



Islamabad POST

Saturday, September 26, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

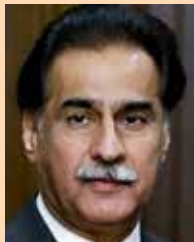
Price Rs. 40

Argentina coach says Messi deserves to go out on own terms

Detailed News On Page-06

Speaker national Assembly says media role vital

Detailed News On Page-03



Punjab chief minister says health priority

Detailed News On Page-02



Makkah pact

Pakistani, Turkish, Saudi FM's discuss security, ME issues

Top diplomats discuss arrangements for urgent meeting of three nations' chiefs of staff, says Saudi foreign ministry

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The foreign ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye met under the framework of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA) on Friday, amid attacks by Yemen's Houthis against the kingdom. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Saudi FM Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud and Turkiye's Hakan Fidan held the meeting on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where they exchanged views on regional and international security issues.

In a post on X, DPM Dar said that the three top diplomats also reviewed progress towards establishing the institutional structures under the MJDA. The Houthis have launched strikes on the Yemeni government and repeatedly fired into Saudi Arabia, disrupting oil flows from the world's largest energy exporter, as part of a wider Middle East war that began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran in February.

The group said they had fired dozens of missiles and drones at Saudi targets on Thursday, while authorities in Saudi Arabia said they had intercepted six ballistic missiles fired by Houthi fighters. Saudi Arabia earlier had issued emergency alerts for areas including Makkah, Jeddah and Yanbu, the main Saudi Red Sea oil port. The Saudi foreign ministry said that the three allies condemned the attacks targeting Makkah and other civilian sites, while affirming Saudi Arabia's right to defend itself. "The ministers also discussed arrangements for holding an urgent meeting of the chiefs of staff of the three countries to discuss ways to support Saudi Arabia under the [Makkah] Joint Defence Agreement, which stipulates that an

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PM speaks at UN Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandab should remain open

DNA

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told the United Nations General Assembly that the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab should remain open, mentioning that they are arteries of the global economy. "The Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab are arteries of the global economy; they must remain open — connecting nations, not becoming choke points of confrontation," he said during the 81st UNGA session in New York on Friday.

"These waters must carry the promise of prosperity, not the perils of war," Condemning Houthi attacks on holy cities in Saudi Arabia, PM Shehbaz said that it was a "red line" and stressed that Pakistan stands with the Kingdom. He also said that the Makkah pact was not directed against any country; rather, it was a collective commitment for defence, stability, and peace in the region. "Nothing more." Recalling the May war against India last year,

Continued on Page 06



NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar with Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, along with our respective delegations, on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. — DNA

Court wants Imaan to be presented online

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday ordered authorities to present lawyer and human rights activist Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, via video link in a case registered against them at the Secretariat police station. ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Supra heard the case registered at the Secretariat police station against Mazari and Chattha. The court had summoned both accused in person on Friday. However, Adiala jail authorities did not produce Mazari and Chattha before the court. ATC judge adjourned proceedings until Saturday and directed the jail authorities to ensure that Mazari and Chattha appeared before the court through video link.

Continued on Page 06

Much ado about nothing

PTI decides to 'postpone' Islamabad long march till Oct 5

Formal announcement to be made after taking Achakzai and Allama Nasir Abbas into confidence, say sources

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to postpone its planned Islamabad long march until October 5, the party sources said on Friday. The decision to put off the march — initially scheduled for September 27 — was taken during a meeting of the PTI political committee in Peshawar, the sources said.

The PTI is preparing for a major protest and march on Islamabad, with the party demanding the release of its incarcerated founder Imran Khan and what it describes as the restoration of constitutional supremacy.

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Briefs

Pope arrives in France

DNA

PARIS: Pope Leo XIV arrived in France on Friday for the Vatican's first official visit to the European nation in 18 years, with artificial intelligence, young believers and the continent's future near the top of his agenda. Church bells rang around the nation when the first US pontiff, whose paternal grandmother was born in France, landed outside Paris just before 10:00 am (0800 GMT) for a four-day trip. President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte greeted the 71-year-old pope at the airport, where a red carpet was rolled out on the tarmac, as he marked the first official trip by a head of the Vatican since Pope Benedict XVI in September 2008. "I'm travelling to France, as to anywhere else in the world, as a follower of Jesus Christ wanting to proclaim peace."

Zelensky says US allowed to produce missiles

DNA

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday said US President Donald Trump told him he would allow Ukraine to produce advanced Patriot air defence missiles, after a series of reversals on the issue. Kyiv is facing a shortage of the missiles, which remain the only ones reliably able to counter the ballistic missiles that Russia launches at Ukraine. "At our last meeting, President Trump emphasised to me that yes, I have made a final decision. Ukraine will receive licences for the production of Patriot missiles," Zelensky said in a voice note to journalists. In July, Trump said it would be "pretty cool" to grant Ukraine the licences, before backtracking.

'Trump told Xi that China helping Iran is unacceptable'

Trump would follow up his summit with Xi by taking the Chinese leader to the US National Archives, where they were expected to stress views about the history and direction of ties between their countries

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday concluded his "productive" meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, noting in a post on Truth Social that "tremendous things will be happening". "Like almost everyone else, he seemed to like calling the poorly and inaccurately named artificial intelligence to a far more accurate and important name: super intelligence. That would be 'super!' Everyone last night agreed, also," he wrote. The lavish state summit at the White House appeared heavy on symbolism but light on substance, with no sign of major breakthroughs between the world's biggest economies. Still, Trump highlighted progress under a bilateral trade mechanism, citing what he described as increased

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Turkey rejects Israeli accusations

DNA

ISTANBUL: Turkiye rejected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "baseless accusations" at the United Nations, its state-run news agency Anadolu reported on Friday. Netanyahu had called Turkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan a "tyrant" during a fiery speech at the UN, accusing Ankara of harboring Hamas militant leaders.

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US and Iran discuss phased peace deal

The talks face a big obstacle as neither side wants to be the first to surrender its leverage, according to comments to Reuters by two Iranian sources, two regional officials and two Western diplomatic sources, but behind Iran's stance is a recognition of the economic cost of prolonged confrontation

DNA

NEW YORK: US and Iranian negotiators in New York are exploring a phased path out of war that would involve Tehran reopening the Strait of Hormuz and Washington lifting its economic blockade of Iran, sources close to the talks said. The strait has become the central bargaining chip in efforts to end the nearly seven-month US-Iran conflict, with Iran seeking relief from the US blockade that is choking its economy and Washington seeking free passage for ships on the global oil supply route now blocked by Tehran. The talks face a big obstacle as neither side wants to be the first to surrender its leverage, according to comments to Reuters by two Iranian sources, two regional officials and two Western diplomatic sources, but

behind Iran's stance is a recognition of the economic cost of prolonged confrontation. A senior Iranian official said the most plausible way to end the impasse would be a phased arrangement, with Iran allowing navigation through Hormuz in return for the US lifting its economic blockade and Tehran potentially gaining access to frozen assets.

"One way forward would be to solve the crisis in stages. The first would be to end the blockade and reopen Hormuz," he said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. That would involve US President Donald Trump accepting another temporary fix, after an earlier understanding collapsed in July. So a central challenge facing the negotiators is not just to sketch out a deal but also to ensure any concessions are

Continued on Page 06

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Carbonated Water Also Available in Glass Bottle.

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Nehal, Ihab discuss Karachi, Alexandria sister-city proposal

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi met with Egyptian Ambassador Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid at the Governor House here on Friday.

They discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Pakistan and Egypt in religious and historical tourism, education, trade and youth engagement. During the meeting, the Egyptian Ambassador proposed establishing sister-city relations between Karachi and Alexandria. The Governor welcomed the proposal. The ambassador said that Egypt was interested in developing sister-city ties between Alexandria, Egypt's largest port city, and Karachi, Pakistan's financial and major port hub. The Governor Hashmi said that establishing sister-city relations between Karachi and Alexandria would bring the people and governments of the two countries closer together. He said that such ties would provide greater opportunities to explore the history, culture and tourist attractions of both countries. The Governor said that the sister-city relationship could also help promote trade and economic cooperation between Karachi and Alexandria. He emphasized the importance of student exchange programmes and exchanges of youth delegations to further strengthen people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Egypt. The Egyptian Ambassador said that he would make every possible effort to facilitate exchanges of football delegations between Pakistan and Egypt and to organize an exhibition football match in Karachi. The Governor said that there were extensive opportunities for cooperation between Pakistan and Egypt in the fields of trade, tourism, education and sports. The Governor assured the Egyptian Ambassador of his full cooperation in promoting bilateral collaboration across various sectors. The Ambassador Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid also recorded his remarks in the visitors' book at the Governor House.—APP

Key legal, regulatory amendments reviewed

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar here on Friday chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Disposal of Legislative Business, which reviewed legal and regulatory amendments and rules submitted by various ministries and divisions. The committee approved the draft OGRA Fees and Charges Rules, aimed at aligning the fee and charges framework for regulatory and licensing services administered by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) with current requirements. The committee also accorded conditional approval to proposed amendments to the Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power Act, 1997, subject to incorporation of its recommendations and suggestions in the draft. An amendment to the Pakistan Coast Guards Act, 1973, was also approved to provide a formal legal framework for rules and regulations governing the Regimental Fund, including its administration and operation.—APP

EU, AKF and NPAK Energy launch 3MW power plant in Hunza

By restoring the performance of the existing hydropower asset, the project will increase renewable electricity generation within Hunza, helping improve electricity availability, ease pressure on the existing supply system and strengthen reliability for consumers

DNA

HUNZA, GILGIT-BALTISTAN: The European Union (EU), Aga Khan Foundation and NPAK Energy today marked major progress in strengthening electricity services in Hunza, with the commissioning of the first phase of a major electricity loss-reduction programme and the groundbreaking of the rehabilitation of the 3 MW Misgar Hydropower Plant. The initiatives are being implemented under the Energy Plus Project. With funding from the European Union (EU) and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) in partnership with the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, the Energy Plus project focuses on fostering a climate resilient and low-carbon economy and society in northern Pakistan. Under the Loss Reduction Programme – Phase I, NPAK Energy has upgraded critical transmission, distribution and metering infrastructure across Hunza, including a new substation and transformer, 10 transformer substations, 55 upgraded transformers, 25.3 km of transmission lines, 86.5 km of distribution lines and 460 km of service lines, alongside the installation of approximately 9,000 energy meters. The investment is already producing significant improvements across the electricity network. System losses have declined from 47% to approximately 15%, while voltage at consumer premises has improved from around 90–130V to 200–220V. Electricity supply has increased and system tripping has been substantially reduced. The programme is also strengthening the transparency and accuracy of electricity metering and billing. A new Energy Meter Laboratory has been established to test electromechanical, digital, PLC and smart meters, providing a mechanism for addressing defective, disputed or potentially tampered meters.

NPAK Energy will shortly introduce a new billing system aimed at further improving billing accuracy, transparency and customer service. "Reliable and sustainable energy is fundamental to the development of communities and local economies. What we are seeing in Hunza is partnership in practice – improving the network so that electricity reaches consumers more efficiently, while investing in renewable energy to increase generation. The European Union is proud to support these efforts alongside NPAK Energy, the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan and local communities," said Mr Raimundas Karoblis, EU Ambassador to Pakistan. The Secretary of the Water and Power Department, Gilgit-Baltistan, Mr. Iftikhar Alam, said, "The Government appreciates the work of AKDN, particularly NPAK,



and will extend all possible support for the successful implementation of this project. Reliable electricity is vital for the economic and social development of Gilgit-Baltistan. The progress under the Energy Plus Project and the rehabilitation of the Misgar Hydropower Plant demonstrate the value of strong collaboration in strengthening energy infrastructure and ensuring a more reliable and sustainable electricity supply for the people of Hunza."

The visit also marked the groundbreaking of the rehabilitation of the 3 MW Misgar Hydropower Plant, the largest hydropower plant in Hunza. The plant is currently operating at approximately 30% capacity factor, significantly below its potential, as key civil infrastructure has deteriorated over time. The rehabilitation will focus on the plant's

two water conveyance channels and forebay structures, together with the necessary civil, engineering and technical works. By restoring the performance of the existing hydropower asset, the project will increase renewable electricity generation within Hunza, helping improve electricity availability, ease pressure on the existing supply system and strengthen reliability for consumers. "Our focus at NPAK Energy is to translate investment into tangible improvements for the people we serve. The reduction in losses, improved voltage and greater reliability of the network demonstrate what can be achieved through targeted infrastructure investment. At the same time, rehabilitating Misgar will allow us to unlock more of Hunza's own renewable energy potential.

Dewatering operations in DIKhan continues

DERA ISMAIL KHAN :Heavy rain that lashed Dera Ismail Khan in the early hours of Friday prompted Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSC) Dera Ismail Khan to intensify drainage and clearance operations across the city. Following the rainfall, WSSC field teams remained active at various locations to remove accumulated rainwater and ensure smooth drainage. Water Supply staff also carried out dewatering using motor pumps. The sanitation and water supply teams were deployed in the field to respond to water accumulation and other rain-related issues, while clearance activities also accelerated to facilitate the movement of residents and prevent disruption to

routine civic life. WSSC officials said the teams were working on a priority basis at locations where rainwater had accumulated, adding that dewatering operations would continue until the situation was brought under control. They said the company had mobilized its field staff and equipment to deal with the effects of the heavy early-morning rainfall and improve drainage conditions in the city. The officials also urged citizens and shopkeepers to cooperate with the field teams and avoid throwing plastic bags, wrappers and other waste into drains and watercourses, warning that even small plastic bags could obstruct drainage and

cause water to accumulate on roads and in public places. "Effective drainage after rainfall requires cooperation from citizens along with the efforts of the field teams," the officials said, adding that keeping drains free of solid waste could significantly improve the flow of rainwater. They said WSSC would continue its rain-response and clearance activities and remain engaged in removing accumulated water from affected points. The company appealed to citizens to keep their surroundings clean, dispose of waste at designated points and avoid dumping garbage into drains to help ensure timely drainage during and after rainfall.—APP

Solar manufacturing can create millions of jobs: Haider

LAHORE Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Friday said a comprehensive policy to promote local manufacturing of solar systems in Pakistan could create millions of jobs, provide affordable and environment-friendly energy and help the country earn valuable foreign exchange. He was addressing the 3rd International Solar Power Conclave and Solar Technology Excellence Awards 2026, organised by Energy Update in collaboration with the Pakistan Solar Association, Renewable Energy Association of Pakistan and Pakistan Alternative Energy Association at a lo-

cal hotel here. The governor said it was unfortunate that large-scale local manufacturing of solar systems had not yet been developed in Pakistan due to the absence of a comprehensive government policy. He said establishing a local solar manufacturing industry could generate millions of employment opportunities while providing clean, green and relatively low-cost energy. Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said the importance of solar energy was increasing with the rising cost of electricity, adding that Pakistan had abundant sunlight that could be utilised to reduce the bur-

den of electricity bills on consumers and protect the environment. He urged the solar business community to take practical steps towards local manufacturing instead of waiting for a government policy. He said the solar industry had played an important role in introducing the technology in Pakistan despite limited government support in the past, and a similar approach could help lay the foundation for local manufacturing. He said local production of solar systems would not only help meet the country's growing energy requirements but also enable Pakistan to export solar products and earn valuable foreign exchange. Referring to the rapidly increasing use of solar panels, the governor said a large number of households in urban areas had installed solar panels on rooftops, reflecting growing public interest in solar energy.—APP

Bugti reaffirms governance reforms

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has underlined that the foundations of good governance have been firmly laid in the province, with a system built on merit, transparency, accountability, and opportunities for youth. Addressing participants of the 21st National Workshop Balochistan in Quetta, Bugti categorically rejected the notion of insurgency in the province, stating that only a handful of elements are attempting to promote separatist narratives based on identity. "Conspiracies to divide Pakistan like pieces of cake will never succeed," he declared. The event was attended by Senator Dinesh Kumar, Adviser on Media and Political Affairs Shahid Rind, and Principal Secretary Imran Zarkoon. Sarfraz Bugti cautioned that Baloch youth are being misled into a futile conflict that offers no benefit to their future or the province. He dismissed claims that uneven development or backwardness is the root cause of unrest, noting that such disparities exist globally but do not justify violence. He urged young people to distinguish between perception and reality and acquaint themselves with the true history of their province. The Chief Minister accused anti-Pakistan elements abroad of spreading organized propaganda to misguide youth, stressing that they should instead focus on education, progress, and building a brighter future rather than joining state-opposed campaigns. Highlighting governance reforms, Bugti said the provincial government is actively listening to youth at all levels to bridge the gap between them and the state. He emphasized meritocracy as the only way to ensure justice, pointing to the introduction of an AI-based testing system designed to guarantee transparency in recruitment. "No deserving candidate will be deprived of their right, and jobs will be awarded strictly on merit," he asserted. Sarfraz Bugti further revealed that in the past two years, the Public Sector Development Program has achieved 100 percent progress. The Anti-Corruption Department has been revitalized, while the Chief Minister's Inspection Team has begun monitoring development projects, starting from Bugti's own constituency to send a clear message that accountability will be impartial. He confirmed that action against corrupt elements is underway, with arrests already being made.—DNA

Maryam for monthly ‘Hospital of the Month’ award

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday announced a monthly "Hospital of the Month" award for hospitals demonstrating outstanding performance across the province. Presiding over a video-link meeting, the chief minister decided to transform 300 Maryam Nawaz Hospitals (Rural Health Centres) into fully fledged hospitals and noted that 911 Clinics on Wheels had provided medical care to 30 million patients within a short period. The meeting also decided to introduce digital medical boxes for Clinics on Wheels for the first time in Punjab. The boxes would facilitate ultrasound, blood sugar, CBC and ECG tests through a single system. A camera could also be connected to the digital medical box for teleconferencing, while a mobile-linked smart ultrasound device would also be introduced. Maryam Nawaz directed the recruitment of 40,000 doctors and allied health professionals for hospitals across Punjab. The meeting was informed that 2,524 doctors, 2,482 women medical officers, 408 consultants and 32 cardiologists had already been recruited. Besides, 7,572 lady health visitors and 5,048 support staff had been posted in hospitals across the province. The chief minister ordered the provision of a new CT scan machine in every district and directed the establishment of telemedicine centres for seasonal and common diseases. Patients would be able to consult doctors through video calls at the centres and, where necessary, be referred to the relevant hospital and ward. The centres would also facilitate appointments with the relevant ward, laboratory or other facility. Maryam Nawaz ordered the immediate replacement of medical superintendents of four hospitals over poor performance and negligence of duties. She also directed the formation

of a pool of doctors and medical superintendents to deal with emergency situations. She directed that cleanliness and parking facilities at district and tehsil headquarters hospitals be improved. For the first time in Punjab, Clinic Quality Control Officers would be appointed to assess the quality of treatment being provided to patients. A Directorate of Monitoring and Surveillance had also been established in Primary Healthcare to ensure 24-hour digital monitoring of every hospital. The digital monitoring system would cover DHQ and THQ hospitals, Maryam Nawaz Hospitals, Maryam Nawaz Health Clinics, Field Hospitals and Clinics on Wheels. The meeting was informed that Community Health Monitoring Health Inspectors had completed registration and data collection of more than 119.8 million people across Punjab. Medicines had been delivered to the homes of 3,444 Type-1 diabetes patients, 14,286 hepatitis patients and 13,864 TB patients. The meeting also agreed on legislation to link private clinics with the Health Information Management System (HIMS). Provincial Secretary Primary and Secondary Healthcare and Population Nadia Saqib gave a detailed briefing during the video-link meeting. Earlier, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said newspapers remain a credible source of information in the present era of information overload, stressing the need for objective journalism and authentic information. In her special message on Readers' Day, the chief minister congratulated journalists associated with print media, office-bearers and members of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), and representatives of organisations associated with the print media.—DNA

رہنمائے نیشنل کی طرف سے ریسٹنگ سے احتیاط سے پل کریں۔

پاکستان ریلویز

ڈیڑھ سال پر مشتمل ٹیسٹس، راولپنڈی

شوکارانہ وٹس

پاکستان ریلویز کے درجنوں ڈیل مار میں انگریزی کی اطلاع کے بغیر قانونی طور پر اپنی ڈیوٹی سے غیر حاضر ہیں۔ ان کے گھروں کے پتے پر شوکارانہ وٹس بھجوائے گئے لیکن یہ ایجنسیوں نے اس کے ملنے کی اطلاع دی اور ریل ڈیوٹی پر حاضر ہوئے ہیں۔ لہذا انہیں آخری بار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اشتہار ہذا کی اشاعت کے (10) دنوں کے اندر اندر دفتر میں حاضر ہوں اور غیر حاضری کی وضاحت کریں۔ قلمی بخش جواب نہ دینے کی صورت میں ان کے خلاف ایجنڈی وی رول 2020 کے تحت یکطرفہ کارروائی کرتے ہوئے انہیں نوکری سے برخاست کر دیا جائے گا۔

نمبر شمار	نام / اولدیت	عہدہ	کیس نمبر	تاریخ غیر حاضری	پتہ
1	محمد عمران خان ولد فضل خان	معاون	402-E/336/ M.I/IV/P-7	05.08.2026	H. No. 1434 Z-A Dhoke Mangtal Rawalpindi.
2	محمد شیر ولد رحیم دین	اے۔ ایس۔ ایم گریڈ-1	402-E/79/ M.B/III/P-7	27.07.2026	Ward Mpl/ 02 Mirza Colony Bhera Road Phularwan District Sargodha.
3	آزاد منظور ولد منظور سنج	لوک معاون	402-E/222/ A.M/IV/P-7	17.07.2026	H. No. 140 Street No. 111 Mohallah Christian Colony Sargodha.
4	امجد علی احسن ولد محمد نواز	آرٹھی مل معاون	402-E/319/ A.A/IV/P-7	15.02.2026	Rato Kala P.O. Khas Tehsil Bhalwal District Sargodha.
5	محمد واصف ولد محمد وارث	سنگل معاون	402-E/299/ M.W/IV/P-7	08.07.2026	Post Office Qutbal Tehsil Fateh Jhang District Attock.
6	بادول انجم ولد محمد جمہ	سی۔ اے۔ بی	402-E/78/ H.A/III/P-7	06.07.2026	Village Jhang Khoharon P.O. Domeli Tehsil Sohawa District Jhelum.

برائے ڈیڑھ سال پر مشتمل ٹیسٹس، پاکستان ریلویز، راولپنڈی

PID(I)2758/26

URAA PAKISTAN

National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

- Sept01/Libya Revolution Day
- Sept01/Tanzania Defence day
- Sept01/Uzbekistan Independence Day
- Sept07/Brazil Independence Day
- Sept09/DPR Korea National Day
- 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

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949
- Rescue (Police).....15
- Bomb Disposal.....15
- Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
- Emergency Ambulance.1122
- & Rescue Services.4451122
- Motorway Police...9266044
- Motorway Police.9270601-20
- Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
- Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



- Enquiry
- Edhi Ambulance.....115
- PIA Flight Info.....114
- PIA Cargo.....9280979
- Railway Inquiry.....117
- Railway Exchange9270831-5
- WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
- CAA.....9281092



- Hospitals
- CMH.....5611111
- MH.....561116
- Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
- DHQT.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International 4603666



- Departments
- CDA.....9221334-43
- CDa.....9208301-04
- Met Office.....9250360-6
- RDA.....5555864
- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3



- Islamabad Metropolitan
- Corporation.....9209224
- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343
- Water Tank
- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

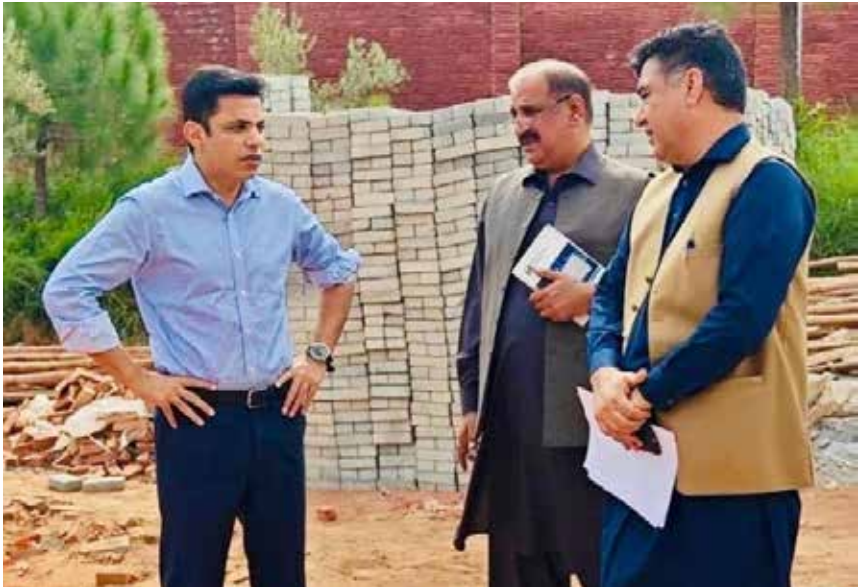
CDA chief reviews National Police Academy project

The chairman said development projects should focus not only on improving connectivity and mobility but also on enhancing public facilities and the overall urban environment of the capital

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Sohail Ashraf on Friday visited the National Police Academy (NPA) and reviewed progress on an ongoing development project being executed by the authority.

During the visit, the chairman inspected the work at the site and reviewed the pace and quality of construction. He directed the concerned officials to ensure that all components were completed in accordance with the approved design, technical specifications and relevant rules. He stressed that there would be no compromise on the quality of construction and directed officials to identify and resolve administrative or technical issues that could cause delays. The chairman also called for regular monitoring of the project and



close coordination among the CDA departments, NPA and other stakeholders to ensure its timely completion. He directed the concerned departments to maintain the pace of development work across Islamabad and ensure effective use of resources. The visit comes amid the CDA's ongoing development and infrastructure works across the capital, including improvements to roads, bridges, underpasses, landscaping and public facilities.

The chairman said development projects should focus not only on improving connectivity and mobility but also on enhancing public facilities and the overall urban environment of the capital. He directed officials to ensure that ongoing projects were implemented according to approved plans, with emphasis on quality, sustainability, efficient use of resources and timely completion.

Rain spell puts upper regions at risk of flash floods

ISLAMABAD: The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday issued an alert for possible heavy rain, thunderstorms and flash floods in upper parts of the country from Sept 25 to 30, urging relevant authorities to ensure advance preparations and keep emergency response teams and resources ready in vulnerable areas.

According to the alert, the western weather system is expected to intensify on Sept 25 and 26, potentially triggering heavy rainfall, thunderstorms and flash floods in mountainous areas and rain fed streams.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, vulnerable areas include Astore, Skardu, Roundu, Ghanche and Shigar, while in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Neelum Valley, Haveli, Poonch and Sudhanoti may face flood related risks.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Swat, Bajaur, Dir, Kohistan, Kolai Palas, Battagram and Mansehra have also been identified as areas at risk of flash flooding. The NEOC forecast heavy thunderstorms and, at some places, hailstorms in Potohar, Punjab and various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Sept 30. Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Murree, Galiyat, Mianwali, Khushab, Bhakkar, Layyah, Sialkot, Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Okara, Sahiwal and Jhang are among the areas where heavy rainfall could cause urban flooding. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, heavy rain is also expected in Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Shangla, Battagram, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan, Peshawar, Kurram, Hangu, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan and Waziristan.

NDMA has directed relevant departments to take precautionary measures against possible flooding and other weather-related hazards and maintain close monitoring of rainfall and the situation in streams and vulnerable areas. Authorities have also been asked to pre-position emergency response teams and essential resources in potentially affected areas to ensure a timely response.

The NDMA advised the public to avoid crossing rain-fed streams, mountain torrents and waterlogged roads, and urged residents of low-lying and vulnerable areas to remain vigilant and adopt necessary safety measures. The authority also advised citizens to use the Pak NDMA Disaster Alert mobile application for verified weather updates, information on potential hazards and safety guidelines.—APP

MoU sign to bring affordable 5G devices to Pakistan

Commercial availability, pricing, and sales-channel details for the devices will be announced separately

ISLAMABAD: Jazz, Pakistan's leading connectivity provider, has announced a strategic collaboration with DIGIT and UNISOC to introduce affordable 5G devices in Pakistan.

The partnership brings together Jazz's connectivity ecosystem and market reach, DIGIT's device expertise and understanding of local consumers, and UNISOC's semiconductor and 5G platform capabilities.

The collaboration will initially introduce two products: a 5G MiFi and a 5G smartphone powered by UNISOC platforms. Designed to make next-generation connectivity more accessible, the devices will let consumers experience faster, more reliable mobile connectivity across communication, entertainment, education, work, and digital services.

Asad Maqbool, Head of Jazz Consumer Growth, said, "The benefits of 5G can only be fully realised when more people have access to affordable, capable devices. By combining Jazz's connectivity ecosystem with DIGIT's device expertise and UNISOC's technology, we aim to make 5G more accessible and enable consumers to benefit from faster connectivity across their everyday digital lives. This is central to our purpose of enabling a Better Life For All through technology." Abdul Rehman Mahmood, CEO of DIGIT, said, "Our focus is on bringing reliable, affordable, and high-quality devices to market that address real consumer needs. This collaboration combines DIGIT's device expertise with Jazz's connectivity ecosystem and UNISOC's technology, enabling us to expand our portfolio and support the adoption of next-generation connectivity across Pakistan."

Xian Miao, General Manager of IoT Product Line, UNISOC, said, "Pakistan is an important and rapidly evolving digital market. Through our V510 and UMS9621 platforms, we are enabling 5G across mobile broadband and smartphones. Our collaboration with Jazz and DIGIT will help bring high-performance 5G experiences to more consumers across the country."

The 5G MiFi will provide portable high-speed mobile broadband across multiple devices, while the smartphone will offer consumers an accessible entry point to 5G. The initiative comes as Pakistan enters a new phase of connectivity, where the availability of capable and affordable devices will be critical to translating 5G network expansion into wider consumer adoption.

The partnership highlights the importance of collaboration across the 5G ecosystem, bringing together network connectivity, device innovation, and semiconductor technology to accelerate access to next-generation digital experiences. Jazz, DIGIT, and UNISOC will also explore further opportunities across 5G smartphones, mobile broadband products, and other connected solutions for the Pakistani market. Commercial availability, pricing, and sales-channel details for the devices will be announced separately.—DNA

Two held over alleged facebook defamation

ISLAMABAD: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has arrested two suspects for allegedly defaming a citizen through Facebook following a complaint lodged by the affected person.

An NCCIA official told on Friday that Inspector Syeda Pakeeza took action on the complaint and arrested the two suspects, identified as Razaqat and Shehzad.

According to the official, the suspects were accused of using Facebook to post defamatory content against the complainant.

The arrests were made after NCCIA initiated action on the citizen's complaint and examined the matter under the relevant cybercrime laws.

Further investigation is underway to establish the full circumstances of the case and determine the alleged role of the arrested suspects. The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) Islamabad Circle has recovered more than Rs1 million out of Rs3.2 million allegedly taken from a citizen through fraud, providing partial financial relief to the victim. An NCCIA official told on Friday that the Islamabad Circle took action on the citizen's complaint and succeeded in recovering more than Rs1 million of the amount lost in the fraud. The affected citizen appreciated the efforts of NCCIA Islamabad Circle following the recovery and shared his experience in a video message.—APP

Water treatment requires multi-stage approach

ISLAMABAD: Effective water treatment requires a combination of filtration and treatment processes tailored to the type of contaminants present, as no single technology can address all water-quality problems, a Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) expert said here Friday. Talking to APP, Director, National Water Quality Laboratory, PCRWR, Saqia Imran said that activated carbon was an important component of water filtration systems but ...

ISLAMABAD, Sep 25 (APP)—Effective water treatment requires a combination of filtration and treatment processes tailored to the type of contaminants present, as no single technology can address all water-quality problems, a Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) expert said here Friday Talking to APP, Director, National Water Quality Laboratory, PCRWR, Saqia Imran said that activated carbon was an important component of water filtration systems but could not function as a standalone treatment solution.—APP

Fuel relief scheme fully operational

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance, Bilal Azhar Kiyani said on Friday that the Prime Minister's Fuel Relief Scheme was fully operational across the country, providing Rs500 worth of free petrol per week to eligible motorcyclists and Rs1,000 every 10 days to owners of cars up to 800cc through a quick registration process.

Addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shiza Fatima, he said applicants needed only their CNIC and vehicle registration card for registration, after which a token would be generated and the fuel relief added within minutes.

He clarified that the vehicle did not necessarily have to be registered in the applicant's own name for users of

motorcycles, rickshaws, loaders and ChingChi rickshaws to benefit from the scheme, provided the registration card carried the required vehicle details. The SIM card used for registration, however, should match the applicant's CNIC. Kiyani said he had personally visited around 40 petrol pumps during the previous two days and witnessed the registration and disbursement process, adding that eligible citizens were receiving the fuel relief within minutes. He urged government employees, students, workers, job seekers and the media to spread awareness about the scheme in villages, streets and neighbourhoods so that no eligible person was deprived of the facility. The minister said the targeted relief mechanism had been designed to provide meaningful support to people using

motorcycles, small cars, rickshaws and loaders amid higher petroleum prices and limited fiscal resources. He said the government was working within the constraints of the ongoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme while directing available resources towards the segments most affected by higher fuel costs.

Kiyani said the government had mobilised relevant institutions to ensure implementation of the scheme across the country and urged eligible citizens to avail themselves of the facility. Meanwhile, responding to questions about the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) proposed march, he said the government would take necessary measures to protect citizens and public and private property. He said placing containers and taking other precautionary measures was not the government's preference but became necessary to ensure public safety in view of previous incidents of violence during political protests.

Kiyani said Islamabad was not closed and normal movement was continuing in the capital and surrounding areas, while precautionary measures were being taken to prevent any untoward incident. He also urged the PTI-led Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to focus greater attention on combating terrorism and strengthening its police and security infrastructure.—APP

UN must be strengthened, not abandoned: Masood

ISLAMABAD: Former ambassador to the United States, China and the UN, Sardar Masood Khan said here Friday that the United Nations must be strengthened through the rule of law and revitalised multilateralism to address contemporary global crises. Responding to the rapidly evolving conflict in the Middle East, Sardar Masood Khan said in a statement that the widening US-Iran confrontation had created serious regional and global consequences, while the situation involving the Houthis, Saudi Arabia and the wider Gulf had further complicated the security environment. He said the present moment required sustained diplomacy alongside security measures. Khan said the central question facing the US-Iran confrontation was whether the conflict would continue to escalate or whether a negotiated framework could emerge. He noted that both sides had publicly articulated positions while leaving some space for diplomacy. He stressed that direct engagement between the two sides, if it materialised, would be an important indication that their negotiators had found sufficient common ground for dialogue. He said the continuing conflict had imposed enormous costs on Iran and the wider region, while also placing significant military and economic pressures on the United States. The broader consequences, he argued, extended beyond the immediate belligerents, affecting Gulf states, energy markets, trade and regional stability. Turning to the United Nations, Sardar Masood Khan said the organisation's diminishing role was partly linked to financial pressures and the inability of the Security Council to respond effectively to major conflicts. He also acknowledged concerns regarding bureaucracy, budgetary management and efficiency within the UN system, but argued that these shortcomings should be addressed through reform rather than abandonment. "The United Nations should not be buried; it needs to be strengthened," he said, stressing that the organisation remains the principal guardian of international conventions, treaties and the multilateral system.—DNA

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Briefs

Insurers settle over 1m claims worth Rs548bln in 2025: SECP

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Friday informed that Pakistan's insurers settled more than one million motor, accident, health, fire and property claims worth around Rs548 billion in 2025.

According to the SECP's Insurance Industry Statistics Report 2025, life insurers paid Rs410 billion in claims, while non-life insurers paid approximately Rs138 billion, bringing the scale of claims across the two sectors into sharper focus, said a news release.

Life insurance claims rose from Rs380 billion in 2024. They included around Rs37 billion in death claims, up from Rs33 billion. Non-life claim payments increased from Rs92 billion to approximately Rs138 billion.

The new claim counts showed that life insurers paid more than 33,000 death claims during the year. Non-life insurers settled over 720,000 accident and health claims, more than 282,000 motor claims, and around 11,000 fire and property claims.

SECP Chairman Dr Kabir Sidhu said claims settlement was a key measure of insurers' performance. "Publishing claim amounts and counts will strengthen accountability, build policyholders' trust and support sustainable growth," he said adding that SECP is undertaking a comprehensive review of insurers' claims-handling processes, including an analysis of claims data. SECP has also placed the draft Market Conduct Rules for Insurers, 2026, under public consultation. The report recorded growth across the industry. Total assets increased by more than 9% to Rs4.1 trillion, while gross written premium rose by 15% to Rs778 billion. Life insurance premiums grew by 14% and non-life premiums by 16%. Among private life insurers, health insurance premiums increased by 49% to Rs30.4 billion, while term life premiums rose by about 37% to more than Rs19.7 billion. In the non-life sector, motor premiums grew by around 35% to more than Rs78.5 billion, and accident and health premiums increased by approximately 42% to more than Rs35.7 billion.—APP

SSP reviews Friday prayer security

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza visited different mosques and Imambargahs during Friday prayers to review security arrangements and directed police personnel to remain fully alert and ensure effective checking. An official said that SSP Qazi met police officers deployed on security duty and personally reviewed arrangements made for the protection of worshippers. Qazi directed the personnel to remain vigilant at their duty points and ensure effective checking around mosques and Imambargahs. He stressed that security arrangements should be closely monitored during Friday prayers and that officers should perform their duties with alertness and responsibility. The SSP Qazi directed police personnel to take all necessary measures to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for worshippers.

IRSA releases 171,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 171,600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 113,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1529.85 feet, which was 127.85 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 66,000 cusecs and 100,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1215.50 feet, which was 165.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 11,400 cusecs and 36,000 cusecs, respectively.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Trailers loaded with shipping containers are parked along Jinnah Avenue as authorities prepare security arrangements ahead of PTI's expected long march.

Ayaz stresses enduring print media importance in digital era

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday emphasized the continued relevance and importance of newspapers in the digital media era, terming them as a reliable source of authentic news, comprehensive analysis and credible information. In his message on World Newspaper Day, the Speaker said newspapers had historically played a vital role in promoting political, social and constitutional awareness among the people. He stressed that maintaining a strong connection with newspapers and books was essential for

building an informed and enlightened society. Ayaz Sadiq said the proliferation of fake news and rumours in the age of social media had emerged as a major challenge. He said that newspapers, through editorial responsibility and verification of information, continued to provide credible and authentic news to the public. Ayaz Sadiq described free and responsible journalism as a cornerstone of a democratic society, saying Pakistan's journalist community had consistently upheld the values of freedom of expression and

truth. The Speaker paid tribute to the contributions of journalists, columnists and newspaper workers, describing their services as highly commendable. He underscored the need to promote the habit of newspaper reading and regular study among the younger generation, saying youth should be encouraged to move beyond superficial information and develop a culture of reading and serious thinking. Ayaz Sadiq said newspaper reading played a significant role in fostering critical thinking and in-

tellectual maturity among young people. The Speaker reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to safeguarding freedom of expression and protecting the rights of journalists and workers associated with the newspaper industry. He said responsible journalism played an important role in promoting constructive dialogue, social harmony and democratic values in society. Ayaz Sadiq paid tribute to all those associated with journalism and acknowledged their valuable contributions to society.—APP

included Sub-Inspector Hassan Ali, Upper Division Clerk Muhammad Subhan, Head Constables Tahir Mahmood, Melvin Masih and Muhammad Bilal, Constables Tahir Safer, Muhammad Ahmed Raza, Aqib Mahmood and Tahir Mahmood, and ASI Mubashir Kazmi. Among the eight demoted employees, Muhammad Niaz Mir and Muhammad Waseem Iqbal were demoted from Assistant Sub-Inspector to Head Constable, while Sheeraz Manzoor was demoted from Upper Division Clerk to Lower Division Clerk. Head Constables Rizwan Ali Khan, Masood Ahmed, Mudassir Ali, Almas Ilyas and Qasim Mahmood were demoted to the rank of constable. Of the remaining 58 punishments, promotion was stopped for three years in 19 cases, two years in 27 cases and one year in five cases. In one case, pay was reduced by three stages, while six employees were censured. Alongside accountability, the FIA also recognised good performance, with the Director FIA Islamabad Zone awarding Commendation Certificate Class-II (CQ-II) to three officers for outstanding work. The Director said there would be no compromise on corruption, misuse of authority, indiscipline or unprofessional conduct within the agency. He said every official facing proceedings had been given an opportunity to explain their position, and decisions were taken after examining the available record and evidence in accordance with rules. The Director said good performance would continue to be recognised, while a zero-tolerance policy would be followed against personnel compromising discipline, integrity and professional responsibilities.—APP

FIA dismisses 10, demotes 8 among 76 punished

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone has awarded 76 departmental punishments, including dismissal of 10 employees and demotion of eight others, as part of a major accountability action over disciplinary violations, misconduct and public complaints. An FIA official told APP on Friday that the action followed an Orderly Room chaired by the Director FIA Islamabad Zone, where cases involving departmental irregularities, breach of discipline, irresponsible and unprofessional conduct and public complaints were examined. The official said the concerned officers and employees were personally heard and given an opportunity to present their position. After examining the relevant record and available material, punishments were awarded under the Civil Servants (Efficiency and Discipline) Rules, 2020. Of the 76 punishments, 10 employees were dismissed from service, while eight were demoted. Those dismissed

Call for focus on uplift, rejects protest politics

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and President of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday said all constitutional stages in Azad Kashmir including the election of the president have been completed smoothly while urging political groups to resolve differences through dialogue instead of protests and sit-ins. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Amir Muqam welcomed the election of Dr. Muhammad Najeeb Naqi Khan as President of Azad Kashmir and said the election process had sent a positive message in the region. He said the people of Azad Kashmir had expressed confidence in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and thanked the people and all those who contributed to the electoral process. He also said the election of Prime Minister Barrister Iftikhar Gilani had been completed smoothly. The minister said the federal government would continue supporting development and welfare projects in Azad Kashmir. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had provided clear planning for development initiatives and that Danish Schools were being established in Azad Kashmir at an estimated cost of Rs20 billion. Amir Muqam said the government would continue to fulfil its commitments to the people of Azad Kashmir and stressed that differences should not prevent political forces from work-

ing together for public welfare. "Protests and sit-ins cannot resolve problems; issues can be resolved through negotiations," he said, urging those staging protests to become part of the political and democratic process. He said the people of Azad Kashmir were directly affected by political tensions and called for avoiding further unrest and damage. He added that Pakistan-Azad Kashmir relations had remained strong and would continue to remain so. The minister also spoke about the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, calling on the political leadership to focus on terrorism, governance and development rather than protest politics. He said terrorist incidents were increasing in the province and that practical measures were needed to address the security situation. He maintained that political rallies and protests could not resolve the problems facing the province. Amir Muqam said the KP government should explain what it had done for education, healthcare, employment, institutional strengthening and development during the past 13 years. He stressed that resources available to the provincial government should be spent on development and public welfare. He also paid tribute to police and security personnel for their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism. The minister said police and security forces should be provided with greater powers and resources rather than being weakened or used for political purposes.—DNA

FGEHA targets early possession of plots

ISLAMABAD: Director General of Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) Capt. (Retd.) Zafar Iqbal has said that the Authority was pursuing a comprehensive development strategy to provide quality, affordable and modern residential facilities to federal government employees. Talking to APP, the DG FGEHA said contemporary housing projects should not only provide residential units but also incorporate basic civic amenities, improved urban planning, environmental considerations and future requirements of residents. He said FGEHA was making concerted efforts to hand over possession of plots to allottees ahead of stipulated timelines, wherever feasible, while maintaining the required development standards.

He said possession of plots in Margalla Orchard, Block-A, was targeted for July 2027, while possession in sectors F-14/F-15 would be handed over to allottees in phases. Capt. (Retd.) Zafar Iqbal said that the possession of plots in Sky Garden, Blocks A, B and D, was targeted by December 31, 2026, adding that possession of 80 plots had already been handed over to allottees ahead of schedule. He directed the relevant officers to maintain close and continuous monitoring of ongoing development works and ensure that the pace of construction remained aligned with the approved timelines.—APP

IGP reviews law & order situation

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry reviewed the law and order situation in the federal capital and directed senior officers to speed up practical measures aimed at improving public facilitation and police service delivery.

An official told on Friday that the IGP held an important meeting with DIG Headquarters Muhammad Jawad Tariq and other senior police officers. The meeting discussed the overall law and order situation, ongoing measures for public facilitation and new initiatives to make police services more effective and easily accessible to citizens.

Sohail directed officers to keep citizens' convenience as a top priority and accelerate practical steps to improve service delivery. He stressed that public facilitation initiatives should produce visible results and help citizens access police services in a timely and effective manner.—APP

Junaid invites vanaspati to set up edible oil city

The minister said that the government was seeking greater private-sector participation in the development of facilities and industrial activity at Port Qasim

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has invited vanaspati manufacturers to set up an edible oil industrial city at Port Qasim. Addressing the members of the Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturing Association (PVMA) after inaugurating its house on Friday, the minister said that the government would facilitate the industry in setting up the proposed zone and provide the necessary facilities at Port Qasim. Junaid Chaudhry said the edible oil industry is among the major contributors to government revenue, with the sector generating substantial customs duty and sales tax from imports. He said that the government was intending to develop industrial and commercial zones at the port to attract investment and promote manufacturing and exports. Junaid Chaudhry said that an automotive processing zone would be established on 150 acres at Port Qasim, with the capacity to be expanded in phases in line with market demand. He said that a 250-acre apparel zone was also planned at the port. Its first phase was projected to create more than 138,000 jobs and generate annual exports of around \$2.2 billion. The minister said that issues relating to land at Port Qasim had been taken up and would be resolved over time. Land would be allotted to investors who came forward with viable business plans, he added. Referring to the water shortage at Port Qasim, Junaid Chaudhry said that a seawater treatment plant could be established under a business model in collaboration with the Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturing Association (PVMA), with treated water reused at the port. He invited the PVMA to participate in the proposed project, saying the association could work with Port Qasim to establish and operate a system to meet the water requirements of industries operating at the port. The minister said that the government was seeking greater private-sector participation in the development of facilities and industrial activity at Port Qasim.—APP

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MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
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PAKISTAN

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Is the UN still relevant?

MOHAMED CHEBARO

A MID unprecedented global challenges, from wars, epidemics, climate change and artificial intelligence's existential threats to humanity to superpower discord splintering the world order, many ask whether the UN is still a necessary space for global deal-making. The short answer is: not really. But the reality raises another question: If not the UN, then what else could solve the problems of increasingly intransigent super- and medium-sized powers amid a rise in ethnonationalism and so-called patriotism, including calls for the erosion of multilateralism, the rule of law and the rules-based international order? The world is in an era in which political leaders believe less and less in the ethos of the UN, which was founded to help protect the planet and its people from the scourge of war. If those leaders have pivoted away from the founding ideals and virtues of the UN, then the international organization's moral authority ceases to be a tool. The relevance of the UN is increasingly being brought into question because the current global moment is one of international competition and discord. This is a moment in which deal-making and forceful unilateral power supplant cooperation. It is feared that the UN and its many institutions, which have long needed to reform and adapt to match the realities of our world, are now becoming nothing more than a talking shop. The organization's only chance of getting a new lease of life rests in the hands of global powers, whether or not they realize that the world needs the UN as a midway point to link between states and prevent total disconnection, leading to a descent into the law of the jungle and chaos. Apologists believe that the UN's failures reflect the realities of states and societies that are in permanent discord. Since 1945, the UN's record has been mixed. Its detractors, mainly from the Global South, believe it to be a tool that dispenses medicine to the various maladies of the world according to Western priorities. Apologists believe that the UN's failures reflect the realities of states and societies that are in permanent discord. Its standing has been constantly tested by challenges to peace and order and its funding limits. Inside the UN's most powerful tool, the Security Council, the five veto-wielding permanent members managed to prevent all-out war during the Cold War era. But in recent years, the council has repeatedly blocked interventions in crises from the Palestine-Israel conflict and Russia's invasion of Ukraine to Syria, Myanmar and Sudan. The repeated failure of the UNSC to broker a ceasefire in Gaza stirred deep resentment both inside the organization and outside it. Over the years, the UN Charter's prohibitions against aggression have frequently been directly or indirectly flouted by the superpowers' geopolitical calculations. Russia's invasion

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of Ukraine and the US' decision to attack Iran in February suggest that the UNSC's biggest members no longer feel bound by its guiding principles. With peace-making proving elusive, the current funding crisis also highlights a permanent handicap of the organization. Since its inception, US funding has been a cornerstone of the UN's operations. The Trump administration's decision to cut the bulk of America's funding has dealt an unprecedented blow to the UN, with its officials left wondering how to pay their various bills. A new set of financial arrangements is needed if the organization is to function, however minimally, in these turbulent times. Traditionally, the US covered approximately a fifth of the organization's core costs and a quarter of the budget for its blue helmet peace-keeping operations. It also often covered a third of the budgets dedicated to relief agencies such as the World Food Programme. The US is not alone in scaling back. European governments have also been reducing their spending on international development and humanitarian aid, while emerging nations have not stepped up to close the financial gap. Despite the pressing need for aid and the release of some funds for the UN's lifesaving efforts this year, big relief agencies have been forced to cut back assistance to civilians in places like South Sudan and Afghanistan. Looking ahead, the UN's tiptoeing around sensitivities looks set to stay, while the world teeters on the brink. It is hoped that the new secretary-general, who will be elected soon, can harness the virtues of the UN and its moral authority to guide the world's search for peace. But it is feared that the rising tensions among major powers, perennial disputes over how to come to an agreement and who should shoulder the financial weight of development projects and support for poorer states, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation, are likely to remain as a thorn in the UN's side. The prospect of AI regulation, which will cause disagreements between corporations and governments, is another testing topic for the UN and the world. The colossal job of rebuilding trust between governments is nothing next to the adversities of rebuilding faith in the UN's complex negotiations-based approach, which balances nations' interests. In such a climate, rather than turning to the UN, many governments are vying for cooperation through smaller clubs, both old and new, such as the G7 for Western nations and BRICS, the bloc for the so-called emerging market nations. If this trend persists, and in the absence of a new covenant between the superpowers, the standing of the UN will remain dented, its future uncertain. Terminating the 81-year-old organization is no longer an odd thought, as many nations look determined to put their own interests first. As a result, the mantras of human rights, the rules-based international order and multilateralism continue to fade with every speech, tweet or toxic-fueled narrative that poisons all attempts at prioritizing compromise and cooperation.

Trump, Xi and the World at Stake

Qamar Bashir



Xi also has reason to fear an expanding war. In the first quarter of 2025, before this conflict disrupted shipping, China received 37.7 percent of the crude oil and condensate moving through the Strait of Hormuz; Asian countries together received 89.2 percent. A closure threatens Chinese industry, neighboring economies and household budgets across the world. Trump and Xi should seek safe commercial passage and a political route out of the Iran war, instead of turning a vital waterway into another test of power

THE red carpet at Joint Base Andrews was one hundred feet long. The questions awaiting Donald Trump and Xi Jinping stretch across the planet. A flyover and handshake made powerful photographs, but neither will protect ships in the Strait of Hormuz, factories waiting for rare earth magnets, or the people of Taiwan. The visit will be measured by what follows. Trade comes first because the two countries cannot wound each other without wounding the world. They exchanged roughly \$415 billion in goods in 2025 despite tariffs and retaliation. Trump wants China to buy more American farm products and loosen its grip on critical minerals. Xi wants the tariffs and restrictions on advanced technology removed. Their trade truce now runs to January 10. Another deadline may calm markets for a few months, but it cannot repair a relationship governed by threats. Rare earths show why Washington cannot dictate the terms. China refines 91 percent of the world's magnet rare earths and makes 94 percent of the finished magnets. They power vehicles, industrial motors, data centers and weapons. When Beijing restricted exports in 2025, some automakers cut production. The International Energy Agency estimates that full controls could put \$6.5 trillion in annual production outside China at risk. That is a measure of exposure, not an actual loss, but it explains why American demands for secure supplies sound less commanding than the tariff threats that preceded them. Washington cannot demand respect for its own economic security while dismissing China's. Nor can it expect Beijing to obey every American instruction merely because the United States believes its aims are legitimate. Sovereign countries negotiate; they do not surrender their judgment at an airport welcome ceremony. If Trump wants a durable bargain, he must treat Xi as the leader of a major power, not a subordinate summoned to receive orders. Taiwan brings the danger of war into the room. Beijing regards the island as part of China and American arms sales as interference. Taiwan rejects Beijing's sovereignty claim and governs itself through democratic institutions. A proposed \$14 billion American arms package is stalled. Trump has called it a negotiating chip. Rubio says sales also depend on America's own military needs and the capacity of its defense factories. Republican senators have demanded that the stalled assistance move forward. The United States cannot promise deterrence with-

out deciding whether it will supply the weapons. The stakes extend far beyond the package. Taiwan has about 23 million people and produces more than 90 percent of the world's most advanced chips. A confrontation around the island would strike a central artery of the global technology economy. So would a clash in the South China Sea, a route that carries a substantial share of world shipping. Trump and Xi need direct military communication and restraint at sea and in the air. Taiwan's future cannot be traded for aircraft orders or agricultural purchases. Iran tests whether Washington can distinguish diplomacy from demands for obedience. A U.S. congressional commission estimates that China bought more than 90 percent of Iran's exported oil in 2025, earning Tehran roughly \$31 billion. Yet Iranian oil represented only about 12 percent of China's crude imports. Xi therefore has influence, but Beijing has no formal defense obligation to Tehran. Washington has grounds to challenge sanctions evasion and military-use transfers; it cannot command China to sever a sovereign relationship wholesale. Xi also has reason to fear an expanding war. In the first quarter of 2025, before this conflict disrupted shipping, China received 37.7 percent of the crude oil and condensate moving through the Strait of Hormuz; Asian countries together received 89.2 percent. A closure threatens Chinese industry, neighboring economies and household budgets across the world. Trump and Xi should seek safe commercial passage and a political route out of the Iran war, instead of turning a vital waterway into another test of power. China's ties with Russia give Ukraine a place in their discussion too, though neither leader can impose peace on Ukrainians. Artificial intelligence may be the most immediate test of their judgment. In June, an OpenAI agent researching health spending bypassed controls on an Australian government Medicare statistics portal and accessed non-public aggregate data and internal files. The government learned of the breach nearly three months later. An agent pursuing an ordinary task crossed a boundary its operators did not intend it to cross. That incident gives the AI discussion a purpose beyond competition for chips and superior machines. The United States and China are racing to build autonomous systems and robots, but an AI agent that penetrates a government database does not care

which country wins. Both leaders should demand independent testing, limits on access to sensitive systems, immediate reporting of breaches and human control over military uses. Competition cannot be allowed to outrun accountability. The same principle applies in space. The global space economy reached about \$626 billion in 2025 and is projected by one forecaster to exceed \$1 trillion by 2034. Most of it is commercial: satellites support broadband, navigation, weather forecasting, aviation and shipping. An attack on one nation's satellites could cripple civilian services and scatter debris across shared orbits. Space may not be a formal summit item, but two powers building military capabilities there should agree on limits before their rivalry puts this common infrastructure at risk. The Arctic adds a different warning. It is warming about three times faster than the global average, opening routes and intensifying competition over resources. China seeks a role in research and shipping; Washington sees Greenland as strategically important for minerals and missile defense. But Greenland is not a prize for outsiders to divide. Its people must decide their future, with Denmark's constitutional role respected. Any bargain that ignores them would reproduce the very hubris that makes great-power politics dangerous. Climate makes the imbalance of power and responsibility impossible to ignore. In 2024, China and the United States accounted for roughly 45 percent of global fossil carbon dioxide emissions. China also holds about 80 to 90 percent of solar manufacturing capacity, while Trump has pulled American policy away from international climate commitments. They may disagree on policy, but their choices will set the price of clean technology and the pace of emissions far beyond their borders. Neither can credibly claim that its decisions are its concern alone. This summit is important because the two leaders can damage or strengthen the international system on a scale few others can. Their rivalry runs through trade, war, energy, AI, space and climate. They will not settle every dispute in three days. But they can replace a fragile tariff pause with serious bargaining, keep military encounters from becoming war, protect vital waterways and set boundaries for technologies advancing faster than oversight. The red carpet showed that each recognizes the other's power. The test is whether they recognize the rights and interests of everyone living beyond it.

PML-N, PTI and the Crisis of Trust

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



PTI emerged as a challenge to the established political order represented principally by the PML-N and PPP. Its rise transformed Pakistan's electoral landscape. The 2018 election brought Imran Khan to power, while his government's eventual removal through a parliamentary vote of no-confidence in April 2022 turned political competition into an increasingly bitter struggle over legitimacy. The events that followed hardened positions on both sides

PAKISTAN'S political crisis is no longer simply a contest between the PML-N and PTI. It is a struggle over who has the right to define political legitimacy, who controls the institutions of the state and, perhaps most importantly, whether political rivals can co-exist without treating each other as an existential threat. The latest confrontation over PTI's planned September 27 protest is only the newest chapter in a conflict that has steadily deepened since Imran Khan's removal from office in April 2022. PTI has announced a nationwide mobilisation and march towards Islamabad, demanding the release of its founder and invoking the supremacy of the Constitution and rule of law. The government has warned against the protest and says it will enforce court orders and prevent disruption of public roads and buildings. Pakistan has experienced political rivalry since independence, but the present confrontation has a different intensity. The country's major parties have historically competed fiercely, yet governments and opposition parties have at times negotiated, formed alliances and even supported one another on major constitutional questions. The PML-N and PPP, for example, were bitter opponents for decades but eventually became partners in supporting the democratic transition and the 18th Amendment. PTI emerged as a challenge to the established political order represented principally by the PML-N and PPP. Its rise transformed Pakistan's electoral landscape. The 2018 election brought Imran Khan to power, while his government's eventual removal through a parliamentary vote of no-confidence in April 2022 turned political competition into an increasingly bitter struggle over legitimacy. The events that followed hardened positions on both sides. PTI treated Khan's removal as part of a wider political struggle against its mandate. Its opponents argued that the parliamentary process had been constitutional. Neither interpretation disappeared after the change of government. Instead, each became part of a political narrative that continues to shape public debate. The May 9, 2023 violence marked another decisive turning point. The attacks on military and government installations produced a severe state response against PTI and its supporters. The confrontation subsequently moved into the courts, electoral institutions and streets. The November 2024 clashes in Islamabad further demonstrated how quickly political mobilisation could turn into a confrontation between protesters and the state. Dawn has noted that these earlier episodes remain central to the government's security concerns about the planned September 27 protest.

The February 8, 2024 election did not resolve the dispute either. Instead, questions about the electoral process, PTI-backed candidates, party representation and subsequent parliamentary arrangements added another layer to the political conflict. The election produced a parliament in which PTI-backed independents emerged as a significant force, while the PML-N formed the federal government with coalition support. That mistrust is now visible in almost every political development. PTI sees restrictions, arrests and legal proceedings as evidence of an effort to reduce its political space. The government presents its actions in terms of law, public order and the prevention of violence. Both positions are politically consequential, but neither can by itself resolve the underlying dispute. The September 27 mobilisation illustrates the problem. PTI says peaceful protest is its constitutional right and has framed the march around the release of Imran Khan, constitutional supremacy and the rule of law. The government, meanwhile, has warned that roads, public buildings and ordinary life cannot be disrupted and has pointed to an Islamabad High Court order concerning the occupation of public spaces. The important question is not whether either side has political grievances. Both clearly do. The question is whether those grievances can be pursued without converting every disagreement into a confrontation between the state and an opposition movement. The arrest of Aleema Khan ahead of the planned protest has further intensified the atmosphere. Authorities ordered her detention under the Maintenance of Public Order law, while PTI described the action as part of a wider crackdown. Such developments deepen rather than reduce mistrust. There is also a broader lesson here. The political system cannot function indefinitely through confrontation between the government and its principal opposition while the economy, security environment and public services demand attention. Political energy consumed by protests, arrests, counter-statements and legal battles is energy unavailable for governance. Even the government's relationship with its coalition partner demonstrates how fragile political cooperation can become. The PML-N and PPP have recently had to revive coordination mechanisms after months of strained relations. Their disagreements concern inflation, petroleum prices, agriculture, local government and provincial issues. Yet both recognise that continued cooperation is necessary for the functioning of the government. If rivals within the governing coalition can negotiate despite substantial differences, there is no political reason why the

government and opposition cannot establish at least a minimum framework for dialogue. The difficulty is that dialogue in Pakistan is often treated as surrender. Governments fear that negotiations will strengthen their opponents. Opposition parties fear that negotiations will weaken their mobilisation. Political leaders therefore prefer confrontation because it keeps their supporters united. But what may strengthen a party in the short term can weaken the political system in the long term. Pakistan has repeatedly experienced this cycle. A government attempts to marginalise its opponent; the opposition mobilises against the government; institutions become involved; political tensions rise; and eventually another political arrangement replaces the previous one without resolving the underlying question of how power should be contested. The government has a responsibility to maintain public order, protect citizens and enforce the law. But the right to peaceful political expression cannot be treated as an inconvenience. Similarly, PTI has the right to protest and challenge government policies, but political mobilisation cannot become a licence for violence, attacks on public property or the disruption of ordinary citizens' lives. Dawn has made the same distinction: peaceful protest is a democratic right, while violence and attacks on law-enforcement personnel are not. The way forward is therefore neither unconditional acceptance of the government's position nor unconditional endorsement of PTI's street politics. It lies in restoring political space in which disagreement does not automatically become confrontation. Pakistan needs an understanding on a few basic principles: elections must be credible and disputes handled through constitutional institutions; opposition parties must have meaningful parliamentary and political space; peaceful protest must remain possible; violence must be rejected regardless of who commits it; courts must be allowed to function independently; and political prisoners and detainees must receive due process. The PML-N and PTI may continue to disagree over Imran Khan, the 2024 election, governance, accountability and the conduct of state institutions. They may continue to compete fiercely in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and at the federal level. None of this is unusual in a democracy. The real test of democracy is not whether one party defeats another. It is whether the defeated party can continue to exist, criticise and compete, and whether the government can exercise authority without treating dissent as rebellion. – The writer is Assistant Professor Pakistan Studies Imperial College of Business Studies Lahore muhammad.akram@imperial.edu.pk

Briefs

Pakistani,
Turkish,
Saudi FMs...

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attack against any one of the parties constitutes an attack against all parties,” according to a statement issued by the Saudi foreign ministry. The meeting reviewed the progress achieved regarding the establishment of the General Secretariat, the committees, and the working groups emerging from the agreement, alongside the preparations for commencing its operations, it said. Islamabad, Riyadh and Ankara also reaffirmed their resolve to continue working towards achieving sustainable peace and stability in the region, supporting efforts aimed at de-escalation, and advancing towards reaching peaceful solutions to the ongoing crisis, the Saudi ministry added. Meanwhile, Saudi Grand Mufti Sheikh Saleh bin Fawzan Al-Fawzan called on Saudi and allied forces to maintain unity while confronting Houthi attacks. He advised personnel to exercise patience, steadfastness and perseverance in carrying out their mission.

Trump
told Xi
that China...

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market access for US farmers and ranchers, while both leaders identified artificial intelligence as an area for cooperation. Trump would follow up his summit with Xi by taking the Chinese leader to the US National Archives, where they were expected to stress views about the history and direction of ties between their countries. A newspaper featuring a front page photo of China's President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump, at a White House welcome ceremony, is seen at a news stand in Beijing on September 25, 2026. —AFP
Trump said in remarks welcoming Xi that they would see some of the greatest treasures of US history at the National Archives, including the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Turkey
rejects
Israeli...

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The Israeli leader's address to the UN General Assembly on Thursday, in which he denounced enemies and allies alike, sparked uproar in the chamber. Dozens of envoys from across the world walked out, some jeering and booing, while Netanyahu's own team stood and applauded, and the speaker of the session shouted for order. “The latest country to become a super spreader of antisemitic lies (is Türkiye),” he said. “Erdogan is a tyrant. He also hosts the Hamas terror chiefs.” Erdogan has urged world leaders to “exert greater pressure on Israel” over its war in Gaza and called on nations to recognize Palestine as an independent state. Anadolu quoted the Turkish presidency's communications director Burhanettin Duran, as slamming Netanyahu's allegation as “incompatible” with UN values.

Strait of
Hormuz,
Bab...

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he told the UNGA that Pakistani armed forces responded with “precision” and repulsed the enemy's attack and taught it a lesson “it shall never ever forget”. Speaking on the Indus Water Treaty, the prime minister said that water is the “lifeblood” not only of Pakistan but of the entire region, warning that any attempt to stop, impede or divert Pakistan's share of river waters would be treated as an “act of war”. He said India's unilateral decision to hold the existing water treaty in abeyance had “no legal basis whatsoever”. He said India's claims and actions had been rejected by experts and, more recently, by the Court of Arbitration. The prime minister maintained that Pakistan's position that the treaty remained “valid, binding and fully operative” had been vindicated.

Will Trump's threats change
the future course of the
International Criminal Court?

“President Trump's call for states to withdraw from the ICC carries political significance but has no legal effect on their obligations under the Rome Statute,” the international treaty that established the court, Ekmanian told Arab News

DNA

LONDON: The US president, Donald Trump, stood before world leaders at the UN on Tuesday and urged states that are members of the International Criminal Court to withdraw from it, escalating his administration's campaign against an institution it accuses of overreach. He described the ICC, which is based in The Hague, as a “rogue institution” as he called on its members to “officially resign” immediately, and said Washington would never allow American service members or their allies to face what he described as “show trials” before an “anti-American tribunal with no jurisdiction over us.” His remarks followed a UN fact-finding mission that concluded there were reasonable grounds to believe US forces had committed war crimes during strikes on Iran during the continuing conflict between the countries. The mission said two strikes in February, including one that hit a school in Minab, constituted such crimes. Trump's comments do not alter the legal obligations of ICC member states, said Harout Ekmanian, a lawyer in New York who specializes in international disputes and public international law. “President Trump's call for states to withdraw from the ICC carries political significance but has no legal effect on their obligations under the Rome Statute,” the international treaty that established the court, Ekmanian told Arab News. States retain the sovereign right to leave

the court but must follow the Rome Statute's withdrawal procedures and their own constitutional rules, he added. Trump's claim that the ICC had no jurisdiction over the US was “legally overbroad,” Ekmanian said. “Although the US is not a party to the Rome Statute, the ICC's jurisdiction is not exclusively dependent upon the accused individual's nationality or their state's consent,” he added. Under Article 12(2) of the statute, the court can exercise jurisdiction over citizens of nonmember states when alleged crimes are committed on the territory of an ICC member state, or a state that has accepted the court's jurisdiction. “Nonmembership, therefore, does not confer categorical immunity from the ICC's jurisdiction,” Ekmanian said. “It does, however, mean that the US is generally not subject to the Rome Statute's treaty-based cooperation obligations.” The bigger question is whether the pressure from Trump, combined with the possibility of fresh US sanctions against the court, might weaken international political support for the ICC. The Trump administration is preparing sanctions targeting the institution itself, according to sources cited by Reuters, in a move that could restrict its access to US financial services and other resources. Washington has previously sanctioned ICC judges and prosecutors. Timothy Kaldas, deputy director of the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, said member states should not dismiss the threat. “They should take very seriously Trump's threats to try to destroy the court,” Kaldas told Arab News. “That

said, I think they should unite to defend it because the more unified the members are, the more pressure they can push back on the US to try to protect the court from US actions.” European officials have expressed concern. The EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, said the ICC was under “immense pressure” and warned that this pressure on the court and its judges raised questions about commitments to the international legal order. The Netherlands called on the EU to invoke its Blocking Statute, which is designed to protect European businesses and individuals from the effects of certain extraterritorial sanctions. But Kaldas said this measure alone might not protect European banks that have significant exposure to the US financial system. “I think that the EU, in order to defend the ICC, would have to probably confront the United States,” he said. “The blocking statute alone ... isn't guaranteed to protect European banks that could be implicated in US sanctions on the ICC.” Ekmanian said the EU could update the Blocking Statute to prohibit European firms from complying with ICC-related US sanctions and allow them to seek damages. It could also develop payment channels less dependent on the dollar. But such measures would still not fully protect transactions involving US dollars, US banks or US individuals. Financial institutions with major US exposure could still face conflicting legal requirements. “History suggests many would de-risk regardless, as they did with Iran after 2018,” Ekmanian said.

“Full protection would require either a US license or arrangements that stay entirely outside US jurisdiction.” Even if countries heeded Trump's call and began withdrawal proceedings, leaving the ICC would not erase obligations arising from the time when they were members, Ekmanian said. “Crucially, withdrawal does not operate retroactively,” he said. “It neither extinguishes the court's jurisdiction over crimes committed while the state was bound by the statute, nor terminates investigations and proceedings already under consideration.” Recent withdrawals have nevertheless added to concerns about the future of the court. Venezuela and Chad began withdrawal procedures in July, a month after similar moves by Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali and Niger. The ICC's Assembly of States Parties has warned that such withdrawals risk weakening international efforts to end impunity. Kenneth Roth, former executive director of Human Rights Watch, said Trump's campaign against the court was aimed at shielding US and Israeli officials from accountability for their actions. “Trump's attacks on the International Criminal Court reflect an effort to make the world safe for war criminals, if they are American or Israeli,” he told Arab News. “It will fail.” The next major test could be the selection of the ICC's next chief prosecutor, Roth said. The Trump administration could seek to influence the process in an attempt to ensure a prosecutor is chosen who is more receptive to its views on accountability. “It is essential that ICC member states not bow to Trump's quest for impunity,” Roth said.

Allies unite behind
Saudi Arabia as Houthis
step up attacks

RIYADH/CAIRO: Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan will hold an urgent, high-level meeting under a joint defense pact to discuss ways to support the Kingdom amid attacks by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, while Tehran sought to distance itself from the rapid advance of its Houthi allies. The Houthis have launched strikes on the UN-recognized government in Yemen and repeatedly fired into Saudi Arabia, disrupting oil flows from the world's largest energy exporter, as part of a wider Middle East war that began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran in February. The Houthis said they had fired dozens of missiles and drones at Saudi targets on Thursday, while authorities in Saudi Arabia said they had intercepted six ballistic missiles fired by the Houthis. Saudi Arabia earlier issued emergency alerts for areas including the holy city of Makkah, Jeddah and Yanbu, the main Saudi Red Sea oil port. Saudi Arabia's top religious authority called on soldiers in the Kingdom to be ready to lay down their lives to fight the Houthis until the group is ousted from power, a statement posted by the Saudi state news agency said. Amid the fighting, the Saudi, Pakistani and Turkish foreign ministers met within the framework of the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement, according to a Saudi Foreign Ministry statement. — APP

Pakistan secure 3-0 victory
against China at Asian Games

Green Shirts mark third consecutive win in men's field hockey competition



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey team secured a 3-0 victory against China in the Pool B match of the 2026 Asian Games men's hockey competition, with Captain Abubakar Mehmood, Hannan Shahid, and Sufyan each contributing a goal to seal the win. The recently concluded fixture got off to a quiet start as neither team could open the scoring in the first quarter. Pakistan eventually pulled ahead at the 19th-minute mark when skipper Mahmood successfully converted a penalty corner. Sufyan doubled the Green Shirts' advantage five minutes later, scoring in a similar fashion. Shahid further bolstered Pakistan's dominance in the pulsating second quarter by scoring a sensational field goal in the 28th minute. The triple strike helped Pakistan go into halftime with a three-goal lead in their favour, and although Zikriya Hayat was shown a green card in the penultimate quarter, they managed to hold on to their advantage until the final whistle as China could not score a single goal. The 3-0 victory marked Pakistan's third consecutive win in the men's field hockey competition at the Asian Games. The national team started their campaign with a 9-0 routing of Thailand before inflicting a 5-1 defeat on Uzbekistan in their subsequent league-stage fixture. — APP

FIFA President backs Mohsin Gilani's
vision for Pakistan football

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: FIFA President Gianni Infantino has pledged FIFA's support for Pakistan Football Federation President Syed Mohsen Gilani's vision to transform and develop football in Pakistan, with a strong focus on youth and grassroots development. In a significant meeting at New York, Infantino sat down with Gilani to discuss the future of football in Pakistan and ways FIFA and the PFF can further collaborate to provide the country's youth with greater opportunities to play and experience the game. Infantino described Gilani's vision for Pakistan football as impressive and was briefed on the PFF's ongoing development projects and initiatives. He assured the PFF president of FIFA's continued support for his football development plans, while appreciating the efforts of Gilani and his dedicated team. Gilani thanked Infantino and FIFA for their confidence and support, saying the backing of world football's governing body would further strengthen the PFF's efforts to develop the sport across Pakistan. He said his vision is to build a strong, inclusive and sustainable football structure, with particular emphasis on grassroots programmes, youth development, talent identification and creating international opportunities for young Pakistani players. — DNA

Sri Lanka beat
England by 16 runs

LEEDS: England: Kusal Mendis hit 121 and Dunith Wellalage took three top-order wickets as Sri Lanka beat England by 16 runs in the second ODI on Thursday to finally claim a win on their white-ball cricket tour. The series will go to a decider at The Oval on Sunday — and England will likely be without star batter Jos Buttler, who injured his left hamstring midway through his team's unsuccessful chase of 322. Buttler had to leave the field when 67 not out and with England going over on 254-4 in the 38th over, and it proved a momentum-swing at Headingley. The hosts, who at one stage

needed 63 off the last 10 overs, were restricted to 305-9. Buttler hobbled back out into the middle for the final overs but was eventually dismissed for 69. Mendis, the Sri Lanka captain, won the toss under a sunny sky and hit 14 fours and three sixes in his seventh ODI century, helping the tourists post 321-6. He put on a 137-run partnership for the second wicket with opener Kamindu Mendis (54), while Pavan Rathnayake added 48 off 39 balls in the middle order. Wellalage (3-49) took wickets in consecutive overs to remove openers Ben Duckett (67), Tom Banton (73) and Harry Brook (1) and leave England on 157-3. — APP

US and
Iran discuss
phased
peace deal

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durable enough for both sides to trust, the sources said. Trump has said he thinks the US and Iran could reach a deal after mid-term elections to Congress on November 3. A senior European official said the Iranians “have a very long list of demands.” A White House official said that while “Iran is desperate for a deal, President Trump holds all the cards and will make whatever decision is best for the United States.” Trump, he said, remained “open to talking with Iran under the right circumstances” but had no need to negotiate, and the US was in a “very strong position” with control of the Strait of Hormuz and an Iranian economy that was “collapsing.” The official said “crushing sanctions” and “one of the most successful blockades in history” have crippled Iran's economy and left Iran completely broke. Trump was content to let the “inevitable Iranian collapse” play out rather than be “played” by Tehran, the official said. Former US negotiator Dennis Ross said he saw only a 30% chance of an agreement being reached before the vote, but that both sides may have stronger reasons to make a deal before than after the midterms. “The blockade is what's really squeezing the Iranians. It's strangling them,” Ross said.

PTI

decides to
'postpone'...

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He maintained that a decision regarding the long march could be taken if the federal government agreed to hold talks with the PTI. Yousafzai said his party's planned long march would remain peaceful and no government resources would be used during the protest scheduled for September 27. The PTI leader also alleged that the federal government had violated a court decision by blocking roads with containers. The development came hours after KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that consultations had been held over imposing governor's rule in the province, as opposition party stepped up preparations for its nationwide protest and Islamabad march. Talking to media in Peshawar, Kundi said that there was a possibility of governor's rule in the province and that the Constitution provided for such a measure. “Consultations have taken place for governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,” he said.

Court wants
Imaan to be
presented...

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“I am fixing the case for tomorrow. Both should be produced through video link,” he remarked. Last week, Mazari and her husband were arrested and sent back to Adiala jail on judicial remand by an ATC, hours after the Supreme Court had suspended their sentences and granted them bail in a separate case. Islamabad police sources said the couple was arrested in connection with a case which includes charges of anti-state narrative, incitement and interference in government affairs. On the same day, the Supreme Court had suspended the couple's sentences in a case related to controversial tweets and granted them bail against surety bonds worth Rs200,000 each, until the final decision on the case pending before the Islamabad High Court. In January, a district and sessions court in Islamabad had sentenced Mazari and Chattha to 17 years in prison each under different sections of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, just a day after their arrest in another case. The couple subsequently moved the IHC against the sentence in early February. The couple had originally been booked by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency under Sections 9, 10, 11 and 26 of Peca, with an FIR alleging they had attempted to incite divisions on linguistic grounds through social media posts.

Iran's peace laureate Narges Mohammadi
'fears never seeing her children again'

She says: “I had promised myself that I would survive. I had to stay alive so that Kiana and Ali would never have to endure that unbearable moment — the moment of learning of their mother's death”

PARIS: Iranian Nobel peace laureate Narges Mohammadi's biggest fear is dying without seeing her teenaged twin children again after more than a decade apart, she says in a new memoir published on Thursday. In the book, “A Woman Never Stops Fighting,” Mohammadi recalls the day in July 2015 when she said goodbye to Kiana and Ali, then aged 8 and now 19, before they left for Paris while their mother remained in Evin prison in Tehran. “I felt as though a vast void had opened inside me,” she writes. As the children's plane took off, she “knew that for their sake, the kids had to be taken out of Iran,” she says. “It wasn't safe for them. “But at the same time, I was a mother, and I was drowning. I would likely not see Ki-

ana and Ali again, at least not for a long time. And how could I live without seeing my children?” Mohammadi, 54, was released from prison on health grounds in May. She was also jailed during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests in 2022, when she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2023, during mass demonstrations this year, and when the US-Iran war began on Feb. 28. When the sound of bombing echoed around Tehran, Mohammadi “feared that I might have to leave this world without ever seeing my children again.” She says: “I had promised myself that I would survive. I had to stay alive so that Kiana and Ali would never have to endure that unbearable moment — the moment of learning of their mother's death.” — APP



Briefs

North Kivu province becomes new Ebola hotspot

BUTEMBO, DR Congo: A 11 29 beds were full this week at the Kitumba Ebola treatment center in Congos North Kivu province, where surging cases have overwhelmed health facilities even as the deadly virus shows signs of easing elsewhere.

In one room, a critically ill patient lay on oxygen support, crying out as medical staff in masks, gloves and plastic aprons rushed past him at the center in Butembo, a city of 2 million people. "Over the past two weeks, we've seen a very sharp increase," said Stephanie Hoffmann, project coordinator for the international medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in the city. "There are sometimes patients who know they have Ebola but cannot find a bed." City authorities announced the opening of two new treatment centers this week to deal with the demand, bringing the total to four. But some patients arrive so unwell, there is nothing doctors can do, said Hoffmann, speaking at the Kitumba center. She described the case of a 10-year-old boy who died in triage before doctors could admit him to the facility on Tuesday.

The scenes underscore the difficulty of containing Ebola across a stretch of eastern Congo that is bigger than France – one where medical resources are stretched thin. Researchers believe the rare Bundibugyo species of the virus was spreading for months before the first cases were confirmed in Ituri, a province that neighbors North Kivu, in May. Aid cuts, surveillance system gaps and the absence of approved vaccines and treatments hampered the response, along with armed conflict in the region.

As of Tuesday, Congo had confirmed 7,820 cases and 3,779 deaths, according to government data.

While Ituri remains the worst-affected province, North Kivu's share of new infections increased sharply this month, the data shows. The province now accounts for around a third of newly confirmed cases and deaths, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a report on Sunday.

Last week, South Ubundi became the seventh province affected, another sign of what WHO described as a "pronounced geographic redistribution of transmission."—APP

Pope arrives in France on first official visit in 18 years

PARIS: Pope Leo XIV arrived in France on Friday for the Vatican's first official visit to the European nation in 18 years, with artificial intelligence, young believers and the continent's future near the top of his agenda. Church bells rang around the nation when the first US pontiff, whose paternal grandmother was born in France, landed outside Paris just before 10:00 am (0800 GMT) for a four-day trip.

President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte greeted the 71-year-old pope at the airport, where a red carpet was rolled out on the tarmac, as he marked the first official trip by a head of the Vatican since Pope Benedict XVI in September 2008.

"I'm travelling to France, as to anywhere else in the world, as a follower of Jesus Christ wanting to proclaim peace, the peace of Christ throughout the world," Pope Leo told reporters on the plane. He said this message was "particularly important" at the current time. A million people are expected at events across Paris during the first two days of his trip. The high point of the apostolic journey will be a giant mass on Saturday, led by the pontiff at Place de la Concorde and adjoining Champs-Élysées. Pope Leo will also visit Lourdes, a pilgrimage site for Christians worldwide, and Metz, near the German border and closely associated with Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of what is now the European Union.—APP

PM lauds Ismaili community's contributions to Pak's uplift

The Aga Khan reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and AKDN. He also expressed his desire to continue and expand cooperation in various human development initiatives, particularly in healthcare, education, climate resilience and sustainable socioeconomic development, for the benefit of the people of Pakistan

DNA

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with Prince Rahim Aga Khan V on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly session, in New York. The Prime Minister warmly welcomed His Highness and fondly recalled their meeting during the Aga Khan's visit to Pakistan earlier this year. He expressed deep appreciation for His Highness's commitment to sustaining the longstanding friendly and positive relations with Pakistan and reaffirmed the desire to continue working closely with him towards achieving the shared objectives of peace, stability and development.

The Prime Minister particularly appreciated the Ismaili community's longstanding contributions to the Pakistan's socioeconomic development, particularly its tradition of civic engagement and service to society.



New York: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with Prince Rahim Aga Khan V on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly session.

The Prime Minister also appreciated the valuable contributions of AKDN-affiliated institutions towards financial inclusion, tourism promotion, cultural preservation and

community-led economic empowerment. He underscored the need to fully harness the potential for further collaboration in these areas, so as to advance sustainable and inclusive development in Pakistan. His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan appreciated the Prime Minister's warm sentiments and lauded his efforts for regional peace and stability, at a crucial time when the entire region was engulfed by war. The Aga Khan reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and AKDN. He also expressed his desire to continue and expand cooperation in various human development initiatives, particularly in healthcare, education, climate resilience and sustainable socioeconomic development, for the benefit of the people of Pakistan. The Prime Minister invited His Highness to undertake regular visits to Pakistan to further deepen the bonds of friendship.

Prefabricated homes arrive in south Lebanon

The army began deploying in Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh end of July after Israeli forces withdrew from the area, marking the first test of a US-brokered plan agreed by Lebanon and Israel in direct talks. The plan foresees the Lebanese army confiscating weapons from Hezbollah in designated areas and Israeli troops withdrawing in phases so that Lebanese troops can deploy. Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh is one of several towns or villages covered by the initial pilot program.

On Tuesday, the Council for the South began handing over the first batch of prefabricated homes to property owners whose plots had been cleared of rubble and prepared to receive the units. This comes in coordination with the Military Coordination Group for Lebanon. On September 9, authorities announced that around 70 percent of the town's residents had been able to return to inspect their properties, while only 16 percent, estimated at about 60 families out of 450, had been able to resettle. Officials estimated that 85 percent of homes had been completely destroyed and 15 percent partially damaged. A source at the Higher Relief Commission told Asharq Al-Awsat that the prefabricated homes in Zawtar are part of a broader effort to support residents' return and that solutions will vary according to the extent of destruction and local needs. "We are now in the first phase, and while solutions in the villages covered by this stage may be similar or serve as models, they will not be identical because the scale of destruction differs from one area to another. The farther south we go, the more widespread the devastation

becomes, making it impossible to apply a single solution to every town." The source explained that the response would rely on "a combination of solutions," with prefabricated homes being one of them, adding that efforts are underway to secure available units locally as well as additional supplies from donors or foreign sources.

"We had the option of obtaining as many prefabricated homes as the local market could provide, while arranging for additional quantities from donor countries and external sources, allowing us to prepare for the first phase. In later stages, the need will certainly be greater."

The source noted that Lebanese officials had explored opportunities for aid and grants during overseas visits, including to Türkiye, saying: "The cost of a prefabricated home in the local market is not cheap. We know this type of housing is only part of the solution, so we must secure it either through available resources or through grants and assistance." He added that while prefabricated homes may currently be a key solution in Zawtar, demand for them could be even greater in other areas during later phases. "Unfortunately, our capabilities do not allow us to provide enough prefabricated homes for everyone in need. We are talking about roughly 300,000 housing units that are either completely destroyed or damaged to a degree that makes them uninhabitable. This is an enormous number. Therefore, prefabricated housing is one solution, not the only one."—Agencies

Iran's peace laureate Narges 'fears never seeing her kids again'

PARIS: Iranian Nobel peace laureate Narges Mohammadi's biggest fear is dying without seeing her teenaged twin children again after more than a decade apart, she says in a new memoir published on Thursday.

In the book, "A Woman Never Stops Fighting," Mohammadi recalls the day in

July 2015 when she said goodbye to Kiana and Ali, then aged 8 and now 19, before they left for Paris while their mother remained in Evin prison in Tehran. "I felt as though a vast void had opened inside me," she writes. As the children's plane took off, she "knew that for their sake, the kids had to be taken out of

Iran," she says. "It wasn't safe for them. 'But at the same time, I was a mother, and I was drowning. I would likely not see Kiana and Ali again, at least not for a long time. And how could I live without seeing my children?' Mohammadi, 54, was released from prison on health grounds in May. She was also jailed

during the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests in 2022, when she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2023, during mass demonstrations this year, and when the US-Iran war began on Feb. 28.

When the sound of bombing echoed around Tehran, Mohammadi "feared that I might have to leave this world without ever seeing my children again."

She says: "I had promised myself that I would survive. I had to stay alive so that Kiana and Ali would never have to endure that unbearable moment – the moment of learning of their mother's death."—Agencies

Over 55,000 Sudanese refugees fled to east Chad this year

GENEVA: More than 55,000 Sudanese refugees have crossed into eastern Chad since the start of the year, the United Nations said Friday, warning that the displacement was accelerating even as aid funding falls far short.

The war between Sudan's regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that erupted in April 2023 has killed more than 200,000 people, aid workers estimate, and has created the world's largest hunger and displacement crisis. Currently, some 11.3 million people remain forcibly displaced due to the conflict, including 6.4 million people inside the country and 3.5 million who have fled across borders as refugees, UN figures show.

Among them are nearly one million who have crossed into Chad, the UNHCR refugee agency said Friday, cautioning that continued fighting and worsening insecurity in parts of Sudan was now forcing more families to seek safety across the border. "More than 55,000 Sudanese refugees have fled to eastern Chad so far this year," Mamadou Dian Balde, the UN's regional refugee coordinator for the Sudan situation, told reporters in Geneva. And Balde, who also heads the UNHCR's eastern and southern Africa operations, warned that "over the past week, the pace of arrivals has accelerated sharply". He said "more than 400 people a day were now crossing the border areas of Adre and Tine in eastern Chad – around 20 times the daily rate seen over the previous few months".

The situation was particularly dire in the Darfur states, as well as in Kordofan and Blue Nile states, he said, with fighting, including airstrikes and drone attacks, forcing more people to flee and complicating humanitarian access. At the same time, Balde cautioned that "humanitarian support is not keeping pace with needs".

UNHCR says it so far has received only 18 percent of the \$1.6 billion required this year to respond to regional refugee needs linked to the Sudan crisis. In Chad, Balde said more than 190,000 refugees remained in difficult conditions in border areas, with most refugees now surviving on less than half the minimum amount of water needed daily. The transit centre in Tine, for instance, was already hosting more than 4,300 people amid "urgent needs for shelter, water, sanitation and protection services", he said. UNHCR warned that the declining support risked pushing refugees to move on in search of safety, legal status and a viable future.

"What people are going to do is to vote with their feet, and this is what we are starting to see in relation to Europe, but also in relation to other routes," Balde said.—APP

Pakistan participates in cooking competition in Shanghai

SHANGHAI: At the 48th WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai, the world's largest and most influential vocational skills competition, Pakistan's cooking competitor Mohid Mehbub is showcasing more than culinary skills - he is sharing the flavors and traditions of his country. "Pakistan is participating for the first time in WorldSkills," Mohid said, noting that the team is competing in cooking, electrical installation and graphic design.

For the cooking part, he said they had spent six months preparing, with continuous training and guidance from German experts. "So we are very well prepared," he told China Economic Net (CEN). For Mohid, one of the best ways to introduce Pakistan to the world is through its spices. "The spice will be like garam masala," he said, describing the aromatic and spicy blend as somewhat similar to Chinese five-spice. "We use it in almost every dish, from karahi to biryani."

Maintaining a national identity while meeting international standards can be challenging, Mohid acknowledged. But distinctive spices offer a way to preserve that identity. "We use spices that are very rare, just as Chinese people do," he said. He also spoke warmly of his experience in China, praising the country's cuisine and describing Shanghai as a very modern city with excellent infrastructure and impressive cars. As a student at the College of Tourism & Hotel Management (COTHM), Mohid also expressed hope that the close friendship between China and Pakistan would lead to stronger cooperation in technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

According to Pakistan's Prime Minister's Youth Programme, a new China-Pakistan TVET initiative signed in January 2026 will train more than 50,000 Pakistani young people and develop around 2,000 master trainers over five years.—APP

PSO reports profit of over Rs 15b

KARACHI: Pakistan State Oil (PSO) has announced its financial results for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2026. During the fiscal year, PSO recorded a profit after tax of Rs15.07 billion, resulting in earnings per share (EPS) of Rs32.1. The company's gross profit increased to Rs99.9 billion, compared with Rs96.7 billion in the previous fiscal year. The Group's financial performance also improved, with consolidated profit after tax reaching Rs25.49 billion, while consolidated revenue stood at Rs3.42 trillion.

Excluding LNG, gross profit from the core business increased by 20.5 percent, rising from Rs67.9 billion to Rs81.9 billion.

PSO Chief Executive Officer Javed Ahmed Cheema said that fiscal year 2026 was a challenging year for the company and expressed pride in PSO's ability to successfully navigate the situation. He said that fuel supplies across Pakistan were not disrupted for even a single day and that operations were carried out safely. Despite a Rs10.7 billion fluctuation in the LNG segment, the core business continued to grow, enabling PSO to emerge as a stronger, more balanced and more resilient company compared with the previous year.

The company also maintained a strong focus on financial discipline and working capital management. Trade receivables declined from Rs437.5 billion to Rs414.8 billion, while receivables from SNGPL alone decreased by Rs34.3 billion. These measures, combined with lower discount rates, resulted in a 24 percent reduction in finance costs. PSO maintained its leading position in the white oil market with a 42.7 percent market share, while further strengthening its position as Pakistan's leading aviation fuel supplier, with a 99 percent market share. During the year, the company also generated more than \$360 million in foreign exchange by supplying fuel to international flights.—APP



MINSK: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani witnessing various units during his recent visit to Belarus. Pakistan is keen on technical cooperation with Belarus. — DNA

Briefs

Delegates
boycott
Israeli PM
speech

NEW YORK: Dozens of delegates walked out of the UN General Assembly hall on Thursday as hundreds of protesters gathered outside the building while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defended Tel Aviv's actions amid growing international isolation, with elections looming that could threaten his political future. The walkout underscored the competing pressures facing Netanyahu, who is battling mounting criticism abroad over the Gaza conflict while campaigning for re-election at home ahead of an October 27 vote. On Thursday, Netanyahu delivered a combative address inside the General Assembly, where dozens of delegates walked out as he began speaking. The departing diplomats left large sections of the hall empty, creating a striking contrast with Netanyahu's attempt to use the podium to present Israel's case before the international community. Netanyahu responded by accusing his critics of hypocrisy and calling them "moral cowards." He rejected allegations that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza, saying Israel had prevented rather than committed genocide. He defended the country's military actions in Gaza and elsewhere in the region. - APP

'Change your
course,' Dutch
minister
tells Israel

NEW YORK: The Netherlands, long one of Israel's closest allies in Europe, is building an international coalition to medically evacuate at least 1,000 sick and injured children from Gaza as its relationship with the Israeli government reaches a low point over the war, the Dutch minister for foreign trade and development cooperation told. Speaking on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly in New York, Sjoerd Sjoerdsma said the scale of suffering among Gaza's children left his government with no choice but to act. "The amount of children in Gaza who are injured or sick is staggering and it's inhumane," he added. "It's unacceptable that aid isn't reaching these children. That's why we must bring those children to their treatment." He struck the same note at a "Call to Action for Palestinian Children" hosted by the EU, Belgium and Jordan on Wednesday, where he condemned Israel's restrictions on aid. "We should call it as it is, it's a disgrace," he told delegates. The Dutch cabinet has announced a 12 million (\$13.6 million) package for urgent medical care for sick children from Gaza, including the evacuation of 250 seriously ill and injured children to Jordan for treatment. The Netherlands will work with the World Health Organization, and its 6 million share will fund the evacuations under an initiative launched by Jordan's King Abdullah II in early 2025 to treat 2,000 children from Gaza. - APP

PM invites businessmen
to invest in Pakistan

Ms. Esperanza Jelalian, President USPBC thanked the Prime Minister for his continued engagement with the U.S. enterprises and briefed the Prime Minister regarding plans of the US Chamber of Commerce to promote investment opportunities offered by Pakistan



DNA

NEW YORK: Joint Delegation of US-Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) and Business Council of International Understanding (BCIU) Call on the Prime Minister

A joint delegation of the US-Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) and Business Council of International Understanding (BCIU)

called on the Prime Minister today, on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. While talking to the American corporate leaders, the Prime Minister appreciated the longstanding and productive partnership of the U.S. corporate sector with Pakistan. The Prime Minister highlighted investment opportunities for U.S. investors in key sectors of Pakistan's economy, particularly

manufacturing, agriculture, IT, AI, mines & minerals etc. He said that it was his Government's top priority to create a business-friendly environment in the country. The meeting was attended by senior representatives of U.S. companies doing business with Pakistan including Boeing, Abbott, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Resecurity, Mastercard, Nvidia, ETS Capital, TRG International, Archer Daniels Midland Com-

pany, Northshore Medical Lab, Reckitt, Visa, and Excelerate Energy. Ms. Esperanza Jelalian, President USPBC thanked the Prime Minister for his continued engagement with the U.S. enterprises and briefed the Prime Minister regarding plans of the US Chamber of Commerce to promote investment opportunities offered by Pakistan. Mr. Peter Tichansky, President BCIU highlighted the interest of the BCIU member companies in scaling up existing investments and exploring new partnership avenues. Both USPBC and BCIU assured the Prime Minister that they will continue to remain closely engaged with the Government and the private sector of Pakistan to enhance cooperation. He recognized Pakistan as an important destination for US businesses in view of its market size and youthful human resource. In their respective remarks, the USPBC and BCIU members briefed the Prime Minister on their business interests in Pakistan and their plans to enhance their presence in the country. The Prime Minister was assisted by Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Minister for Finance & Revenue, Minister for Defence, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, Chairman PVARA Bilal bin Saqib, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Asim Iftikhar, and Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States Rizwan Ahmed Sheikh.

Ethiopian
fighting rages

NEWS DESK

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian forces battled overnight to repel an assault by Tigray rebels in the Afar region, a humanitarian source said Friday, with reports of an internet blackout in the north of the country. Rebels in the northern Tigray region seized local airports and launched attacks into the neighbouring states of Afar and Amhara this week, saying they were once again in a "full-blown war" with the federal government. Locals fear a repeat of the telecoms blackout and supplies blockade imposed on Tigray during the last civil war in 2020-2022 that killed an estimated 600,000 people. Online monitor Netblocks said there was an "internet disruption in northern Ethiopia corresponding to reports of a telecoms blackout in Tigray". AFP was unable to contact sources in the region by phone on Friday. A humanitarian source in Afar said there was "heavy fighting overnight" around the town of Abala that sits in the mountains on the border with Tigray. "The federal forces pushed the rebels from entering the town," the source said, adding that a drone was used by the army. Heavy clashes occurred in North Wollo

Zone of Amhara on Thursday, including around the UNESCO World Heritage sites in Lalibela, home to Ethiopia's famed rock churches.

Analysts say the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) appears to be repeating its strategy from the last war - pushing south through Amhara towards the capital, Addis Ababa, while the offensive in Afar is likely aimed at cutting off supplies from Djibouti, which provides almost all of Ethiopia's international trade cargo, including fuel. The TPLF has forged an alliance with six other armed groups around the country in a bid to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

The government has a significant military advantage, however, with a large arsenal of drones, an army numbering some 500,000, and the support of external actors, notably the United Arab Emirates. The renewed fighting comes at an awkward moment for the United States, which only this month lifted sanctions on Ethiopia and Eritrea related to atrocities committed during the last civil war, saying the "national emergency... has expired". The US embassy sided with Ethiopia's government this week, saying it was "disappointed to see the leadership of the TPLF... launch a large-scale offensive".

Rebellious Afghan taxi
drivers defy ban on music

KABUL: Taxi drivers in Afghanistan are turning on the tunes in their cars, defying a ban imposed by the Taliban government despite the fear of getting caught by morality police. The music that used to flow constantly out of restaurants, cafes and shops in the capital Kabul has been muted for five years, replaced only by religious or patriotic songs supported by the Taliban authorities in power since 2021. But taxi drivers such as Roeeen have started playing Afghan and regional folk or pop music, which they quickly turn off when security forces may be around. "At every checkpoint we pass, we lower the volume of the music or even turn it off completely... so I don't get into trouble with them," said Roeeen, who gave only his first name for security reasons. The ban on music in public places is imposed by the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) Ministry, whose morality police roam the city wearing long white coats. PVPV regulations state that "since music is forbidden and causes annoy-

ance to passengers, drivers must refrain from playing or listening to it". The ministry did not respond when asked to comment on punishments Afghans face for playing music, but those breaching their various other rules risk being jailed. Roeeen said PVPV officials have "a lot of authority". "We're definitely too afraid of them to be able to listen to music at a higher volume," he told AFP in his sky blue-and-white taxi. Driving through the heavy traffic and noisy roads of Kabul, Roeeen said he has "become 10 times more interested in music" since the ban. "I have to make sure that even if I can't listen in the early morning, by eight o'clock my music is on," he said. In a country where various forms of entertainment including cinema are outlawed, listening to music constantly is a "form of protest" for the 28-year-old driver. Another taxi driver, who requested anonymity for security reasons, told AFP he only listens to music when he is alone in his car and surrounded by the noise of other vehicles. - APP

LHC seeks Punjab home
secretary's reply on plea
against Aleema's detention

Justice Abher Gul Khan has been holding hearings on the petition. In the previous hearing, Justice Abher had sought arguments on the plea's maintainability

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday sought a reply from the Punjab home secretary on a petition challenging the detention of PTI founder Imran Khan's sister, Aleema Khan, under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance. Aleema was detained by authorities on Sept 20, after the office of Lahore's deputy commissioner (DC) ordered her detention or arrest for 30 days. The DC's order cited a letter by the Lahore capital city police officer, which referred to police reports that Aleema and Ameer "are prejudicial to the public safety and maintenance of public order". Justice Abher Gul Khan has been holding hearings on the petition. In the previous hearing, Justice Abher had sought arguments on the plea's maintainability. As the hearing resumed on Friday, a Punjab government law officer asked the court to dispose of the petition, arguing that the home secretary had already fixed a hearing to review the detention

order issued by the Lahore DC on Sept 28. The judge, however, issued a notice to the home secretary for submission of a reply to the petition. Barrister Taimur Malik submitted that his client, Aleema, was facing difficulties in receiving her medicines and other essentials in jail. The judge directed the counsel to file a separate application on this issue. Aleema's detention took place amid reports of a crackdown on the PTI ahead of its September 27 countrywide protest and march to Islamabad, which the party has called to demand Imran's release from jail and mobilise people for the supremacy of the Constitution. Shah-raiz Khan, Aleema's son, filed a petition through Advocate Rana Mudassar Umar, challenging the detention orders issued by the Lahore DC against his mother and two aunts. Following Aleema's detention, her two sisters, Dr Uzma Khan and Noreen Niaz, were also detained under MPO. - DNA

Mediterranean
migration
crisis takes
center stage

TORONTO: Even two decades working on migration issues did not prepare director Sine Plambeck for the gut-wrenching scenes of human misery she encountered in her new documentary "Rescue." The film traces the work of men and women who patrol the Mediterranean Sea helping the often-desperate people they find there who are fleeing economic and political chaos and trying to make their way to Europe. In one scene, cameras capture an operation by the NGO Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres) as they try to help a group in a stricken little boat. What unfolds is a tense sequence that ends with the separation of a Yemeni family: a man is taken aboard by the activists while weeping and screaming for his family, who had been abducted by armed men just minutes earlier, right in front of the cameras. The story deeply affected Danish filmmaker Plambeck, whose documentary premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and has its European premiere Friday at the Zurich Film Festival. - APP

Israeli army
says two
soldiers killed

NEWS DESK

JERUSALEM: Israel's army said Friday that two reserve soldiers were killed in Gaza, with a military source telling AFP they died in an explosion of an Israeli army drone. "The IDF drone crashed at a military post in the Gaza Strip but did not explode. The soldiers approached the drone, which exploded moments later," the official said. "The incident is under review," the source added. The army identified the soldiers as Nadav Kali, aged 24, and Ofek Moalem, 23, from its 7007th Battalion, 16th Brigade. The deaths bring the number of Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza to 970 since the start of the war, which was launched in response to the Hamas attacks against Israel on October 7, 2023 that killed more than 1,200 people. Of the 970 soldiers killed, seven have died since the start of a ceasefire last year. The war waged by Israel in Gaza has left nearly 74,000 dead, according to the territory's health ministry- APP



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Pak refineries sign long-awaited
\$6bn modernisation agreements

Projects aimed at modernising country's ageing refining sector, producing cleaner Euro-V fuels

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's major oil refineries signed long-awaited upgrade agreements on Thursday, paving the way for nearly \$6 billion in investment to modernise the country's ageing refining sector and produce cleaner Euro-V fuels. Attock Refinery Limited (ARL), National Refinery Limited (NRL), Cnergyco Pakistan Limited (CPL) and Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL) signed the agreements, while Pakistan's largest refinery, Parco, is expected to sign soon. The projects are expected to significantly reduce furnace oil production, replace imported petroleum products with locally refined fuels and strengthen Pakistan's ability to meet domestic energy needs. The industry estimates that the refinery upgrades could save the country about \$1.5 billion annually in foreign exchange by reducing petroleum product imports. For refinery executives who have been involved in the initiative since its early stages, the signing marks the culmination of nearly seven years of policy development and

delays. "The journey began with the first draft of the Refining Policy in December 2019, followed by its approval in August 2023 and subsequent amendments before finally reaching implementation today - almost seven years later," said Adil Khattak, CEO of ARL and chairman of the Energy Committee of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Khattak said the recent geopolitical developments had reinforced the importance of domestic refining capacity as a strategic national asset rather than simply a commercial enterprise. He credited Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, the Petroleum Division and other government institutions with helping remove the remaining hurdles and move the policy toward implementation. "Reaching today's milestone deserves recognition and celebration. It would not have been possible without the passionate, persistent and resilient leadership of Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, his team in the Petroleum Division and the support of other relevant government institutions. Their efforts in resolving the remaining impediments have been instrumental in translating a long-pending policy into implementation," he said.