities for Pakistani businesses to develop stronger links with Burundian counterparts and for both sides to identify products, services and investment sectors that could contribute to increased bilateral commerce. The Ambassador also met members of the Pakistani community and the Pakistani Association in Burundi. Their contributions to strengthening people-to-people ties and promoting Pakistan's economic and cultural interests were acknowledged. He encouraged members of the community to continue playing a constructive role in building bridges between Pakistan and Burundi.

Qatar's non-hydrocarbon GDP share rises to about 70%

RIYADH: Qatar's non-hydrocarbon economy now accounts for nearly 70 percent of gross domestic product, up from 40 percent in 2011, as the country continues to strengthen economic diversification, according to a top official. In an interview with Bloomberg TV on the sidelines of the Qatar Economic Forum, Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saud Al-Thani, the governor of the country's central bank and chairman of the its investment authority, explained that the non-hydrocarbon economy recorded 3.5 percent growth in the first quarter of 2026 despite regional challenges, the Qatar News Agency reported. Qatar has also strengthened its fiscal position in recent years, with debt falling to about 40 percent of GDP, down from around 60 percent, while maintaining an AA sovereign credit rating, Al-Thani said. The country's non-hydrocarbon economy has continued to expand across several sectors, with construction growing 6.2 percent year on year in the first quarter of 2026, followed by wholesale and retail trade at 9 percent, real estate at 6.1 percent and financial and insurance activities at 4.8 percent, according to the National Planning Council. The war between Iran, Israel and the US that began in February has disrupted Qatar's liquefied natural gas industry, with Iranian attacks on Ras Laffan Industrial City damaging several LNG facilities and halting about 17 percent of the country's LNG export capacity, the country's Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi said in March. He added at the time that the damage could affect operations for up to five years. "Despite the damage sustained by liquefied natural gas facilities, we are proceeding with our expansion plans," Al-Thani said. He added: "We are working on a new expansion project that will double our production capacity to 145 million tonnes per annum by 2030." Al-Thani also noted that Qatar enjoys a strong external financial position, with substantial reserves at the QCB and one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds. These factors bolster the country's ability to withstand challenges and capitalize on growth opportunities as conditions in the region improve.—APP

Qatar launches wealth fund division for domestic investments

NEW YORK: Qatar's prime minister announced on Sunday the creation of a new division of the Qatar Investment Authority dedicated to developing domestic investments, marking a new direction for a sovereign wealth fund long focused on building wealth overseas. "We aim to expand the role of the private sector in driving Qatar's economic growth," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said as he announced the new division, Doha Investment, at a special edition of the Qatar Economic Forum in New York. "It will support our strongest companies, help emerging businesses grow, deepen capital markets and attract international capital and expertise to contribute to this effort," he added. The new division will operate as the dedicated manager of QIA's local portfolio, initially overseeing 45 state-owned enterprises that represent roughly one-third of the wealth fund's total assets, according to Sheikh Faisal bin Thani Al-Thani, Qatar's minister of commerce and industry. He will serve as managing director and vice-chairman of Doha Investment.—APP

Filipinos mark martial law anniversary protesting corruption

MANILA: Parts of the Philippine capital were locked down on Monday as thousands of demonstrators took to the streets to protest corruption and mark the 54th anniversary of the declaration of martial law, a period marred by violence and rights abuses. More than 17,000 police personnel were deployed across the main protest sites in Manila, and classes in schools across the city were suspended or moved online. The presidential palace complex, Malacanang, was sealed off, with the Presidential Office citing "standard security protocols." Protesters were expected to rally in the area as part of the annual commemoration of the martial law period, during which the father and namesake of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. assumed emergency powers in what many remember as one of the darkest periods in the Southeast Asian nation's history. He was ousted 14 years later in a popular uprising. Since last year, Sept. 21 has also marked anti-corruption mobilization by labor, youth and church groups in the wake of a multibillion-dollar graft case involving fake flood control projects. Many powerful political figures were implicated in the scandal, fueling public backlash and demands for accountability in one of the world's most typhoon-prone countries. "Our primary goal is really to highlight that the Filipino people's fight against flooding, corruption, poverty and lack of accountability is continuing, especially since only three people have been arrested so far," David San Juan, convener of the People's Movement Against Corruption and co-organizer of Monday's rallies, told Arab News. "The flood control scam has really not been resolved. And what's even more alarming is that next year, there is still a 107 billion peso (\$1.7 billion) budget for flood control, despite the fact that the government has failed to conduct a full accounting of previous flood control expenditures. If we don't hold those responsible for corruption accountable, it will happen again and again."—APP

EU to lift sanctions on Russia-linked Usmanov, Fridman

BRUSSELS: European Union envoys agreed on Monday to lift sanctions imposed over Russia's war in Ukraine on businessmen Alisher Usmanov and Mikhail Fridman as long as no EU government objected to the move within the next few hours, diplomats said. The agreement by ambassadors from the EU's 27 countries came as part of a package deal to renew sanctions on thousands of other Russian individuals and entities for three years — much longer than usual rollover periods of six or 12 months — the diplomats said. Uzbek-born Russian businessman Alisher Usmanov attends the Congress of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs in Moscow on March 26, 2026. (AFP) To the surprise and anger of some EU countries, France this month joined Slovakia in pushing for the removal of Russian-Uzbek billionaire Usmanov from the sanctions list. Luxembourg then demanded the removal of Fridman, a Russian, according to diplomats. France urged the EU to lift sanctions on Usmanov after coming under what it said was pressure from Azerbaijan, which has detained at least two French nationals, three European diplomats told Reuters last week. A senior Azerbaijani diplomat on Friday rejected those assertions. Russian businessman, co-founder of Alfa-Group Mikhail Fridman attends a conference of the Israeli Keren Hayesod foundation in Moscow on September 17, 2019. (AFP) France has not publicly confirmed that it has pushed to lift EU sanctions — which involve a ban on travel to the bloc and a freeze on assets held in the EU — on Usmanov.—APP

Huawei launches NPO-based Atlas 960E SuperPoD

SHANGHA: Chinese tech giant Huawei has launched world's first NPO-based SuperPoD — the Atlas 960E SuperPoD at HUAWEI CONNECT 2026 to accelerate training and inference for 10-trillion-parameter models. David Wang, Deputy Chairman of the Board and Rotating Chairman at Huawei, delivered a keynote speech titled Advancing the Agentic World, Building a Solid Silicon Foundation. In his speech, Wang launched the industry's first NPO-based SuperPoD — the Atlas 960E SuperPoD — to accelerate training and inference for 10-trillion-parameter models. Huawei's AI strategy is centered on computing power, with a focus on monetizing hardware. The company is committed to building out AI infrastructure — the silicon foundation for the intelligent world, and honing its competitive edge through systems and architectural innovation. Centering these efforts on SuperPoDs and SuperClusters, Huawei aims to build a solid computing foundation, go open source and open system to build out computing ecosystems, and offer a new option for the world. As foundation models approach 10 trillion parameters, SuperPoDs are the go-to choice for AI infrastructure buildout. Huawei's SuperPoD design approach centers on connecting all cluster components under a single protocol with peer-to-peer interconnect, supporting cross-physical-server memory access, and adopting short-reach copper alongside long-reach

optics. Through sustained system-level innovation, Huawei has applied its years of expertise in optical technology to its SuperPoDs, introducing the world's first mass-produced NPO optical engine — Hi-ONE. This product delivers industry-leading transmission capacity at 7.2 Tbit/s, and is currently the industry's only NPO with a built-in light source. At the event, Wang unveiled the Atlas 960E SuperPoD powered by UnifiedBus and Hi-ONE. As the industry's first NPO-based SuperPoD, the Atlas 960E SuperPoD features an advanced orthogonal architecture and a fully liquid-cooled design. With unified memory addressing enabled by UnifiedBus, a single SuperPoD can scale to 4,096 NPUs, delivering 8 EFLOPS at FP8 precision and 16 EFLOPS at FP4 precision. By integrating 5,500 Hi-ONE units, this SuperPoD doesn't need the 48,000 800G optical modules that would traditionally be required to connect all the NPUs. This cuts power consumption by over 550 kilowatts, while doubling the system's fault-free operating time, achieving 99.8% system availability. All told, the system greatly accelerates innovation in training and inference for frontier models. Huawei has also applied the SuperPoD architecture to general-purpose computing systems, resulting in products like its fully upgraded TaiShan 950 SuperPoD. Powered by UnifiedBus all-optical networking, the new SuperPoD supports up to 4,096 nodes with a unified memory pool of up to 256 TB. This enables higher-density agent sandboxes, faster sandbox startup, and improved agent vector search performance. Huawei has also launched OceanStor M900 — a UnifiedBus-powered context memory storage cluster that supports direct one-hop access and provides a petabyte-scale KV cache for the L3.5 layer. With the UnifiedBus network or RoCE, multiple Atlas 960 SuperPoDs can be connected to build a larger SuperCluster. With a two-tier, four-plane Clos architecture, the SuperCluster can interconnect up to 512,000 NPUs. And when combined with a multi-rail topology, this cluster can support up to one million NPUs.—APP

World leaders to tackle conflicts & AI governance

UNITED NATIONS :With security tightened around the UN headquarters in New York, the 81st UN General Assembly Tuesday opens its high-level debate on a high-stakes agenda addressing Artificial Intelligence (AI) regulation, climate change, systemic inequality, and the ongoing crises in Ukraine, Sudan, and the Middle East. These crises come at a defining moment for the UN as the organization's efforts aimed at halting wars and easing civilian suffering remain paralyzed, while funding cuts have weakened its capacity. This pivotal session will culminate in the appointment of a new Secretary-General, taking place against the backdrop of Pakistan's expanding diplomatic influence and rising international profile. Top Bangladeshi diplomat Khalilur Rahman is presiding over the session, held under the theme "Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All." More than 130 heads of state and government, including Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, will take part in the annual debate which begins on Sept. 22 when US President Donald Trump will be among the first speakers. PM Shehbaz is set to address the 193-member Assembly on Sep 25. "The Prime Minister is coming to the UNGA in the backdrop

of unprecedented prominence and profile of Pakistan at the global stage," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said in an interview with APP correspondent. In this regard, he referred to developments: from the crushing defeat of the Indian aggression in May 2025, to championing peaceful settlement of disputes, to the high-stakes mediation between Iran and the United States, to the landmark Pak-Turkish-Saudi Makkah Pact. The prime minister, Ambassador Asim Ahmad added, will be representing Pakistan, "confident, ready and willing to play its role for regional and global peace and stability." In his address to the Assembly, according to diplomatic sources, PM Shehbaz will present Pakistan's perspective on the evolving regional and international security environment and emphasize the importance of dialogue, diplomacy, restraint and the peaceful resolution of disputes. These principles have been a consistent feature of Pakistan's foreign policy and have also guided our approach during Pakistan's current term on the UN Security Council, it was pointed out. The prime minister will highlight Pakistan's active diplomatic engagement and meditation efforts aimed at preventing escalation, promoting dialogue and contributing to peace and stability in the region,

the sources said. He will also outline Pakistan's priorities on a range of pressing international issues, including sustainable development, climate change, counter-terrorism, Islamophobia, global economic challenges, UN reform and the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The prime minister will underscore the need for greater international cooperation to address the interconnected development, economic, climate and security challenges faced by developing countries. PM Shehbaz will also draw the international community's attention to situations of prolonged occupation and the denial of the right to self-determination, particularly in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine. He will underscore the need to address these issues in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. The prime minister will also participate in a number of high-level events and meetings focusing on development, climate action and other issues of international and national importance. He will also hold bilateral meetings with several world leaders, as well as with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, whose second 5-year term expires at the end of this year. —APP

Briefs

President, PM reaffirm resolve to world peace

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to international peace and a strong, effective and inclusive multilateral international system with the United Nations at its core. In their separate messages on International Day of Peace being observed today (Monday), they said Pakistan supports peaceful settlement of disputes and a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and resolution based on dialogue, diplomacy and collective action. The President said Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between Iran and United States have been acknowledged internationally. He said there can be no durable peace where the right of peoples to self-determination is denied and Security Council resolutions remain unimplemented, including in situations of foreign occupation such as Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Prime Minister said Pakistan takes pride in its constructive role in advancing regional and international peace. He called upon all citizens to play their part in combating negative forces such as hatred, intolerance, and discrimination, and promote empathy, dialogue, and respect for others. He said strengthening a culture of peace is a shared responsibility of government institutions, civil society, religious leaders, teachers, the media, communities, and families alike. - APP

US has deported 25,000 to third countries under secretive deals

The investigation by Forbidden Stories found the administration has earmarked \$410 million to be paid directly to the receiving countries, or to UN agencies to facilitate the returns

DNA

NAIROBI: The United States has deported more than 25,000 people under secretive agreements with 35 countries to take migrants with no ties to those nations, according to an investigation published Monday. Since US President Donald Trump took office in January 2025, Washington has been signing deals with developing countries to take migrants who cannot legally be sent home. The investigation by Forbidden Stories found the administration has earmarked \$410 million to be paid directly to the receiving countries, or to UN agencies to facilitate the returns.

At least 25,447 people had already been deported to third countries by August 31, 2026, according to data compiled by Forbidden Stories with a consortium of

international journalists. The vast majority - around 20,000 - were sent to Mexico, but the rest were dispersed to 27 other countries across Latin America, Africa, and the Pacific, and agreements have been finalised with seven more. The deals vary, including over which nationalities can be deported and whether people with criminal records can be accepted. Forbidden Stories said 49 of Africa's 54 countries had been approached about accepting third-country deportees.

A little-known State Department division called the Office of Remigration, created in May 2025, has handled most of the negotiations and payments, according to Forbidden Stories. The office is headed by Christian Jove Ehrhardt, a 41-year-old diplomat who previously worked as a security officer. The report details his visits to Cameroon, which signed a memorandum of under-

standing with the US in December on accepting deportees. A week later, it also signed a five-year health assistance programme worth nearly \$400 million.

The following month, the State Department said it would provide a further \$30 million to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Cameroon to "facilitate the voluntary return of refugees and combat illegal immigration." The first plane carrying deportees arrived in Cameroon on January 14. Other agreements have involved direct payments to governments. Palau, a small Pacific island nation with a population of under 18,000, signed an agreement in December 2025 to accept up to 75 third-country nationals in return for \$7.5 million.

However, only three people have so far been sent under the agreement. In Eswatini, 32 people have arrived since July 2025 out of a possible 160 under an agreement

worth more than \$5 million. It has accepted deportees with criminal records, the investigation found. Of the \$410 million planned for the agreements, internal State Department records showed that \$81 million was earmarked for signatory governments.

The rest was intended for aid organisations, including more than \$178 million for the UN's International Organisation for Migration, and \$123 million for UNHCR. The agencies have faced criticism over their involvement, although UNHCR told Forbidden Stories that it was not party to the bilateral agreements and that US funding was being used in line with its mandate to strengthen asylum systems. An IOM spokesperson told Forbidden Stories that the agency's decisions to accept funding rested "on a single question: whether our engagement will improve the lives of the migrants affected. In these instances, we believe strongly it does."

Russia not a threat to France: Putin

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Monday that Russia does not pose a threat to France or any European country, rejecting comments by the leadership of France's hardline National Rally as false. In a joint statement at the weekend, presidential candidate Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella, the party's president, said they would "never tolerate a foreign power, in this case, Russia, seeking to dictate, directly or indirectly, the policy of our country through intimidation, threats, destabilization or psychological pressure."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow did not accept the criticism.

"We do not agree with this statement. Russia is not threatening France or any other country in Europe. President Putin has stated this on numerous occasions. We have no disputes with any European states that could give rise to any serious disagreements," said Peskov. "Russia therefore poses no threat whatsoever; it threatens no one and blackmails no one. We therefore categorically disagree with such statements. We do not accept them," he added. - APP

12 dead in Ethiopia violence

DNA

Addis Ababa: At least 12 people have been killed and dozens injured as a result of fighting in western Ethiopia near the border with South Sudan, according to Doctors Without Borders (MSF). Intercommunal clashes are frequent in the Gambella region, home to more than 400,000 refugees, most of them South Sudanese who have fled violence in the world's youngest country.

"MSF teams at Kule health centre in Ethiopia's Gambella Region have been responding to an influx of wounded patients following violence in Itang Special Woreda on 18 September," the medical charity said in a statement on Sunday. MSF said it had received 88 patients from Friday's violence, including eight who were already dead and four who died upon arrival. "We call on all those involved to exercise restraint and protect civilians from further violence," said MSF's operations manager in Ethiopia, Gul Badshah. It is not clear who was responsible for the violence. A 2025 Rift Valley Institute report attributed the rise in conflict in Gambella to competition over economic resources and an influx of refugees in the area.

Chinese President Xi to visit US from Sept 23-25



BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping will visit the United States this week for talks with President Donald Trump, Beijing confirmed on Monday. Xi will be there from September 23 to 25 (Wednesday to Friday), a government statement said. Foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said the two leaders would "have an in-depth exchange of views on major issues concerning China-US relations and world peace and development".

Beijing would "work with the US to enrich the substance of the relationship of constructive strategic stability between China and the US, strengthen dialogue and cooperation, (and) properly manage differences", he added. Washington had already made clear that the leaders of the world's two biggest economies were due to meet this week, in what is expected to be a bid to ease tensions over trade, technology and broader strategic issues.

Trump will personally welcome Xi at Joint Base Andrews on Wednesday before their meetings the following day, a US official confirmed. The US leader was welcomed by China's vice president when he landed in Beijing for his state visit in May. "I'll be discussing almost everything with him," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday. The simmering trade war between the two countries is a key concern, and the threat of military confrontation over Taiwan looms large as well.

While both sides have maintained a tariff truce for nearly a year, they have yet to secure a lasting agreement.

Vice Premier He Lifeng, China's top negotiator for trade, is in the US for meetings with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. The two discussed creating a communication channel for AI concerns, as they met on Sunday.

Trump's Iran war casts a long shadow too, as China seeks to avoid US sanctions against countries dealing with Tehran, despite reports that Beijing supplied Iran with intelligence for a strike on US troops. - APP

Nation will never forget sacrifices of soldiers

PESHAWAR: Minister

for Information and

Broadcasting Attaullah

Tarar visited the residence

of policeman

Faheemullah, the only

brother of three sisters,

who was martyred in Kohat

incident. He met with

Faheemullah Shaheed's

father, Ikramullah, and

offered Fateha for the departed

soul. He expressed his

heartfelt sympathy and

condolences to the bereaved

family. The Information

Minister said the people of

Pakistan would never

forget the sacrifices of

brave young men like

Faheemullah. He said the

martyrs laid down their

lives for the peace and

security of the country. He

said the sacrifices of the

martyrs will not go in vain,

and their families will never

be left alone. Attaullah

Tarar said the entire

nation stands with the

brave personnel of law

enforcement agencies in the

war against terrorism. - APP



France vows response after Iran closes language center

"This new attack against France's cultural presence in Iran, following the assault on two staff members of the French embassy last July, is unjustifiable and unacceptable," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Pascal Confavreux said in a statement

UNITED NATIONS: France will summon Iran's ambassador and take appropriate measures in response after Iranian authorities sealed a French language center affiliated with its embassy in Tehran, the Foreign Ministry said. "This new attack against France's cultural presence in Iran, following the assault on two staff members of the French embassy last July, is unjustifiable and unacceptable," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Pascal Confavreux said in a statement. Ties between the two countries have been strained for years over Iran's nuclear programme and Tehran detaining several French nationals. Although the relationship had improved after their release and Paris distanced itself from the US war against Iran, the situation worsened over the summer after two of its diplomats were arrested and subsequently expelled. France reciprocated. Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported earlier on Sunday that authorities had closed the French language centre following a judicial order from the Tehran prosecutor's office. The center operated for years under the cover of foreign-language teaching despite repeated warnings to obtain a licence, authorities said, ac-

cusing it of activities against Iranian culture and national security, including identifying and building networks as well as facilitating the departure of skilled Iranians from the country.

France has previously dismissed such allegations, saying there had been a pattern of intimidation in recent months as Paris sought to increase its support for, and contacts with, Iran's civil society following a crackdown on protests at the start of this year.

Diplomats said Iran has also been irked by a recent social media post from France's foreign minister, Jean-Noel Barrot, to mark the fourth anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini, which triggered protests across the country. In response on Friday, Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araqchi, called the post "crocodile tears" and accused Paris of slaughtering 1.5 million Algerians during the war of independence. "Your silence when the US massacred our schoolkids said it all," he said, referring to a strike in Iran that Tehran believes the US was responsible for. The two ministers are set to meet on Tuesday on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations. - APP

یکم جنوری 2006 کے بعد سے رجسٹرڈ موٹر سائیکل ، چنگچی اور رکشہ چلانے والے خصوصی ریلیف اسکیم کے لیے اہل ہیں

وزیراعظم کی خصوصی ریلیف اسکیم

رعایتی پٹرول کے حصول کا طریقہ کار :

- STEP 01 رجسٹریشن کے بعد پٹرول ریلیف حاصل کرنے کے لیے پٹرول پمپ جانے سے پہلے TOK لکھ کر 9771 پر بھیج دیں
- STEP 02 موصول ہونے والے میسج میں ٹوکن نمبر ، گاڑی کا رجسٹریشن نمبر ، پٹرول کی مقدار اور ٹوکن استعمال کرنے کی مدت درج ہوگی
- STEP 03 ٹوکن پٹرول پمپ پر دکھا کر آپ رعایتی قیمت پر پٹرول حاصل کر سکتے ہیں

صوبے کے نام کا پہلا حرف

اسلام آباد	پنجاب	سندھ	بلوچستان
خیبر پختونخوا	گلگت بلتستان	آزاد جموں و کشمیر	

REG لکھ کر space دیں

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- STEP 02 بغیر space نمبر پلیٹ LHR123 ایسے لکھنے کے بعد space دیں
- STEP 03 صوبے کے نام کا پہلا حرف جہاں آپ کی گاڑی رجسٹر ہے صوبہ کا نام پنجاب کے بعد space دیں
- STEP 04 ویبیکل رجسٹریشن کی تاریخ بمعہ ، مہینہ ، اور سال DD/MM/YYYY دن مہینہ اور سال ایسے لکھیں 08102010

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