



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, September 02, 2026

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Pakistan keen to attract foreign tourists, says Yasir

Detailed News On Page-08

Misbah steps down as the team selector

Detailed News On Page-06



Former UK PM Starmer quits politics

Detailed News On Page-01



Briefs

Iran urges US to comply with interim agreement

NEWS DESK

BISHKEK: Iran said on Tuesday it would reciprocate if the United States honoured its commitments under a June interim deal on halting their conflict, but tensions remained high after US President Donald Trump threatened Tehran with further strikes. Oil prices rose after the first exchange of direct attacks since late July, and following reports of two tankers coming under fire leaving the Strait of Hormuz, the global oil supply waterway that Iran has effectively closed to shipping. The six-month-old conflict had shifted into an economic standoff before a US attack on Iran's Larak Island on Sunday, which Iran responded to by launching missiles overnight at two US air bases in Jordan. "We're going to hit them hard ... There will be a response," a Fox News reporter quoted Trump as telling the channel on Monday, although the president separately told reporters that the renewed strikes did not signal a return to full-scale war. While neither side appears to want a return to all-out war, their pledges to respond to further attacks highlight how quickly a conflict that has increasingly been fought through sanctions, blockades and economic pressure could spill back into military action.

Starmer leaves the parliament

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Keir Starmer will stand down as a member of parliament, he said on Tuesday, some six weeks after he resigned as Britain's prime minister having lost the support of his Labour Party. Starmer guided Labour into power in 2024 with one of the biggest parliamentary majorities in Britain's modern history, completing a remarkable turnaround having become Labour leader four years earlier after its worst election showing since 1935. But the former lawyer, whose tenure as prime minister was marked by several damaging U-turns, failed to connect with voters and steadily lost the support of the public and his party. Starmer had previously said he would remain as a lawmaker until the next general election. But he told the Camden New Journal, a local newspaper in his North London constituency, that he had changed his mind and intended to "concentrate on international affairs". He confirmed his resignation in a statement on X.

Terrorist attacks increases in August: report

DESK REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The number of terrorist attacks increased significantly in August despite sustained counter-terrorism pressure, but their human impact declined compared with July, according to a monthly security assessment by an Islamabad-based think tank. According to monthly data compiled by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), 199 terrorist attacks were recorded in August, compared with 144 in July — an increase of 38 per cent. Violence linked to terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations had intensified sharply in July, making it the deadliest month of 2026.

Continued on Page 06

SCO summit

Shehbaz says water 'lifeblood' of region

The prime minister's speech comes a day after the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ordered India to uphold the IWT with Pakistan and suspend work on a hydro project in occupied Kashmir

DNA

BISHKEK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said water was the "lifeblood" of the region and must never be weaponised, as he addressed a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Kyrgyzstan. Speaking at the SCO Council of Heads of States (CHS) meeting in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, the premier said the region cannot "realise its full potential without lasting peace". Without naming India directly, he highlighted the issue of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and demanded that it be honoured. "Water is the lifeblood of our region. It sustains millions of lives, nourishes our land and secures the very future of our coming generations," he noted. He stressed that it "must never be weaponised; it cannot be used as an instrument of coercion, nor can it ever be exploited for political leverage". "The treaties governing our shared waters are solemn, binding international commitments. They are not matters of political convenience to be cast aside at your will. They must be honoured unconditionally, in both letter and spirit." The prime minister's speech comes a day after the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ordered India to uphold the IWT with Pakistan and sus-

pend work on a hydro project in occupied Kashmir. The Hague-based court backed Pakistan's stance, declaring that the IWT between the two countries remained fully in force, as India had no justification for ending or suspending the agreement. Water and the IWT remain a contentious issue between India and Pakistan, following New Delhi's unilateral abeyance of the accord in April last year — a move that was followed by a brief military conflict between the two sides in May 2025. Speaking on the issue of terrorism, PM Shehbaz said it remained "one of the gravest threats that has affected our entire region in its various forms and manifestations". As chair of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), Pakistan has "worked actively to strengthen regional counter-terrorism cooperation", he highlighted. "Few nations have fought against the scourge of terrorism as resolutely and valiantly as Pakistan. In the past two and a half decades, we have sacrificed more than 90,000 lives and endured economic losses of over \$150 billion in combating terrorism." Pakistan sought a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, he said, adding: "But let there be no ambiguity; so long as terrorists continue to use Afghan territory to shed the blood of innocent

Continued on Page 06

UN Secy General lauds Pakistan peace efforts

The DPM/FM appreciated the Secretary-General's leadership in advancing the UN's role in addressing global challenges and promoting effective multilateralism



DNA

BISHKEK: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq

Dar met with UN Secretary-General António Guterres on the sidelines of the SCO Heads of State Summit in Bishkek today. The DPM/FM appreciated the Secretary-General's leadership in advancing the UN's role in addressing global challenges and promoting effective multilateralism. He reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to the UN and underscored the close and longstanding Pakistan-UN partnership. The two sides exchanged views on regional developments, preparations for the upcoming UNGA, and ongoing work at the UN Security Council. The Secretary-General appreciated Pakistan's constructive and principled role in multilateral diplomacy and commended its contributions to promoting regional peace and security. The DPM/FM extended an invitation to

Continued on Page 06

IHC tells Adiala jail to arrange meetings with Imran, Bushra

During earlier proceedings, the govt and Adiala jail authorities had denied that either Imran or Bushra Bibi was being kept in solitary confinement

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday declared petitions challenging the alleged solitary confinement of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi maintainable and also directed Adiala jail authorities to ensure that neither was kept in solitary confinement. IHC's Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro announced the verdict, which had been reserved on Aug 6, and held that the petitions were maintainable in light of the principles laid down in the Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Begum Shamim Afridi cases. The court also directed jail authorities to facilitate a meeting between Imran and Bushra in accordance with prison rules. It further ordered that Imran's family members be allowed to meet him as permitted under the jail rules and directed authorities to make arrangements for phone calls between him and his sons. At the same time, the court directed that phone calls be withdrawn if the recordings of these conversations were being used for political purposes. The court also directed jail authorities to provide Imran with newspapers and books daily and ensure that he receives medical facilities in accordance with the applicable prison rules. The superintendent of Adiala jail was specifically directed to ensure that Bushra Bibi was not kept in solitary con-

finement and to submit an implementation report to the court within 15 days. The IHC directed the superintendent of Adiala jail to ensure strict compliance with the court's directions and disposed of the applications accordingly. The petitions had been filed by Imran's sister, Aleema Khan, and Bushra Bibi's daughter, Mubashra Khawar Maneka, challenging the alleged prolonged isolation of the former prime minister and his wife. During earlier proceedings, the government and Adiala jail authorities had denied that either Imran or Bushra Bibi was being kept in solitary confinement. The advocate general maintained that Imran was housed separately due to security concerns linked to his political profile and was being provided facilities beyond those available to B-class prisoners. Adiala Jail Superintendent Sajid Baig had told the court that Imran was not confined to a single cell around the clock and had access to a compound comprising seven cells, where he could move around during the day. The jail authorities had similarly stated that Bushra Bibi was being housed separately due to security concerns and not as a form of solitary confinement. Barrister Salman Safdar, representing the petitioners, had disputed the government's position, alleging that the restrictions imposed on his clients amounted to prolonged isolation and mental distress.

Continued on Page 06

UZBEK INDEPENDENCE DAY



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Sardar Awais Ahmed Leghari, Federal Minister for Energy, Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi, Presidential Spokesperson Murtaza Solagni, Ambassador of Uzbekistan Alisher Tukhtaev and others cutting cake to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Independence of Uzbekistan. — DNA

Security forces kill 21 terrorists

DNA

QUETTA: Security forces killed 21 terrorists belonging to Indian-sponsored militant groups in separate encounters in Balochistan during the night of August 31 and September 1, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday. According to a press release issued by the military's media wing, six personnel, including two officers and a Customs official, embraced martyrdom in the operations. In the first incident in Nokcha, Chagai District, terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindistan attempted to disrupt

Continued on Page 06

Punjab PA seeks social media ban

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab Assembly on Tuesday passed a resolution seeking an effective legal ban on social media accounts for children under 16 years of age. The resolution was submitted to the Punjab Assembly in July by the chairperson of the Child Protection Bureau, Sarah Ahmad. It called for effective legislation and a coordinated mechanism between federal and provincial institutions to protect minors from the growing dangers of social media. The resolution noted that social media use was exposing children to cyberbullying, online sexual exploitation, inappropriate content, mental stress

Continued on Page 06

Easing of tensions

Taliban open to US investments

The White House has not issued a response to Muttaqi's comments. In his first term, US President Donald Trump said he was considering an arrangement to use Afghanistan's mineral wealth to make the Taliban pay for Washington's war and reconstruction efforts, which cost \$117 billion by 2017

DNA

LONDON: The Taliban have signaled their openness to US investment in Afghanistan's mining, infrastructure, agriculture and trade industries as part of a bid to mend ties between Kabul and Washington. Interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told the Financial Times that the Taliban would "absolutely" welcome US investment, adding: "Relations between Afghanistan and the US should not be assessed through the lens of the past 20 years of war, but rather on the basis of future co-operation." The White House has not issued a response to Muttaqi's comments. In his first term, US President Donald Trump said he was considering an arrangement to use Afghanistan's mineral wealth to make the Taliban pay for Washington's war and reconstruction efforts, which cost \$117 billion by 2017. Afghanistan holds mineral deposit reserves valued at more than \$1 trillion, according to a study by the US Geological Survey. The country's earth contains vast deposits of gold, silver and platinum, as well as iron ore, uranium, zinc, tantalum, bauxite, coal, natural gas and copper. The Taliban's economic policy "is open," said Muttaqi, highlighting the group's pitch to the international

Continued on Page 06

Afghan envoy calls for better connectivity

Ambassador Shakeeb emphasized that Afghanistan and Pakistan are not merely two neighboring countries

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb delivered a thought-provoking address at Islamabad, highlighting the deep interconnection between Afghanistan and Pakistan. His remarks underscored the shared geography, intertwined histories, and mutual security concerns that bind the two nations together. Ambassador Shakeeb emphasized that Afghanistan and Pakistan are not merely two neighboring countries. "Our geographies are interconnected, our peoples and societies share deep ties, and our histories are intertwined in many respects," he stated. He noted that trade, transit, and the movement of

Continued on Page 06

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Afridi for greater provincial share in natural resources

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi here Tuesday called for the protection of the province's constitutional rights over its hydropower and natural resources, saying that the province is generating significant energy for the country, and people of KP needed to be provided fair share of the benefits. He made the remarks while presiding over a meeting on ongoing projects and key matters of the energy and power department. The chief minister said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's hydropower, oil, gas and LPG resources were playing an important role in meeting the country's energy needs.

The province was supplying more than 70 percent of the country's total hydel power generation to the national grid. However, he said, the absence of a provincial transmission line had forced Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to sell the electricity. The meeting was informed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was developing its own provincial transmission and grid system to ensure reliable electricity transmission and meet the requirements of industry. The chief minister directed officials to present the provincial transmission line project at an investors' conference. Described the project as highly profitable, he said several

countries were interested in investing in it. According to the briefing, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa produces around 530 million cubic feet of natural gas per day, while its daily consumption stands at approximately 200 million cubic feet. The briefing further said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa produces around 850 tonnes of LPG per day against daily consumption of approximately 600 tonnes. The province also contributes 48 percent of the country's crude oil production and 38 percent of its LPG production. Sohail Afridi directed officials to raise the province's rights with the federal government through a strong and formal mechanism. —APP

165 village conservation committees set up

ISLAMABAD: As many as 165 village conservation committees (VCCs) have been established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) under the wildlife component of the Upscaling Green Pakistan Programme (UGPP), as the country expands community participation in wildlife and habitat conservation. According to official data available with Wealth Pakistan, detailing progress on major wildlife activities under the UGPP from FY2019 to the third quarter of FY2025-26, AJK accounts for 115 of the committees, while another 50 have been established in KP. The table records no VCCs under this particular activity for Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan or Gilgit-Baltistan. AJK therefore accounts for nearly 70% of the 165 committees established, with KP accounting for the remainder. The VCCs form part of a wider range of wildlife interventions undertaken under the programme, which include the expansion and management of protected areas, wildlife monitoring, community-based conservation, eco-tourism infrastructure and measures to curb illegal wildlife trade. The progress data show that 131 new protected areas have been established under the Protected Areas Initiative. Punjab accounts for 65, KP 29, Balochistan and AJK two each, and Gilgit-Baltistan 16. Another 70 management plans for protected areas have been developed, including 32 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 20 in AJK, 14 in KP, three in Punjab and one in Balochistan. The programme has also established 52 wildlife check posts to control illegal wildlife trade, while 148 wildlife surveys have been conducted. The data further record 247 community-based projects, including 197 in Balochistan and 50 in KP. Water availability for wildlife has also been addressed, with 1,145 water points reported under the programme. Of these, 980 are in Balochistan, 120 in KP and 45 in Gilgit-Baltistan. Other interventions reported in the progress document include 31 eco-tourism infrastructure initiatives in existing and new protected areas, 24 breeding centres, 47 solid-waste management interventions in protected areas and six dossiers developed for declaration as Man and the Biosphere reserves under UNESCO. The programme has also generated 4,939 green jobs under its wildlife component, according to the progress table. The UGPP was initiated in 2019 as a nationwide programme covering forestry and wildlife resources. —APP

Punjab CM reviews own-source revenue projects

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities to use recycled plastic drain covers along roadsides and imposed a ban on placing concrete flower pots on roadsides and road medians. Presiding over a special meeting here, the chief minister reviewed development projects to be executed through own-source revenue in Sargodha and Dera Ghazi Khan divisions. She directed that the names of cities be prominently displayed on green, grassy plots at the entry points of every city to enhance their aesthetic appeal. The meeting was informed that 20 projects would be completed through own-source revenue in Sargodha Division, including eight in Sargodha district, six in Khushab and six in Bhakkar. The Sargodha city package includes construc-

tion, expansion and rehabilitation of five major roads, including Dairy Road, Azad Road, Urdu Bazaar Road, Pilot Chowk and Khayyam Chowk Overhead Bridge Road. In Khushab, six road construction and rehabilitation projects would be completed through own-source revenue, including roads around Jahaz Chowk, DPS School and Sehgal Chowk, Mianwali Road, Main Bazaar Quaidabad and Noorpur Thal Road. Six projects have also been approved for Bhakkar, including GPO Chowk Road, TDA Road, Kallur Kot Road and Mankera City Road. The chief minister directed that the name of Bhakkar be prominently displayed on a green and landscaped plot at the city's entry points. She further ordered installation of electronic traffic signals on congested roads in Bhakkar and

other cities and directed removal of illegal ramps constructed outside houses that obstruct public roads and passageways. For Rajanpur, six own-source revenue projects were approved, including development and rehabilitation of Kitab Canal-Indus Highway, Post Office Road, Akalpur and Fatehpur roads, besides other roads. The chief minister also approved sewerage and drainage projects in rural areas, including Rohjan, Kot Mithan, Jampur and Dajal, and directed that sewerage and drainage schemes in villages be completed on a priority basis. She also sought additional development projects for Rajanpur city and its relevant tehsils, directing the authorities to ensure quality, timely execution and improved civic facilities under the development programme. —APP

FCCI, PCRWR move to boost tech coop on water issues

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) have agreed to establish a formal mechanism for technical cooperation to address drinking water, wastewater and rainwater-related challenges and in this connection, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would soon be signed. FCCI President Farooq Yousuf Sheikh visited the PCRWR laboratory and reviewed the facilities and technical services available for water quality testing and research. During the visit, PCRWR District Officer Tajammal Hussain Langrial briefed the chamber president about the role, functions and ongoing activities of PCRWR particularly its efforts for addressing water-related challenges through scientific research and technical expertise. The FCCI Chief appreciated technical capabilities of the institution and emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination between the business community and research organizations. —DAN

Over 132,000 youth to be equipped with digital skills

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is ramping up efforts to expand its digital workforce and boost IT exports, with the National Semiconductor HR Development Programme (INSPIRE) targeting 7,200 individuals, while other government-backed initiatives plan to train more than 25,000 youth in emerging technologies and another 100,000 students through an industry partnership. According to an official document available with Wealth Pakistan, INSPIRE, being implemented by the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), will benefit 2,200 undergraduate and postgraduate students through Semiconductor Education and Research Clusters, while another 5,000 engineers will be covered through nationwide upskilling programmes. The initiative aims to develop Pakistan's semiconductor talent pipeline. Alongside this, the Prime Minister's SkillTech Pakistan Initiative plans to provide training to more than 25,000 youth over the next three years in emerging and industry-demanded technologies, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing, data analytics and software development. The initiative also includes bootcamps, professional certifications, internships, soft-skills training and industry linkages to improve employability and develop an export-ready digital workforce. PSEB has also entered into a Youth Development Agreement with ZTE Pakistan to train 100,000 students through online learning programmes in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, 5G and modern communication technologies. The partnership also envisages developing 100 certified trainers through a Training of Trainers programme. The skills push forms part of a broader government strategy to strengthen Pakistan's IT and IT-enabled services exports by expanding international market access, improving industry facilitation, strengthening digital infrastructure and developing an export-ready digital workforce. To increase the global presence of Pakistani technology firms, PSEB is facilitating participation in international technology exhibitions, targeted trade missions and business matchmaking initiatives. The measures are intended to connect Pakistani companies with overseas markets, attract foreign investment and generate new export opportunities. The government is also expanding the Prime Minister's National Technology Parks to 250 centres, alongside the development of IT parks in Islamabad and Karachi and the establishment of Software Technology Parks. These facilities are intended to provide infrastructure for startups, SMEs, freelancers and IT companies and strengthen the country's technology export ecosystem. Industry facilitation has meanwhile been strengthened through PSEB's MARKAZ one-window platform, which provides round-the-clock assistance for registration, visa facilitation, foreign remittance matters, regulatory coordination and investor services. —APP

KP achieves major milestone in digital transformation

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to leveraging technology for economic strengthening and creating new employment opportunities for the province's youth

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has achieved significant progress in its digital transformation journey, with hundreds of government services being mapped, redesigned, and digitized under a comprehensive strategy to enhance governance, transparency, and youth employment, officials said on Tuesday. The province is rapidly moving towards a cashless and paperless governance model, with 462 services currently in the complete digital transformation pipeline under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB). Furthermore, 795 government services have been mapped for end-to-end digital delivery under the Cashless Khyber Pakhtunkhwa initiative, while 800 services are currently undergoing business process re-engineering for digital redesign. In a statement issued here, Pro-

vincial Information Minister Shafi Jan said the digital initiatives are laying the foundation for a modern, citizen-friendly governance system where technology is making public services easier, faster, transparent, and more accessible. He emphasized that these measures are not merely about digitization but represent a strategic investment in better governance, youth empowerment, and the province's digital future. Highlighting financial and skill-development achievements, the minister said that digital transactions worth 6.8 billion rupees have been recorded across the province through Cashless KP platforms. Revenue channels under the cashless system generated 4.3 billion rupees by March 2026, while the Paymir platform alone contributed 726 million rupees in digital pay-

ments during March and April 2026. On the youth front, 870 young individuals from the merged districts have successfully completed training in employable digital skills. Additionally, research and innovation are being promoted through the Frontiers in Science program, offering a maximum research grant of 40 million rupees per consortium. Minister Shafi Jan said the journey to build a modern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa driven by technology-enabled convenience, transparency through digital systems, and youth equipped with advanced skills is progressing steadily. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to leveraging technology for economic strengthening and creating new employment opportunities for the province's youth. —DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan meeting with Shi Yuanqiang, Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China.

CO-Ablation Cancer treatment machine opened

FAISALABAD: Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique inaugurated a state-of-the-art CO-Ablation Cancer treatment machine at Radiology Department of Allied Hospital-I Faisalabad on Tuesday. During his visit to Allied Hospital-I, Khawaja Salman Rafique formally inaugurated the newly installed CO-Ablation Cancer machine and reviewed the facilities being made available to cancer patients through the latest technology. Speaking on the occasion, he said the Punjab government under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was taking practical measures to provide cancer patients with the latest treatment facilities at their doorstep and introduction of CO-Ablation technology was an important development in cancer care. He said that five modern CO-Ablation Cancer machines had been procured for Punjab and these were being installed at major healthcare facilities in Faisalabad, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi to expand access to advanced cancer treatment across the province. He said that modern CO-Ablation Cancer machines were also being installed at Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research, further strengthening the province's specialized cancer-care infrastructure. He said that availability of the advanced technology in Faisalabad would provide a major facility to local cancer patients, enabling them to benefit from modern treatment without having to travel to other cities for the same services. —APP

Kundi directs timely completion of power projects

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday directed the authorities to ensure the timely completion of power development projects in the province especially in Dera Ismail Khan, saying uninterrupted and improved electricity supply was a basic public necessity. He issued the directive during a meeting with PESCO Chief Engineer (Development) Habib Ur Rehman Khan Marwat at the Governor House, where they discussed public issues related to WAPDA and ongoing measures to improve the power distribution system. During

the meeting, the Governor was briefed on the progress of electricity development projects in Dera Ismail Khan. The briefing said work on the Dera Grid-II transmission line was progressing at a fast pace, while more than 50 percent work on an alternative transmission line had already been completed to strengthen the electricity supply system. The Governor was informed that efforts were also underway to remove legal hurdles delaying the projects and that both the Dera Grid-II transmission line and the alternative line were expected to be completed by December this year. The meeting was

further informed that the Band Korai Grid Station had been completed and would be inaugurated next month. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Kundi said the timely completion of power projects was essential to ensure better electricity services for the public. He urged the relevant authorities to take effective measures to resolve electricity-related issues faced by consumers. The Governor said the completion of the ongoing projects in Dera Ismail Khan would help address low voltage, overloading and other power supply problems, providing improved electricity facilities to the people. —APP

UoS marks 75 years of Pak-China diplomatic ties with special events

SARGODHA: The University of Sargodha (UoS) marked the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations with a series of events highlighting bilateral friendship, educational cooperation and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Chinese Consul General in Lahore Mr Sun Yan attended the main event as chief guest and cut a cake with UoS Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Qaisar Abbas to commemorate the anniversary. Organised by the Pakistan Institute of China Studies (PICS), the event brought together Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Masood Sarwar Awan, PICS Director Prof Dr Tahir Mumtaz Awan, deans, directors, fac-

ulty members and students. A conference titled "Pakistan-China at 75: Reflecting on the Journey, Shaping the Future from Enduring Friendship to a Shared Future" was also held as part of the celebrations. The event began with the national anthems of Pakistan and China. Addressing the gathering, Mr Sun said the 75-year relationship had strengthened people-to-people ties between the two countries through mutual affection, cooperation, fraternity and cultural exchanges. He said Pakistan and China had stood by each other during difficult times, describing their friendship as an example of peace, development and mutual trust in the region. He

welcomed increased student exchanges between the two countries and called for continued joint efforts to turn the vision of a shared future into reality. The consul general also appreciated UoS efforts to strengthen educational links with Chinese institutions. Prof Dr Qaisar Abbas said his affection for China was partly rooted in his own experience of receiving higher education there, adding that the relationship between the two countries went beyond economic interests and was based on mutual respect, friendship and people-to-people bonds. "Pakistan and China are indispensable to each other," he said, stressing that UoS was committed to expanding academic cooperation with Chinese universities to help achieve shared development goals. The vice chancellor said promotion of the Chinese language was an effective means of deepening people-to-people ties. He said UoS, in collaboration with Confucius Institute, was taking practical steps to promote Chinese language learning. —DNA

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- 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
- DHQ.....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

Gilani condoles with envoy King Harald V demise

Acting President noted that, at this time of sorrow, the thoughts and prayers of the people of Pakistan were with His Majesty King Haakon VIII, the Royal Family and the people of Norway. He prayed that the departed soul may rest in eternal peace

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani visited the Residence of the Ambassador of Norway in Islamabad



and recorded his condolences in the condolence book opened following the passing of His Majesty King Harald V of Norway. He was received by senior officers of the Embassy. In his remarks, Mr Gilani expressed profound sorrow over the passing of King Harald V and, on behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan and on his own behalf, extended his heartfelt condolences to His Majesty King Haakon VIII, the Royal Family and the people of Norway. He stated that King Harald V had served Norway with wisdom, dignity and devotion for over thirty-five years and that the late King's long reign and dedicated service to his country and people would be remembered with great respect. Mr Gilani noted that, at this time of sorrow, the thoughts and prayers of the people of Pakistan were with His Majesty King Haakon VIII, the Royal Family and the people of Norway. He prayed that the departed soul may rest in eternal peace.—DNA

SECP wins global award for women Insurance Policy

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has won a global award for developing a comprehensive insurance policy aimed at enhancing women's access to insurance services. The SECP received the Outstanding Policy Award at the Women's World Banking Programme held at the University of Oxford, where teams from 16 countries participated. The proposed SECP policy focuses on expanding women's access to insurance, developing products tailored to their specific needs and increasing outreach

through digital channels. According to the SECP, Pakistan has around 117 million women, representing significant potential for expanding insurance coverage among women. Under the proposed policy, insurance companies have been encouraged to introduce at least two dedicated insurance products for women, aimed at addressing their specific financial protection needs. The policy is initially expected to benefit around 1.5 million existing women life insurance policyholders, while creating opportunities to bring more women into the formal insurance

system. The proposed framework also aims to improve women's access to insurance products through digital platforms and other accessible channels, thereby promoting greater financial inclusion and protection. SECP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said the international recognition was an endorsement of the Commission's policy direction and its efforts to strengthen financial inclusion. He said that improving women's access to insurance and ensuring effective consumer protection remained among the SECP's key priorities.—DNA

Rare art being preserved thru special initiatives

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Tuesday said that the government was taking special measures to preserve rare, traditional and endangered forms of art and ensure their transmission to future generations, with efforts also underway in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The minister expressed these views while meeting artists nominated for the Lok Virsa and Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) National Awards 2026. He congratulated all the selected artists and said the recognition was a matter of pride not only for the recipients but also for their families, respective fields and the country as a whole. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said the nominated artists had been selected purely on the basis of merit and artistic excellence. He noted that a significant number of young artists had also been selected for the National Awards this year as per vision of Prime Minister, describing the inclusion of young talent as an important step towards promoting arts and culture among the younger generation. The minister emphasized that Pakistan's rare and endangered arts were not merely artistic traditions but an integral part of the country's identity, history and cultural heritage. He said the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Lok Virsa and PNCA would further strengthen efforts for the

preservation, documentation and intergenerational transmission of traditional arts and crafts. He urged artists to actively participate in the activities of Lok Virsa and PNCA and demonstrated their skills so that the public could gain greater awareness of the unique and endangered artistic traditions found across different regions of Pakistan. He added that the government would also consider these artists for opportunities to represent Pakistan at international events. The federal minister particularly appreciated the performance and achievements of women artists selected for the National Awards. He said the Ministry was making special efforts to identify talented women from across the country, showcase their artistic abilities and provide them with greater opportunities for advancement. Pakistani women, he noted, were demonstrating exceptional talent in arts and crafts, embroidery, design, drama, calligraphy, music and other fields. Khichi also appreciated the teams of Lok Virsa and PNCA for giving priority to merit and following a transparent process in finalizing the artists for the awards. He said suggestions put forward by artists would be given due consideration and practical proposals aimed at further improving the institutions would be pursued. Federal Secretary for National Heritage and Culture, Asad Rehman Gilani said the selection for the National Awards had been conducted entirely on merit. He

explained that several candidates had been dropped at different stages of the selection process, while the final names were determined after reviews by various committees, consultation with the provinces and recommendations from relevant institutions. The federal minister, he added, had also conducted a thorough scrutiny of the nominations. The federal secretary said the nominated artists were genuinely accomplished and hardworking professionals who had earned the recognition through their talent and contributions. He said the National Awards are announced on August 14, while the awards ceremony is held on March 23. During the meeting, nominated artists from different parts of Pakistan, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, introduced themselves and briefed the Minister about their respective artistic disciplines and contributions. The artists thanked Lok Virsa, PNCA, the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khan Khichi and Federal Secretary Asad Rehman Gilani for selecting them on merit. The artists also offered their services to the government of Pakistan and relevant institutions and reaffirmed their commitment to promoting Pakistan's cultural heritage, safeguarding rare and endangered arts, and helping pass traditional skills and knowledge on to future generations.—APP

Kabul rightly urged not to allow Afghan soil use against Pak

Some participants urged greater nuance to policies towards Afghanistan so that policy affecting the people of Afghanistan is distinguished from policy directed at the Taliban regime in Kabul, which itself had come to power through the use of force against the will of the Afghan people

ISLAMABAD: Experts at a roundtable discussion at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, agreed that Pakistan's primary expectation from the Taliban regime in Kabul was that it should not allow Afghan soil to be used against Pakistan. They noted that, since Pakistan's inception, its foreign policy towards Afghanistan had been one of cautious friendliness, with the expectation that Afghanistan would respect Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and not allow its soil to be used against Pakistan in any way or form. The participants at the roundtable, organised by IRS in collaboration with the South Asia Times (SAT), agreed that Pakistan had shown extraordinary restraint in the face of a continuous onslaught of terrorist attacks in the country that were planned in and coordinated from Afghanistan. They urged the Taliban regime to respond positively to Pakistan's genuine security concerns regarding terrorism emanating from Afghan territory. While

the participants felt that violence may not be the solution to every problem, but stressed that Pakistan needed to negotiate with Afghanistan from a position of strength and should not allow instability caused by elements sheltered by the Taliban regime to spill over into Pakistan's border regions. They emphasized a meaningful, consultative process to resolve their outstanding issues, particularly the issue of greatest concern to Pakistan: terrorism. The participants underscored that improved relations between the two countries were in the best interests of the peoples on both sides. They expressed particular concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, where three-quarters of the population was living in poverty. Notwithstanding the claims of the Taliban government, the participants urged it to pay particular attention to the plight of the Afghan population, especially women, rather than supporting terrorist groups

against Pakistan. Some participants urged greater nuance to policies towards Afghanistan so that policy affecting the people of Afghanistan is distinguished from policy directed at the Taliban regime in Kabul, which itself had come to power through the use of force against the will of the Afghan people. The participants of the roundtable included Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS; Senator Barister Muhammad Ali Saif, former adviser to the KP government; Ambassador Abrar Hussain, Pakistan's former Ambassador to Afghanistan; Mr. Israr Madani, President, International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA); Dr. Ifthikhar Firdous, Editor, The Khorasan Diary; Mr. Abdullah Khan, Managing Director, Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS); Mr. Salman Javed, CEO, SAT; Mr. Aarish U. Khan, Lead Afghanistan Program, IRS; and Dr. Shabana Fayyaz, Professor, Department of Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.—DNA

Rain or rush DIG orders stronger road discipline

ISLAMABAD: Director General Safe City/DIG Traffic Muhammad Haroon Joya on Tuesday directed traffic officers to keep traffic moving smoothly during rainfall while stepping up action against lane violations, helmetless motorcyclists, non-standard number plates and tinted glasses across the federal capital. An official told media on Tuesday that he issued the directions while chairing a meeting of traffic officers attended by Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Kainat Azhar Khan and other officials, said a press release here. The meeting reviewed traffic management during rainy weather and measures required to prevent disruption on the city's roads. Haroon Joya directed officers to remain vigilant during rainfall and take necessary measures to maintain smooth traffic flow and facilitate road users. He also ordered effective enforcement against motorists violating lane discipline and using non-standard number plates or tinted glasses, as well as motorcyclists riding without helmets. The DIG Traffic further directed officers to address parking problems at public and tourist places, where improper parking could create difficulties for visitors and other road users. He asked traffic officers to ensure better travel facilities for citizens and take necessary measures to keep traffic organised and roads convenient for commuters.—DNA

Ufone, Telenor secure nine awards

ISLAMABAD: Ufone and Telenor Pakistan have secured nine awards at the Dragons of Pakistan 2026, comprising two Gold, two Silver and five Black Dragons, across Marketing, Public Relations, Media, Digital, Content Creation and Small Budget categories. Ufone secured five awards, led by its campaign, "Babar Azam's Lost Phone, Data Bohhaat Hai," which won Gold Dragons in both Marketing Discipline and Public Relations, as well as a Black Dragon in Media. The brand also received a Silver Dragon in Media for "Super 5" and a Silver Dragon in Digital for "5G Launch: It's More Than Just Speed." Telenor Pakistan added four Black Dragons to PTML's tally, with its work recognised across Content Creation, Digital, Small Budget and Public Relations. The brand won for "Comic Feeds" in Content Creation, "Tension Ko Smash Karo" in Digital, "Karachi Ka Connection" in Small Budget, and "Influencer Tactical Campaigns" in Public Relations. Commenting on the success, Syed Atif Raza, Chief Commercial Officer, PTML said, "We are proud of the recognition received by Ufone and Telenor Pakistan at Dragons of Pakistan 2026. The nine awards reflect the quality and impact of the hard work of our team and partners. These campaigns demonstrate our commitment to create innovative products and services, substantiated by relevant and powerful communication that resonates with the audiences.—APP

ERC meeting orders tighter monsoon readiness

The committee also stressed the need for proactive action at the district level to minimise risks and protect vulnerable communities as the monsoon spell continues

ISLAMABAD: The Emergency Response Committee (ERC), chaired by Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives Prof Dr Ahsan Iqbal, on Tuesday reviewed the country's monsoon situation and national preparedness at the National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) in Islamabad. The committee directed federal and provincial authorities to maintain close coordination, strengthen early warning systems and keep rescue and relief resources ready as rain is expected to continue in northern areas and could trigger urban and flash flooding in vulnerable districts until Sept 4. The 17th ERC meeting was convened by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to oversee preparedness and coordinated emergency response during the 2026 monsoon season. Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Muhammad Mueen Wattoo, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, representatives of Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), relevant federal ministries and senior officials attended the meeting. The committee reviewed prevailing weather and hydrological conditions, the latest weather outlook, river flows, vulnerable locations and preparedness measures. The NEOC gave a detailed briefing on the evolving weather system and its likely impacts, including the potential for urban flooding, localised flash floods and water accumulation in low lying areas. According to the briefing, the weather system is expected to affect the Potohar region, adjoining catchment areas of the Chenab and Jhelum rivers and parts of northeastern Punjab. The northern parts of the country are likely to remain under the influence of the rain bearing system until Sept 4, with intermittent rainfall potentially triggering localised weather related emergencies in vulnerable districts. The Rawalpindi district administration briefed the committee on the situation around Nullah Lai, saying relevant departments had been placed on high alert and arrangements had been made for the safe evacuation of residents with the assistance of Civil Defence, police and Rescue 1122 personnel. Emergency responders had been deployed around Nullah Lai, while traffic flow was being maintained on major roads, the meeting was told. Provincial authorities briefed the committee on preparedness measures, availability of rescue resources, emergency stocks, evacuation plans and coordination with district administrations. Federal and provincial departments and response agencies also updated the committee on the prevailing flood situation, ongoing rescue and relief operations, deployment of resources and measures being taken in vulnerable areas. The meeting placed particular emphasis on uninterrupted communication, timely dissemination of early warnings, prepositioning of relief supplies and maintaining the operational readiness of emergency response agencies. Prof Ahsan Iqbal directed all relevant departments and response agencies to maintain close coordination and ensure timely implementation of preparedness and response measures. The committee also stressed the need for proactive action at the district level to minimise risks and protect vulnerable communities as the monsoon spell continues.—DNA

NADRA, FBISE sign MoU

ISLAMABAD: The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) have signed an agreement to integrate the student registration system for Matriculation and Intermediate examinations. Under the agreement, a mutual data-exchange mechanism has been established. This will enable NADRA to provide FBISE with key student details directly from its registry, including full name, father's name, and date of birth. The initiative aims to minimise data discrepancies and errors during student registration, whilst enhancing administrative efficiency through the issuance of accurate and verifiable academic credentials. The partnership also includes the development of a secure Digital Wallet, allowing students to access, store, and digitally share their educational certificates. This collaboration forms part of NADRA's broader initiative to integrate national identity system and educational records. Under this programme, NADRA is progressively working to streamline digital data-sharing across secondary and higher secondary education boards, universities, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) nationwide. The signing ceremony took place today at the NADRA Headquarters in Islamabad, attended by the Chairman of FBISE, Dr Ikram Ali Malik, and the Chairman of NADRA.—APP

IRSA releases 318,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 318,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 331,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1550.00 feet, which was 148.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 220,000 cusecs each. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1220.00 feet, which was 170.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 20,300 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 240,800, 154,400, 157,800, and 116,000 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 24,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 42,800 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Briefs

IESCO
notifies
power
suspension
programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to an IESCO spokesperson, in Islamabad Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 8 am to 12 pm, Numbles, feeder in Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, RIC, DK, Farman Ali, Tipu Road, Jahangir Road, Rahimabad, Rehmatabad-1, PAF, Takbeer-1, Chaklala, feeders. In Rawalpindi City Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Benazir Bhutto Hospital, Sector-IV, APHS, Tehmasabad, DK, Hukam Dad, feeders. Similarly, in Attock Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 5 am to 12 pm, Industrial Estate Bahtar, feeder. In GSO Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 05:00 am to 09:00 am, 250MVA, 220/132kv Auto Transformer T-2, from 09:00 am to 04:00 pm, 132kv AWC HMC Taxila and 132KV Sangiani-Burhan, from 08:00 am to 06:00 pm, 132KV Kahuta City, Palandri, 132KV New Wah-Bahtermore along with related earth switch, and surrounding areas. IESCO apologized to consumers for the temporary inconvenience and said electricity supply would be restored before the scheduled time if the maintenance work was completed earlier than expected.—APP

Tariq reviews
rain situation
in city

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Tuesday visited rain-affected areas of Islamabad and reviewed the situation following heavy rainfall. Officials of the district administration and local leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) accompanied the federal minister during the visit. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry inspected various areas affected by the rainfall and reviewed arrangements for draining accumulated rainwater. He directed the authorities to immediately drain rainwater from low-lying areas and roads. "All necessary measures should be taken to maintain the flow of traffic and ensure public convenience," the minister said. He said heavy rainfall had caused some drains to overflow, creating difficulties for citizens in several areas. "The CDA, Metropolitan Corporation and Islamabad administration, along with all relevant departments, are actively working in the field," he said. The minister said he was in constant contact with the Deputy Commissioner and Chief Commissioner and was personally monitoring the situation.—APP

Rawal Dam
spillways
opened

ISLAMABAD: Following heavy rainfall in Islamabad and surrounding areas, the water level at Rawal Dam has risen to 1,751.90 feet, prompting authorities to open the dam's spillways at 2:00 pm. The district administration has directed Rescue 1122, police, and other departments to remain on high alert during the operation. The District Administration Islamabad announced that the water level in Rawal Dam increased significantly after continuous rainfall across the federal capital and nearby regions. According to officials, the reservoir's water level reached 1,751.90 feet, leading authorities to decide to open the spillways to regulate the inflow and maintain safe water levels. The administration has instructed Rescue 1122, Islamabad Police and other relevant departments to remain fully prepared during the release of water. Authorities have also directed all concerned institutions to implement necessary safety measures before and during the operation.—APP

ICCI, PBA Korea partner to
expand business linkages

Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that MoU would strengthen B2B cooperation and deepen Pakistan-Korea economic ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the Pakistan Business Association Korea (PBA Korea) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen institutional cooperation, promote bilateral trade and investment, enhance business-to-business linkages and facilitate greater interaction between the business communities of Pakistan and South Korea. The MoU was signed during the visit of a high-level PBA Korea delegation to ICCI, led by its Chairman Mudassar Ali Cheema (Tamgha-e-Imti-az) Mudassar Ali Cheema appreciated ICCI for providing a platform for strengthening structured engagement between Pakistani and Korean businesses. He highlighted the Association's milestones in organizing the Pakistani business community in Korea, addressing community and business-related issues and promoting stronger commercial relations between Pakistan and South Korea. ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood welcomed the delegation and said the signing of the MoU marked an important step

towards translating the strong Pakistan-Korea relationship into tangible economic opportunities. He said overseas Pakistanis, particularly the business community in

Korea, could serve as effective economic ambassadors by connecting Pakistan with international markets, investment, technology and global business networks. He said



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry presents Chamber's memento to Mudassar Ali Cheema Chairman Pakistan Business Association Korea. President PBA Korea Rahim Shah, Vice Chairman PBA Sabir Khan Khattak, ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, ICCI Executive members Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry and other are also present.

Pakistan's young workforce, large market and investment potential, combined with Korea's advanced technology, capital, industrial expertise and access to international markets, could create substantial opportunities for both countries. He emphasized that the newly signed MoU would provide a framework for promoting B2B meetings, joint business delegations, investment opportunities, market information exchange and direct interaction between entrepreneurs. President Pakistan Business Association Korea Rahim Shah said the Council would work closely with ICCI to translate the objectives of the MoU into practical initiatives and mutually beneficial business opportunities. He expressed the hope that enhanced cooperation between the two organizations would encourage Pakistani and Korean companies to explore new partnerships, joint ventures, investment projects and opportunities for technology and knowledge transfer. Those present on the occasion also included Vice Chairman PBA Sabir Khan Khattak, ICCI Executive members Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry, former senior vice President Khalid Chaudhry and other.

Duty in
downpour
earns cop
reward

ISLAMABAD: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad, Kainat Azhar Khan, on Tuesday honoured Traffic Police Officer Asif with an appreciation certificate and cash reward for performing his duty with dedication during heavy rainfall in the federal capital. An ITP official told APP that officer Asif was invited to the CTO's office where Kainat appreciated his commitment and professional conduct while performing traffic duty amid the downpour, said a press release here. The CTO Kainat, presented him with an appreciation certificate and cash reward in recognition of his dedicated service during difficult weather conditions. She appreciated the officer for setting an example of commitment to duty and encouraged traffic personnel to continue serving citizens with the same dedication and professionalism.—APP

Foreign
nationals'
security
in focus

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Security Islamabad, Rana Umar Farooq on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review security arrangements for foreign nationals and diplomatic missions in the federal capital and directed officers to further strengthen the measures. An official told APP that Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad, Qazi Ali Raza and other police officers attended the meeting, said a press release here. The meeting reviewed security matters related to diplomatic missions and foreign nationals and discussed the arrangements currently in place for their protection. DIG Umar issued necessary directions to further improve the security arrangements and ensure effective implementation of measures for the safety of foreign nationals and diplomatic missions in the federal capital.—APP

E-11, Ghouri Town among
rain affected areas

ISLAMABAD: Heavy rainfall across several Islamabad sectors led to water accumulation in low-lying areas, disruption of traffic at multiple points, and emergency drainage operations, while authorities reported no loss of life. While, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration conducted emergency response operations under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Memon. Field teams remained active throughout the day to address water accumulation, monitor vulnerable locations, and restore normal conditions in affected areas. The deputy commissioner visited several locations impacted by the rain and reviewed drainage efforts being carried out by district administration teams and other relevant departments. According to officials, immediate action was taken after reports of water gathering in low-lying areas. Irfan Memon said that authorities had been continuously monitoring vulnerable locations during the monsoon season and had already identified areas that required close observation during periods of heavy rainfall. He noted that emergency teams were deployed as soon as rainfall intensified. One of the most affected locations was Sector E-11, where officials reported record rainfall. The large volume of rainwater exceeded the carrying capacity of a nearby stormwater channel, causing water to overflow. As a result, rainwater entered roads and the basements of a number of buildings in the area. The deputy commissioner stated that basements considered vulnerable to flooding had already been sealed as a precautionary measure. He added that field staff were present at the site and continued efforts to manage the situation and remove accumulated water. In Ghouri Town, officials said water overflowed after a drainage channel became blocked. The deputy commissioner conducted a special visit to Ghouri Town Phase-II to assess the situation on the ground. According to the administration, a slab placed over the drainage channel obstructed the flow of water, causing it to spill into surrounding areas. Heavy rain also affected traffic movement at several locations across the capital. Water accumulation on roads slowed the flow of vehicles and created temporary disruptions on some major routes. However, district authorities said traffic police personnel were working alongside administrative teams to maintain traffic movement and assist commuters. Drainage operations continued in I-8, Ghouri Town, E-11, and other affected areas. Municipal workers and machinery remained engaged in removing standing water from roads, streets, and residential zones. Officials said efforts were being carried out on a priority basis to restore normal movement and reduce inconvenience for residents. The district administration said all concerned departments had been placed on alert and that machinery, rescue resources, and field teams were present in vulnerable areas to respond to any developing situation. Authorities added that coordination among departments was ongoing to ensure a timely response wherever required. According to the deputy commissioner, no casualties or loss of life had been reported so far despite the heavy rainfall and water accumulation in several parts of the city. Officials continued to monitor conditions and remained in contact with field teams across Islamabad. The district administration appealed to citizens to remain cautious during periods of heavy rain and to immediately inform relevant authorities in case of any emergency. Residents were also advised to avoid unnecessary travel through flooded areas and cooperate with officials during ongoing drainage and traffic management operations. Authorities said monitoring and relief activities would continue until conditions returned to normal and all affected areas were cleared of accumulated rainwater.—DNA

OGDC, Baker
Hughes sign
contract to
boost oil, gas
production

ISLAMABAD Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDC), Pakistan's largest exploration and production company, has signed a contract with Baker Hughes, a leading United States energy technology company, to deploy Mature Assets Solutions (MAS) aimed at revitalising ageing oil and gas wells and increasing Pakistan's indigenous hydrocarbon production. The contract signing ceremony was held here at OGDC Headquarters. Special Secretary Petroleum Mirza Nasiruddin Mashood Ahmad and United States (US) Chargé d'Affaires Natalie A. Baker attended the ceremony as chief guests. MD/CEO OGDC Ahmed Hayat Lak, alongside senior leadership of OGDC and Baker Hughes, also attended the signing ceremony, according to the news release. Mature Assets Solutions is designed to help operators unlock greater value from established fields that are experiencing natural production decline. Under the contract, Baker Hughes will bring its technical expertise, advanced technologies and integrated capabilities to support OGDC in identifying production opportunities and addressing challenges across mature assets. The partnership is part of OGDC's comprehensive Production Optimisation Drive to maximise its existing production portfolio. Speaking on the occasion, MD/CEO OGDC Ahmed Hayat Lak said the company was pursuing meaningful engagements with world-class service providers to optimise its oil and gas production and strengthen Pakistan's energy security. He expressed confidence that the project would be implemented efficiently to revitalise OGDC's mature assets. Special Secretary Petroleum Mirza Nasiruddin Mashood Ahmad said the partnership would contribute to Pakistan's energy security by supporting efforts to maximise indigenous oil and gas production. US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie A. Baker described the agreement as a milestone in the US-Pakistan energy partnership. She said energy was a foundation of economic security and that collaboration between OGDC and Baker Hughes would advance the shared goal of strengthening Pakistan's energy security.—DNA

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Rainwater drainage operation
launched after downpour

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CDA Chairman and Islamabad Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf on Tuesday inspected several parts of the capital following heavy rain and reviewed arrangements for drainage of rainwater. Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon accompanied the CDA chairman during the visit, as officials assessed the situation in low-lying areas, underpasses, interchanges and major roads. The chairman was briefed by field teams and relevant officials on measures being taken to drain accumulated rainwater and keep traffic flowing. Special teams comprising officials from the CDA, Emergency and Disaster Management, Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and district administration were deployed to deal with drainage-related issues, officials said. Sohail Ashraf also visited Sector E-11 to assess the situation caused by the rain and directed the concerned authorities to ensure timely removal of accumulated water. De-watering machinery was deployed at low-lying points and underpasses, while teams were also working to remove debris, garbage

and other obstructions from drains and water channels. The chairman directed the relevant officials to remain in the field and continuously monitor sensitive and low-lying areas, saying negligence or delay

in dealing with drainage issues would not be tolerated. The administration also advised citizens to avoid unnecessary travel during heavy rain and stay away from low-lying areas, underpass-

es and places where water had accumulated. Citizens may contact the CDA and district administration on 16 and 1334 in case of emergencies, according to the administration.

Property tax
bills within 10
working days

ISLAMABAD: The Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) will issue property tax bills for the financial year 2026-27 within 10 working days following an upgrade of its billing system, the Directorate of Revenue said on Monday. The upgraded system covers billing for residential, commercial, industrial and institutional properties, according to the directorate. In view of the delay caused by the system upgrade, the MCI has revised the rebate period for taxpayers. The rebate will now be calculated from the date of issuance of the property tax bill instead of any earlier date. The additional five per cent rebate available on early payment of property tax will remain applicable from the date of issuance of the bill until its due date, the directorate said. The revised arrangement is intended to provide taxpayers sufficient time to receive their bills, verify the details and make payments within the stipulated period to avail themselves of the applicable rebates. The MCI has advised property owners to pay their taxes within the prescribed period after receiving the bills. For queries regarding residential properties, taxpayers may contact the Directorate of Revenue at 9252823 and 9253057, while queries concerning commercial properties may be directed to 9252498 and 9252461. The directorate said the billing system was being modernised to improve the efficiency and transparency of property tax collection and facilitate taxpayers.—APP

Ayaz pays tribute to cops'
martyred during operations

He said that the nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave Armed Forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has expressed grief over the martyrdom of six brave security personnel, including two officers and a Customs official, during successful operations against terrorists in the Chagai and Pishin districts of Balochistan. He paid rich tribute to the martyrs and also commended the professionalism and bravery of the security forces for eliminating 21 terrorists during the operations. Ayaz Sadiq said that the martyrs had set a remarkable example of courage, devotion to duty and patriotism by sacrificing their lives for peace and security of the country and the protection of the lives of the countrymen. He said that the nation would always remember the matchless sacrifices of its soldiers, who laid their lives for the defence of the motherland. NA Speaker prayed to Allah Almighty for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs and for patience and strength for the bereaved families. Ayaz Sadiq also paid tribute to the security forces for foiling the terrorist attack on the Customs House and thwarting the nefarious attempt by terrorists to disrupt the movement of passengers by establishing an illegal checkpoint on the Quetta-Taftan Highway. He lauded the professionalism and exceptional courage displayed by the security forces in successfully foiling the terrorists' nefarious designs. NA Speaker said that the security forces have demonstrated immense professionalism and extraordinary bravery during the operations against terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khawarij. He said that the nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave Armed Forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism, and that the national resolve would remain unwavering until the complete eradication of this menace.—APP

Pakistan,
Germany eco
coop discussed

ISLAMABAD: Member of the German Bundestag, Mr. Christoph Schmid called on Deputy Speaker National Assembly, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah at the Parliament House on Tuesday. The matters pertaining to bilateral relations between Pakistan and Germany, parliamentary cooperation, economic engagement and important regional issues were discussed in the meeting. While extending a warm welcome to Christoph Schmid, Deputy Speaker said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its longstanding friendly relations with Germany. He said that Pakistan and Germany enjoy cordial relations based on mutual respect, trust and cooperation in diverse fields, with considerable potential for further strengthening bilateral ties. The Deputy Speaker said that parliamentary delegations and exchanges between the two countries had remained active in the past; however, such engagement had declined following the COVID-19 pandemic. He underscored the need to revive and further strengthen interaction between the Parliaments of Pakistan and Germany, observing that parliamentary diplomacy could play an important role in further consolidating bilateral relations. Mustafa Shah recalled the visit of the then Speaker of the German Bundestag, Prof. Dr. Norbert Lammert, to Pakistan in 2014 and described it as an important milestone in parliamentary relations between the two countries. He noted that interactions and exchanges with representatives from different segments of Pakistani society during the visit had contributed significantly towards strengthening mutual understanding and people-to-people contacts. The Deputy Speaker appreciated Germany's humanitarian assistance to Pakistan during the devastating floods of 2010 and acknowledged Germany's support during natural disasters and other regional challenges. He said that Pakistan deeply values Germany's assistance as well as its positive and constructive approach towards regional developments.—DNA

The Hormuz Paradox: The War Behind the War

THE Strait of Hormuz presents a puzzle that cannot be resolved through official statements alone. Iran claims that no vessel can use the waterway without its authorization. The United States simultaneously says that its naval “wall of steel” is preventing ships from entering or leaving Iranian ports. If both claims were completely accurate, the consequences should have become catastrophic. Iranian oil would be trapped by the United States, while petroleum belonging to Washington’s Gulf allies would be blocked by Iran. The resulting pincer movement should have removed an enormous volume of oil and gas from international markets. After almost six months of war, however, the anticipated worldwide collapse has not occurred. Brent crude remains around \$87 rather than \$150 or \$200. Transportation and insurance costs have increased, but most countries have not declared that their fuel reserves are exhausted. There are no universal gasoline lines, comprehensive rationing programs or widespread refinery closures. The contradiction demands an explanation. Iran has demonstrated that its restrictions are not merely rhetorical. The United Arab Emirates says at least 15 vessels connected with ADNOC have been attacked since the war began. Several attacks occurred during August alone, producing deaths, injuries and operational disruption. Saudi Arabia faces pressure at both ends of its export system. Iranian power threatens shipping through Hormuz, while the Houthis have declared a maritime embargo against Saudi-linked vessels around the Red Sea. Qatari LNG operations and tankers have also suffered disruption. The United States, meanwhile, is preventing ships from entering and leaving Iranian ports. CENTCOM has intercepted or redirected Iran-linked vessels and says the blockade can be maintained indefinitely. The EIA estimates that petroleum flows declined from approximately 21.6 million barrels per day before the conflict to 4.9 million during the second quarter of 2026. Recent private estimates range between 1.74 million and 6.98 million barrels daily. The reduction is therefore real and historically significant. That produces another puzzle. If a Chinese tanker receives Iranian permission to transport Saudi or Emirati oil, the Gulf producer still exports its petroleum and receives revenue. The cargo also remains available to the world market. Iran would be controlling the destination—not blocking the oil itself. Strategic and commercial stocks provide part of the answer. The International Energy Agency reports that observed worldwide oil inventories have declined by approximately 410 million barrels since the war began—an average depletion of 2.7 million barrels per day. The global numbers are revealing. Supply has fallen by about 4.3 million barrels per day, while high prices and economic weakness have reduced demand by approximately 1.6 million. The remaining deficit is around 2.7 million barrels daily—almost exactly the reported rate at which inventories are declining. This explains why the shortage has not yet produced universal rationing. But inventories cannot explain the whole system. Stored petroleum cannot indefinitely replace the enormous quantity his-



torically transported through Hormuz. Attention must therefore shift outside the Persian Gulf. The IEA estimates that production from the Americas has increased by approximately 1.4 million barrels per day during 2026. The United States is producing around 13.8 million barrels daily, while Canada, Brazil, Guyana and Argentina are expanding output. Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela have collectively delivered the largest increase in petroleum exports from any producing region during 2026. Venezuela exported approximately 1.16 million barrels daily in July, including about 786,000 barrels per day to the United States—the highest American-bound volume since early 2019. These emergency arrangements may become permanent. Once countries spend billions adapting their infrastructure, they have little reason to restore their previous dependence completely. Iran may therefore be damaging not only American allies but its own strategic position. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait risk losing customers and their reputation for reliable delivery. However, the USA and American and Western Hemisphere producers are gaining customers and influence. This market transformation raises a question more consequential than the original shipping puzzle: was the redistribution of energy power merely an unintended consequence? In 2025, China demonstrated that control of strategic resources could become a geopolitical weapon. Beijing tightened restrictions on rare-earth elements, processing technology and permanent magnets essential to American automobiles, aircraft, missiles, radar systems, semiconductors, robotics and industrial machinery. The United States could identify new mineral deposits, but it could not quickly reproduce China’s refining and magnet-manufacturing ecosystem. Beijing had acquired leverage capable of interrupting American factories and defence production without military action. Washington needed comparable bargaining power. China imports approximately 70 percent of the petroleum it consumes, much of it through vulnerable maritime routes. Oil and its transportation system offered a possible counterweight. Before the Iran war, Trump demanded “total access” to Venezuelan oil. Venezuela possesses the world’s largest reported proven petroleum reserves. Iran possesses enormous oil and gas deposits while occupying the northern coastline of the waterway carrying approximately one-fifth of global petroleum consumption. The official military objectives—supporting Israel, destroying missiles, preventing nuclear proliferation and weakening Iranian regional influence—remain part of the explanation. But they do not necessarily constitute the entire explanation. The inquiry began with two allegedly airtight blockades and a strangely resilient oil market. It then uncovered inventory depletion, alternative suppliers, new trade routes and a historic transfer of energy influence away from the Persian Gulf. At the end of that trail stands a larger possibility: the Iran war may be one battlefield in an American attempt to create energy leverage against China’s mineral power. What appeared to be a war centred upon Iran and Israel may ultimately be part of a much greater contest over who controls the indispensable resources—and therefore the geopolitical bargaining power—of the twenty-first century.

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

Foreign-Born Companions of Pakistan’s Political Leaders

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Mohammad Ali Bogra, Pakistan’s third Prime Minister, provides a further instance with his second wife, Aliya Begum. Aliya was a Lebanese woman whose family had settled in Canada. She had worked with Bogra when he was associated with Pakistan’s diplomatic mission and subsequently became Social Secretary to the Prime Minister. They married after Bogra became Prime Minister. Contemporary historical accounts describe the marriage as controversial, partly because Bogra was already married and the union therefore became associated with the debate surrounding polygamy among Pakistan’s...

POLITICS is generally regarded as a realm in which national interests, public responsibilities and political traditions dominate almost every aspect of a leader’s life. Yet the personal lives of political leaders sometimes reveal a fascinating dimension of history that lies beyond parliaments, elections and governments. Pakistan’s political history provides several remarkable examples of prominent leaders whose lives were closely connected with women born outside the country or belonging to foreign nationalities. From the early years of the Sub-Continent to contemporary Pakistan, marriages between Pakistani political leaders and women of foreign origin have occasionally attracted considerable public attention. Some of these marriages crossed national boundaries; others crossed religious, cultural or social barriers. Together, they provide an interesting glimpse into the cosmopolitan character of Pakistan’s political elite. The story begins, in a broader sense, with the country’s founding father, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Jinnah married Rattanbai “Ruttie” Petit on 19 April 1918. Ruttie belonged to the prominent Parsi Petit family of Bombay and converted to Islam before the marriage. The official Quaid-i-Azam Academy records that Jinnah waited until she attained the age of eighteen before marrying her, despite strong opposition from her father, Sir Dinshaw Petit. Strictly speaking, however, Ruttie should not be described as a foreign woman. She was born in Bombay, then part of British India, rather than in a foreign country. Her marriage to Jinnah was therefore principally an extraordinary interfaith and cross-community marriage, rather than a Pakistani-foreign marriage. Nevertheless, it remains one of the most remarkable personal chapters in the life of the man who would later create Pakistan. A similar case is that of Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan’s first Prime Minister, and Begum Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan. Born Sheila Irene Pant in 1905 into a Kumaoni family of Almora in British India, of originally Brahmin background that had converted to Christianity, she embraced Islam, married Liaquat in 1933, and became a distinguished social worker, diplomat and First Lady. Though of Indian origin within the old imperial territories, her life illustrates the same crossing of communal and cultural lines. A much clearer example is that of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Begum Nusrat Bhutto. Nusrat Ispahani was born on 23 March 1929 in Esfahan, Iran, into the wealthy Hariri family, of Iranian-Kurdish background. She received her education at the University of Esfahan and met Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Karachi. They married on 8 September 1951. Begum Nusrat Bhutto subsequently became much more than the wife of a political leader. When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became President and later Prime Minister, she served as First Lady and accompanied him on several foreign visits. Following her husband’s execution in 1979,

she assumed the leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party and remained an important figure in Pakistani politics. She was the mother of Benazir Bhutto, Murtaza Bhutto, Shahnawaz Bhutto and Sanam Bhutto. The pattern of foreign marriages continued within the family. Mir Murtaza Bhutto first married Fauzia Fasihuddin, an Afghan and daughter of an Afghan foreign-affairs official, while in exile in Kabul; they had a daughter, Fatima Bhutto, and later divorced. He then married Ghinwa Itauvi, of Lebanese origin, who had fled the Lebanese Civil War and was teaching ballet in Syria, with whom he had a son, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Jr. Shahnawaz Bhutto married Rehana Fasihuddin, the Afghan sister of Fauzia. Fatima Bhutto’s marriage to Graham Byra, an American who converted to Islam represents the reverse case of a Bhutto woman marrying a foreign man. Another Iranian connection appears in the life of Iskander Mirza, Pakistan’s first President. His second wife, Nahid Mirza, born in 1919 of Kurdish and noble Iranian descent, had previously been married to an Iranian military attaché. They wed in 1954, and she served as First Lady from 1956 to 1958. Some accounts note a cousinly link with Nusrat Bhutto. Mohammad Ali Bogra, Pakistan’s third Prime Minister, provides a further instance with his second wife, Aliya Begum. Aliya was a Lebanese woman whose family had settled in Canada. She had worked with Bogra when he was associated with Pakistan’s diplomatic mission and subsequently became Social Secretary to the Prime Minister. They married after Bogra became Prime Minister. Contemporary historical accounts describe the marriage as controversial, partly because Bogra was already married and the union therefore became associated with the debate surrounding polygamy among Pakistan’s elite. The story of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy is even more unusual. Suhrawardy, who later became Pakistan’s Prime Minister, married Vera Tiscenko in 1940. Vera was a Russian actress of Polish descent associated with the Moscow Art Theatre. Historical accounts record that she had fled revolutionary upheaval in Europe and eventually came to India. She converted to Islam and adopted the name Begum Noor Jehan. Suhrawardy and Vera later divorced in 1951. Vera’s life itself was extraordinarily cosmopolitan. She had experienced the upheavals of revolutionary Russia and Europe before becoming connected with the political world of British India and, subsequently, Pakistan. Her marriage to Suhrawardy therefore represented not merely a personal union between two individuals but a remarkable encounter between European and South Asian histories. Feroz Khan Noon provides perhaps the most striking example of an Austrian-born woman becoming the wife of a Pakistani Prime Minister. His wife, Victoria Rekha (Viqar-un-Nisa Noon), was born in Austria. The Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs specifically identifies her as the Austrian-born

wife of Prime Minister Feroz Khan Noon and notes her significant contribution to the politics of Pakistan and to relations between Austria and Pakistan. She married Feroz Khan Noon in 1945 and later became widely known as Begum Viqar-un-Nisa Noon. Her significance extended beyond her marriage. She became involved in public and political affairs and is remembered as one of the foreign-born women who became deeply associated with Pakistan’s national story. The modern era produced another internationally famous political marriage; that of Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith. Imran Khan married Jemima in Paris in 1995. She was the daughter of British financier James Goldsmith. The couple had two sons, Sulaiman and Qasim, and their marriage lasted approximately nine years before ending in divorce. Her marriage to Imran Khan attracted enormous attention because Khan was already an internationally recognised sportsman and public figure before entering politics. There is, however, a contemporary name that requires particular caution; Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. In recent days, reports have circulated on social media and in some media outlets claiming that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari might marry a woman connected with Austria’s former royal family. Some reports even named Gloria von Habsburg as the alleged prospective bride. Bilawal himself denied the reports on social media, and on 29 August 2026 PPP leader and Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, who also serves as a spokesperson for Bilawal, publicly rejected the story as “incorrect and unfounded.” There has been no official announcement from Bilawal Bhutto Zardari or his family confirming an engagement or wedding. He remains unmarried. Consequently, Bilawal should not presently be included in a historical list of Pakistani politicians who married foreign women. These marriages demonstrate that Pakistan’s political history has never been completely isolated from the wider world. Long before globalisation became a defining feature of modern life, Pakistan’s political families were connected with Iran, Lebanon, Russia, Austria, Britain, Afghanistan and other parts of the world. Yet perhaps the most important lesson is that history must distinguish between fact and fascination. Political personalities naturally attract rumours about their private lives, particularly when those lives involve foreign families, royalty or prominent personalities. But responsible historical writing requires that documented marriages be separated from speculation. The story of Pakistani political leaders and foreign-born women is therefore not merely a collection of unusual marriages. It is a small but revealing chapter in the country’s history—a reminder that political Pakistan, despite its strong national identity, has always existed within a much wider human, cultural and international landscape.

Near-defeat and near-victory

Ghassan Charbel

China presents a uniquely complex factor. Added to this is that Trump, who was in a hurry to exit the war, has demonstrated an ability to wait despite the approaching midterm elections. Of course, Trump speaks of a decisive victory, recalling what befell the Iranian navy and air force, and reiterates that he foiled Iran’s game in the Strait of Hormuz. In Israel, opponents of Benjamin Netanyahu argue that he suffered a loss because he failed to topple the Iranian regime. Conversely, his supporters view the situation as a victory...

IS it true that, after six months of confrontation, the region remains trapped in a situation of near-defeat and near-victory, in which near-defeat is not enough to force one to swallow the bitter pill of submission and near-victory is insufficient to impose a surrender? Is it also true that Donald Trump cannot withdraw the US fleets without a victory and that Mojtaba Khamenei cannot agree to a deal that would shake the regime’s image and clip its regional wings? It is no surprise that the generals of the Revolutionary Guard are speaking of a certain degree of victory. On the first day of the war, US-Israeli strikes severed the head of the regime. They killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, along with officials, generals and scientists, yet the regime absorbed the blow, survived and retaliated. Iran chose to close the Strait of Hormuz and target neighboring countries. It attempted to choke the global economy to trigger an unprecedented crisis, hoping this would force a swift end to the war. However, the crisis did not reach the scale the Iranian regime had hoped for. Now, the world is witnessing a decline in the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz. The closure of the strait is not absolute and the region has seriously begun searching for alternatives. If it is possible to speak of a near-victory simply because the Iranian regime survived, Tehran has nonetheless failed to inflict upon American forces what was inflicted upon its own installations, factories and military infrastructure. It could not sink an American ship, inflict serious casualties on the US military or prevent Israeli warplanes from dominating Tehran’s airspace and roaming freely within it. Meanwhile, experts state that the US-Israeli strikes have set back Iran’s nuclear program and left it needing years to overcome the aftermath of the war. Tehran has failed to inflict upon American forces what was inflicted upon its own military infrastructure. There are those who speak of an American near-loss or near-defeat because the Iranian regime did not fall and it managed to divert attention from the nuclear facilities to the Strait of Hormuz. However, recent days have shown that the US possesses another card to con-

tinue the war: that of strangling the Iranian economy. While the process requires cooperation from many nations, it is equally true that it will be difficult for several countries to sacrifice their economic relations with the US in order to rescue their relations with Iran. China presents a uniquely complex factor. Added to this is that Trump, who was in a hurry to exit the war, has demonstrated an ability to wait despite the approaching midterm elections. Of course, Trump speaks of a decisive victory, recalling what befell the Iranian navy and air force, and reiterates that he foiled Iran’s game in the Strait of Hormuz. In Israel, opponents of Benjamin Netanyahu argue that he suffered a loss because he failed to topple the Iranian regime. Conversely, his supporters view the situation as a victory that must be completed, citing the blows dealt to Hamas and Hezbollah alongside advancing discussions regarding their disarmament. A thick fog hangs over the theater of conflict. Victories are not enough to impose surrender on the adversary, nor are defeats sufficient to compel realistic calculations. Trump will not accept a solution that does not allow for talk of victory and Mojtaba Khamenei cannot accept a solution that is actually a defeat. Thus, the confrontation appears open to a new chapter that differs from what prevailed during the first six months. Trump has chosen to launch a major economic war against Iran, betting that its results might achieve what its military strikes did not. It is clear that the purpose is to weaken the regime and the position of hard-liners within it, so that it comes to the negotiating table with a different mentality and fewer demands. When a country comes under a foreign military attack, nationalist sentiments awaken and help cover up internal divisions. Opponents feel embarrassed and refrain from viewing the attack as an opportunity for themselves. Economic warfare is different. In the military war, the US and Israel attacked nuclear facilities, radars, Revolutionary Guard headquarters and industrial complexes. Iran responded by bombing American targets in the region and other targets in neighboring countries, while also closing the Strait of Hormuz. Confronting a military

attack is a matter that falls upon the army. In this type of confrontation, losses can be covered up with slogans of steadfastness and martyrdom. Economic warfare is different. It drives the war into the homes of citizens — their jobs, the value of their salaries, bread, and prices of energy and goods. In a military war, the Revolutionary Guard can threaten to plunge the region into chaos and instability; it can launch missiles and drones, even if under unconvincing pretexts. In an economic war, the generals possess neither the power nor the leverage. They cannot halt the deterioration of the Iranian rial, nor can they rein in prices if energy costs soar or the supply of available goods declines. A military war poses questions to military personnel. An economic war poses questions to the father, the mother, the worker, the teacher and the student. The confrontation appears open to a new chapter that differs from what prevailed during the first six months. Perhaps for this reason, the supreme leader intervened to demand that there be no talk of negatives, warning against weakening national sentiment and social cohesion. He knows the heavy toll of economic deterioration; the missile arsenal cannot stop it, nor can fanning the embers of the revolution. He also knows that heading toward a widespread economic collapse could open the door for Iranians to take to the streets, despite the bloody crackdowns that have aborted previous protests. Despite the supreme leader’s words, President Masoud Pezeshkian found himself forced to reveal some truths, including that the American blockade has led to a 35 percent drop in exports and imports. Scenes of queues at gas stations provide evidence of what awaits Iran in the economic war. The question remains: Can Iran escape economic strangulation by pivoting to military escalation, either directly or by proxy? The most dangerous aspect of the crisis is that it remains open-ended and poised to accumulate further immense damage for both sides, the countries of the region and the world. One must wait to see whether the economic war will alter the equation of near-defeat and near-victory.

Briefs

Terrorist attacks increase...

FROM PAGE 01
However, the institute added that despite the increase in attack frequency, their human impact declined from the previous month. Data showed that the 199 attacks recorded during August resulted in 158 deaths and 181 injuries, compared with 268 deaths and 216 injuries in 144 attacks during July. Deaths resulting from terrorist attacks therefore declined by 41pc, while injuries declined by 16pc. Security forces' continuing counter-terrorism operations during August resulted in 211 deaths, including 203 terrorists. The operations also resulted in 21 terrorists being injured and 26 suspected terrorists arrested. Security forces killed 115 terrorists in Balochistan, 56 in mainland Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 32 in the merged districts during the month. The institute also recorded three suicide attacks during August, including two vehicle-borne suicide attacks. PICSS noted that this represented a substantial decline from July, when eight suicide attacks were recorded, including five vehicle-borne suicide attacks – "the highest number of suicide attacks recorded in a single month during the past decade". Kidnapping incidents declined by 36pc, falling from 66 in July to 42 in August.

Shehbaz says water 'lifeblood'...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistanis and other nations, lasting peace will remain beyond our reach." In his speech, the prime minister also mentioned Pakistan's mediation efforts in the US-Iran war and laid out the country's plan as it assumed the SCO CHS chair. PM Shehbaz was welcomed by the Kyrgyz president upon his arrival at the summit's venue on Tuesday, and later posed with other world leaders for a group photo. Leaders from China, Iran, Türkiye, Russia, and India were also in Kyrgyzstan for the two-day summit. The regional bloc, which also includes Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus, is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

IHC tells Adiala jail...

FROM PAGE 01
He had also complained of limited access to lawyers, family members and books, and sought regular meetings and weekly telephone calls between Imran Khan and his sons. Last week, after an interview with Imran's sons was broadcast during a Test match between Pakistan and England, the Ministry of Information issued a detailed statement, which was released on social media and sent to the foreign press. In the statement, the information ministry rejected allegations that Imran was being subjected to "punitive solitary confinement, cruelty or deprivation", stating that visits, phone calls, reading materials and home-cooked meals, among other amenities, were available to him. It said Imran was "not a person held under executive detention" and that he had been incarcerated based on multiple convictions after judicial proceedings, noting that the PTI founder "remains entitled to pursue all remedies available to him under Pakistani law".

Taliban open to...

FROM PAGE 01
community in seeking recognition five years after retaking control of Afghanistan. Despite Taliban assurances that their return to power would include a liberalization of policies, they have imposed sweeping restrictions on women and girls, barring 2.5 million of them from secondary schools and universities, as well as limiting their freedom of movement. Since retaking power in 2021, the Taliban government has only been formally recognized by Russia. Other countries such as China, Pakistan, India and Iran have offered leaders in Afghanistan bilateral trade and investment agreements in exchange for security guarantees.

Japan provides grant assistance to the Dopasi Foundation

The Dopasi Foundation is a dedicated humanitarian organization in Pakistan with more than 200 staff members. Over the years, the foundation has worked to address the needs of underprivileged communities and has steadily expanded its healthcare initiatives across the country



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan, under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Program, has decided to provide grant assistance of 21 million Yen (approximately USD 142,500) to the Dopasi Foundation for a project to procure equipment and a vehicle for tuberculosis screening in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Chakwal. The grant contract was signed between H.E. Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan and the representative of the Dopasi Foundation at the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad on September 1st, 2026. The project, titled "The Project for

the Procurement of Equipment and Vehicle for Tuberculosis Screening in Two Districts of Punjab Province and Islamabad City" aims to improve access to early diagnosis and basic health services for vulnerable communities. The Dopasi Foundation is a dedicated humanitarian organization in Pakistan with more than 200 staff members. Over the years, the foundation has worked to address the needs of underprivileged communities and has steadily expanded its healthcare initiatives across the country. Through this grant, the Dopasi Foundation will deploy a fully equipped Mobile Health Unit in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and District Chakwal. This unit will provide digital chest radiography, TB screening, family planning counseling, and basic health checks to mar-

ginalized populations, including daily wage earners, women and families who face barriers to accessing healthcare. Toyota Tsusho Corporation, in collaboration with Fujifilm, has also contributed to the project by supporting the development of a specially equipped Land Cruiser with a compact X-ray system and AI technology for TB screening, as well as a local maintenance system for its sustainable operation. Toyota Tsusho and Fujifilm will also support technical training to ensure the effective and sustainable use of the equipment. The project is expected to provide high-quality medical screening to 20,000 individuals annually, reducing the impact of communicable diseases and barriers to healthcare access on local households. It will also en-

hance the long-term socio-economic resilience of vulnerable families by helping prevent catastrophic health expenditures and saving lives through early diagnosis. At the signing ceremony, Ambassador AKAMATSU stated that human security begins with protecting every individual life, a fundamental principle of Japan's development cooperation. He emphasized that ensuring access to early diagnosis and basic health services is directly linked to saving lives and lifting families out of vulnerability. As a steadfast friend of Pakistan, the Government of Japan will continue to support capable local NGOs through grant assistance to advance human security in Pakistan. It is hoped that this project will further strengthen the long-standing friendship between Japan and Pakistan.

Narrow win for Zimbabwe after Brad Evans final over heroics

WINDHOEK: Zimbabwe took four wickets in the final over to secure a narrow five-run victory over hosts Namibia on Monday in the third match of the Twenty20 tri-series also involving South Africa. Brad Evans finished with 3-41 as Namibia fell short of the target, chasing Zimbabwe's 195-6 but being bowled out for 190 with the last ball of a high-scoring contest at the Namibia Cricket Ground. Zimbabwe were put in to bat and started brightly with openers Ben Curran (38) and Brian Bennett (32) both getting among the runs, but they lost five wickets for 15 runs in a four-over spell in the middle of their innings. An unbeaten 94-run partnership in 48 balls between Ryan Burl (57 not out) and Evans (37 not out) then saw Zimbabwe climb to an imposing 195-6 off their 20 overs. They looked to be well in command as Namibia slumped to 68-5 in the 11th over, but the hosts fought back with Zane Green and Alexander Busing-Volschenk smashing runs in 51 balls. Namibia needed 16 runs in the last over, but first Green was run out by a direct throw from deep for 54 and two balls later Busing-Volschenk (56) was caught behind off Evans with a flying catch from wicket-keeper Tadiwanashe Marumani, ending home hopes. Zimbabwe are back in action on Tuesday against South Africa. All three countries have one win under their belts after two games each and play each other twice with the top two finishers contesting a final at the weekend.

SCOREBOARD ZIMBABWE: B. Curran c Brassell b Heinego 38, B. Bennett c Frylinck b Smit 32, D. Myers b Scholtz 2, S. Raza c Frylinck b Erasmus 0, R. Burl not out 57, W. Madhevere c Smit b Erasmus 2, T. Marumani c Frylinck b Erasmus 18, B. Evans not out 37, EXTRAS (LB-4, W-5) 9, TOTAL (for six wickets, 20 overs) 195
NAMIBIA: L. Steenkamp c Madhevere b M'rabani 6, J. Frylinck c Curran b Masakadza 22, G. Erasmus c Bennett b Evans 12, J. N. Loftie-Eaton lbw b Bennett 20, JJ Smit c Burl b Bennett 6, R. Truempelmann c Curran b Raza 8, Z. Green run out 54, A. Busing-Volschenk c Marumani b Evans 56, B. Scholtz run out 0, J. Brassell b Evans 0, M. Heinego not out 0, EXTRAS (NB-2, W-4) 6, TOTAL (all out, 20 overs) 190, FALL OF WICKETS: 1-14 (Steenkamp), 2-28 (Erasmus), 3-60 (Loftie-Eaton), 4-66 (Smit), 5-68 (Frylinck), 6-76 (Truempelmann), 7-186 (Green), 8-190 (Busing-Volschenk), 9-190 (Scholtz). RESULT: Zimbabwe won by five runs. – APP

Misbah-ul-Haq 'decides' to quit PCB selection committee

Former captain to leave cricket board after completing his notice period, say sources

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Misbah-ul-Haq has decided to resign from the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) selection committee, sources close to the former cricketer said on Tuesday. Sources said that Misbah has informed the PCB about his decision and will serve a notice period before formally stepping down from his role. The development comes a day after the cricket board announced that seven players alongside two coaches, Sarfaraz Ahmed and Umar Gul, have been released from the Pakistan Test squad ahead of the Third Test against England in Birmingham. Those released included Mohammad Rizwan, Imam-ul-Haq, Salman Ali Agha, Ali Usman, Aamir Jamal, Muhammad Awais Zafar and Khurram Shahzad, according to a press release issued by the cricket board. The PCB has named seven replacements, comprising five players yet to make their Test debuts and two capped players, ahead of the third Test against England in Birmingham. – APP

Novak Djokovic falls in US Open first round, Medvedev and Pegula advance

NEW YORK: Novak Djokovic made his earliest exit at a Grand Slam in more than two decades as the Serb succumbed to injury and illness in a shock first-round defeat by unseeded Argentine Mariano Navone at the US Open on Sunday. The 39-year-old had arrived at Flushing Meadows with the aim of winning a fifth title and a record 25th major crown overall but crashed out 7-6(7/5), 5-7 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 to send shockwaves through the final Grand Slam of the year. Former champion Daniil Medvedev and highest-ranked American Jessica Pegula advanced with little fuss earlier in the day, as players began their campaigns to grab a slice of the record prize purse of \$108 million up for grabs. The last time Djokovic lost in the first round of a Grand Slam was at the Australian Open in 2006 and the Serb did not go down without a fight despite battling shoulder and back problems and vomiting midway through the match. "I pretty much despised every moment I spent on the court for that," Djokovic told reporters. "It's something that I've been carrying, unfortunately, pretty much every match this year. Vomiting, throwing up ... Then my whole body starts to collapse, basically cramping and pain." Although he reached the final of the Australian Open this year and the semi-finals at Wimbledon, Djokovic said he's not equipped right now to go deep in tournaments – and he's not sure what the fix is. "I'm just trying to address really what's going on and how far I can go this way," he said. With world number one Jannik Sinner absent and defending champion Carlos Alcaraz returning after a lengthy spell out injured, Djokovic looked primed for a run at a record 25th Grand Slam. But Navone had not read the script and completed the biggest win of his career against his idol at Arthur Ashe Stadium. "I was 0-3 down, feeling a bit nervous



out of respect for the star I was up against," the world number 49 told ESPN. "It's tough to play against Novak, he's an idol. He never looked particularly comfortable with his shots or physically, that's the truth. "In the fifth set he was a bit shaken. I had to focus on my game. You don't get many chances to play an idol on a stage like this ... it's incredible what I'm feeling; it's all so exciting. It's mad." Earlier on Sunday, Russian Medvedev, who had crashed out in a chaotic first-round defeat a year ago, but was all business at the Arthur Ashe Stadium, downing French qualifier Hugo Gaston 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 to quieten doubts after a frustrating run-up to the tournament. "The last couple of weeks were not easy," said Medvedev, who exited the Cincinnati and Montreal tournaments early. "I'm happy that today I managed to produce high-level tennis. I felt like I did everything I wanted to do well," he said. – APP

Pak scholar highlights responsible AI, cross-border cultural dialogue

The West Lake Public Relations Roundtable, first launched in 2010, has grown into one of China's most influential public relations events, Gwadar Pro reported

HANGZHOU: A Pakistani PhD candidate from Zhejiang Gongshang University addressed the 17th West Lake Public Relations Roundtable in Hangzhou, joining young scholars and graduate students from Malaysia, Nigeria, and other countries in a dynamic dialogue on the role of youth in global governance and the transformative power of artificial intelligence in public relations. The West Lake Public Relations Roundtable, first launched in 2010, has grown into one of China's most influential public relations events, Gwadar Pro reported. This year's forum continued the tradition of fostering international dialogue, with a special focus on how emerging technologies can enhance rather than hinder meaningful cross-cultural understanding. Under the theme "Global Governance • Youth Responsibility: The Mission and Practice of Public Relations in the AI Era," the annual forum brought together government officials, diplomats, academics, business leaders, and youth representatives from around the world to explore new pathways for cross-cultural communication and public relations in the age of artificial intelligence. Mashood Nishat's participation reflects the growing presence of Pakistani students in China's academic and diplomatic spaces. As bilateral ties between Pakistan and China continue to deepen across education, technology and people-to-people exchanges, voices like his



represent a new generation of bridge-builders committed to mutual understanding and shared progress. Speaking from the perspective of Pakistani social reality,

Mashood Nishat highlighted that Pakistan is a young and highly diverse country with different languages, cultures, traditions and social backgrounds. He explained that "this diversity creates both opportunities and challenges for communication, particularly when different communities and countries try to understand each other." Drawing on his research and living experience, Mashood Nishat discusses how AI can be a powerful tool for cross-cultural communication. Beyond translation, AI can help young people access information from different cultures, understand diverse perspectives, communicate across language barriers, and share their own cultural stories with a global audience, he noted. However, he also struck a note of caution: "AI should be used responsibly, because cultural misunderstandings, misinformation and algorithmic bias can also create new barriers between communities." Another central theme of Mashood's remarks was the role of Chinese and international youth in global governance. He argued that young people should not be seen merely as future players, but as already active stakeholders in addressing global challenges. For him personally, participating in this dialogue as a Pakistani international student and researcher in China was an opportunity to share a Pakistani perspective while also learning from international youth. – APP

Afghan envoy calls for better connectivity

FROM PAGE 01
people connect the economies and societies of both nations, while decades of wars and security developments have created a situation in which their security calculations are also deeply linked. The Ambassador's speech reflected a broader vision of regional cooperation, where connectivity and mutual reliance are seen as essential for stability and prosperity. He pointed out that both countries have suffered from the consequences of conflict, yet their shared destiny lies in collaboration, not division. Ambassador Shakeeb's remarks at NDU resonated with the audience, particularly in the context of ongoing discussions about regional connectivity and cooperation. His emphasis on shared destinies and mutual reliance highlighted the importance of building bridges rather than walls, and of fostering trust to overcome decades of mistrust. The address is expected to spark further dialogue between policymakers, academics, and security experts in both countries, reinforcing the idea that Afghanistan and Pakistan's futures are intertwined – and that cooperation is the only viable path forward.

Security forces kill 21 terrorists

FROM PAGE 01
the peaceful movement of commuters along the N-40 Quetta-Taftan Highway by establishing an illegal checkpoint for extortion on August 31. Security forces responded immediately and, after an intense exchange of fire, killed 11 terrorists on the spot. A large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives was also recovered from the slain militants. During the night of August 31 to September 1, terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij launched a coordinated attack in an attempt to breach the Customs House in Ziarat Cross, Pishin District. Security forces responded effectively and killed 10 terrorists after an intense exchange of fire. Fleeing terrorists were also engaged by security forces, inflicting further casualties. The ISPR described the attack on the Customs House as a manifestation of the terror-crime nexus, orchestrated to prevent customs officials from performing their lawful duties and thereby facilitate the continuation of criminal activities in the area.

Punjab PA seeks social media ban

FROM PAGE 01
and other serious risks. It referred to measures introduced in Australia, France, China and several states of the United States to regulate social media use by underage children, and urged the government to introduce similar effective legal safeguards in Pakistan. The proposal comes at a time when governments around the world are considering stricter regulation of children's use of social media amid mounting evidence linking excessive online activity with mental health issues, cyber abuse and exposure to harmful content. Several countries, including Australia, besides the EU have recently moved towards imposing age-based restrictions on access to social media platforms, while others are examining stronger age-verification requirements and enhanced child online safety laws. If adopted by the Punjab Assembly, the resolution will serve as a recommendation to the federal government, which has legislative authority over telecommunications, internet regulation and digital platforms.

UN Secy General lauds Pakistan peace efforts

FROM PAGE 01
the Secretary-General to visit Pakistan, which he accepted. The Foreign Office of Pakistan will coordinate with the UN Secretariat to finalize the dates for the visit.

Briefs

Rupee gains
01 paisa
against
Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.46, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 277.47.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 277.60 and Rs 278.55, respectively. The price of the Euro against the rupee decreased by Rs 0.25 and closed at Rs 321.60 against the previous day's closing of Rs 321.85, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.73, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.24 and closed at Rs 375.56 compared to the previous day's Rs 375.80. The exchange rate of the Emirate Dirham came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 75.54, while the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant at Rs 73.90. —APP

Pak initiates
US dollar
benchmark
Eurobond
process

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Finance Minister Khuram Schehzad on Tuesday announced that Pakistan had launched the process for a US dollar benchmark dual-tranche Eurobond offering with five-year and 10-year tenors, subject to market conditions. In a statement posted on his official X account, the advisor said the transaction marked another important step in Pakistan's renewed access to international capital markets, following successive sovereign credit-rating upgrades, stronger macroeconomic fundamentals and improved investor confidence. He said the proposed offering, covering long five-year and 10-year maturities, reflected Pakistan's growing engagement with global investors and its efforts to rebuild a sustainable presence in international capital markets. "Stability? Confidence? Global Market Access," Schehzad said, highlighting the sequence of developments underpinning the country's return to global financial markets. —APP

Libya enters
new political
phase

The agreement, signed in Tripoli under the auspices of the UN Support Mission in Libya, is intended to resolve disputes over electoral legislation, reform the national elections body and create the conditions for ending more than a decade of competing governments and divided institutions. The ceremony was attended by Hanna Tetteh, the UN secretary-general's special representative for Libya and head of UNSMIL. It followed months of negotiations involving what became known as the "4+4" format, bringing together two representatives from each of Libya's four main power centers: the Government of National Unity, the High Council of State, the House of Representatives and the Libyan National Army. —APP

FM briefed on key insights
from Hong Kong visit

During the meeting, Bilal Bin Saqib briefed the Finance Minister on his constructive engagement with Hong Kong policymakers and relevant institutions, including the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and Securities and Futures Commission, with discussions on knowledge-sharing, experience and successful use cases relevant to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) Bilal Bin Saqib called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb here on Tuesday and briefed him on his recent visit to Hong Kong, sharing key insights from his engagements there. During the meeting, Bilal Bin Saqib briefed the Finance Minister on his constructive engagement with Hong Kong policymakers and relevant institutions, including the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and Securities and Futures Commission, with discussions on knowledge-sharing, experience and successful use cases relevant to Pakistan. The discussion focused on emerging opportunities in the virtual assets and digital finance ecosystem, including the potential application of blockchain and tokenization technologies in finan-



cial markets. The meeting also covered international practices relating to digital assets, stablecoins, compliance frameworks and digital financial infrastructure. Bilal briefed the Finance Minister on the key insights and use cases discussed during the engagement with Hong Kong pol-

icymakers, highlighting their relevance and potential applicability to Pakistan's emerging virtual assets ecosystem. He also shared perspectives on digital financial products, tokenization and potential areas for institutional cooperation. The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of

developing a responsible, transparent and well-structured digital assets ecosystem that supports innovation while maintaining appropriate safeguards. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb appreciated the efforts to engage with international policymakers and institutions and stressed the importance of building on these engagements to identify practical use cases and opportunities that can contribute to the development of Pakistan's digital financial ecosystem. The Finance Minister welcomed the briefing and emphasized the importance of developing a responsible, transparent and well-structured digital assets ecosystem that supports innovation while maintaining appropriate safeguards. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb appreciated the efforts to engage with international policymakers and institutions and stressed the importance of building on these engagements to identify practical use cases and opportunities that can contribute to the development of Pakistan's digital financial ecosystem

Call for private sector's
leading role in realizing
CPEC phase-II potential

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal stressed that the private sector should play a leading role in realizing the economic potential of CPEC Phase-II, stressing that Pakistan's focus must remain on economic growth, exports and investment rather than political confrontation. Chairing a detailed review meeting on implementation of the CPEC Action Plan 2025–2029, finalized during Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China in August 2025, the minister reviewed progress made during the first year and discussed measures to accelerate work on agreed priorities, a news release said on Tuesday. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan-China relations had strengthened during difficult periods, recalling China's critical investment when Pakistan was facing severe energy shortages. He said CPEC Phase-I brought around \$25 billion in Chinese investment and added nearly 8,000 megawatts to Pakistan's power generation capacity, helping overcome the energy crisis and strengthen energy security. The minister highlighted the development of Thar coal and the fibre-optic network as key achievements of the first phase, saying CPEC Phase-II would build on this foundation through business-to-business cooperation, industrial development, agricultural modernization, minerals, human capital development and technology. He said the priorities of CPEC Phase-II were closely aligned with the five pillars of URAAN Pakistan through five corridors: Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green Economy and Openness. The Growth Corridor would enhance Pakistan's industrial and agricultural capacity to boost exports, while the Livelihood Corridor would promote social development and support less-developed regions, he added. He said the Innovation Corridor, aligned with E-Pakistan, would strengthen IT capabilities and equip millions of young people with modern technological skills. "Our young population is Pakistan's greatest economic asset," he said. The Green Economy Corridor, he added, would focus on climate resilience, water and food security, and agricultural modernization. The minister highlighted the government's initiative to send 1,000 agricultural experts to China for training in modern agricultural technologies, saying the programme would help create a critical mass of trained human resources and lay the foundation for a "Green Revolution 2.0". He said the initiative would be supported by improved seeds, farm mechanization, efficient water use and climate-resilient crops. Ahsan Iqbal stressed that the private sector must play a leading role in realizing the economic potential of CPEC Phase-II, with the government providing an enabling environment for investment and business partnerships. He termed expansion of exports a "national emergency", saying the target of \$100 billion by 2035 was essential for Pakistan's economic survival. —DNA

Iraq wraps up
questioning 5,700
Daesh suspects

BUGHDAD: Iraq's judiciary on Tuesday said it completed the interrogation of more than 5,700 Daesh group suspects whom the United States transferred from neighboring Syria earlier this year. The cases will now proceed to trial, while more than 450 Syrians will be released and handed over to their country. Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council said it concluded "the interrogation phase" of the 5,704 Daesh suspects who were brought from northeast Syria, and referred them to trial. The investigations led to identifying several Daesh commanders, including top-ranking figures, who were involved in "crimes at the international level", according to the council. Six suspects were found to be "directly" involved in forcing people from the Yazidi minority, which suffered some of the worst atrocities at the group's hands, into "slavery". In February, the United States completed the transfer of the detainees who had been held in Syria for years in camps overseen by Kurdish-led forces. Washington stepped in following Damascus's recapture of territory surrounding the camps. Upon their arrival in Iraq, the judiciary began interrogating the detainees ahead of taking legal action against the suspects from 67 countries. The judicial council said they include around 3,497 Syrians and 474 Iraqis. The rest are foreign nationals, including from European and other Arab countries. The judicial council said 457 Syrians will be released and handed over to their country after investigations found no evidence warranting legal action against them. In April, Iraq handed over two detained foreigners, from Finland and the United States, to their countries after they were cleared of suspicion of belonging to the jihadist group. Another seven Iraqis were also released. Many prisons in Iraq are packed with Daesh suspects, and courts have handed down hundreds of death sentences and life terms to those convicted of terrorism offenses, including foreign fighters. —APP

Germany must pair defence
responsibility with partnerships

Highlighting recruitment, infrastructure and more efficient procurement as Germany's principal defence priorities, Mr. Schmid underscored the need to raise societal awareness and resilience against emerging threats. From the German and European perspective, he described Russia as the foremost security challenge.

ISLAMABAD: "Germany has to take more responsibility and lead the way for its own and European security", Mr. Christoph Schmid, Member of the German Bundestag, quoted his Defence Minister while speaking at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). He stressed that stronger defence capabilities must be complemented by dialogue, trusted partnerships and sustained engagement beyond Europe. Mr. Schmid was delivering a public talk titled "Defence and Security Policy in a Changing World Order: Perspectives from Germany and the EU," at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised by its Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP). He traced Germany's evolving strategic posture to the Ukraine conflict and the resulting reassessment of its defence preparedness and dependence on external security and energy arrangements. Highlighting recruitment, infrastructure and more efficient procurement as Germany's principal defence priorities, Mr. Schmid underscored the need to raise societal awareness and resilience against emerging threats. From the German and European perspective, he described Russia as the foremost security challenge. At the same time, he maintained that greater military preparedness must not come at the expense of diplomacy. "Agreeing to disagree is also a way of building trust," he observed, emphasizing the importance of engaging partners across regions. Mr. Schmid commended Pakistan's recent mediation efforts between the United States and Iran, describing the initiative as a major diplomatic achievement. He added that Germany would be ready to engage with Pakistan to learn from its mediation role. In his welcome remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Moin ul Haque observed that major-power competition, the Ukraine conflict, instability in the Middle East, exacerbated by U.S.-Israel attack on Iran, military-technological transformation and non-traditional threats were collectively reshaping the global security environment. called for a more representative and responsive system of global governance in which the legitimate security concerns of developing countries were duly reflected. He added that Pakistan and Germany possessed considerable potential to expand cooperation in security dialogue, trade, technology, development, climate, energy, education and regional connectivity. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), underscored the interconnected nature of contemporary security challenges, noting that conflicts increasingly generate far-reaching economic and security consequences. He stressed the importance of sustained transatlantic cooperation and peaceful coexistence with a rising China. Earlier, CSP Director Dr. Neelum Nigar noted that evolving German and European defence policies carried implications extending well beyond Europe. She highlighted the relevance of these developments for Pakistan's engagement with Germany and the European Union across the security, economic, development, climate and connectivity domains. The talk was followed by an interactive Q&A session, attended by members of the diplomatic community, government officials, academics, researchers, students, media representatives and civil society stakeholders.

Ousted UK
PM quits
parliament to
focus on int'l
affairs

LONDON: Keir Starmer will stand down as a member of parliament, he said on Tuesday, some six weeks after he resigned as Britain's prime minister having lost the support of his Labour Party. Starmer guided Labour into power in 2024 with one of the biggest parliamentary majorities in Britain's modern history, completing a remarkable turnaround having become Labour leader four years earlier after its worst election showing since 1935. But the former lawyer, whose tenure as prime minister was marked by several damaging U-turns, failed to connect with voters and steadily lost the support of the public and his party. Starmer had previously said he would remain as a lawmaker until the next general election. But he told the Camden New Journal, a local newspaper in his North London constituency, that he had changed his mind and intended to "concentrate on international affairs." He confirmed his resignation in a statement on X. Despite the sagging popularity at home that cost him his job, foreign affairs were often seen as a strength during Starmer's premiership. He worked closely with French President Emmanuel Macron to establish the so-called Coalition of the Willing in support of Ukraine, reset ties with China, recognized a Palestinian state and had mixed success in efforts to build relations with US President Donald Trump. The newspaper report did not give a timeframe for when an election would be held for Starmer's seat in the constituency of Holborn and St. Pancras. —APP

Thailand
shortens visa-
free stays
for dozens of
nations

BANGKOK: Thailand will halve the length of visa-free stays for tourists from more than 60 countries and territories to 30 days, effective September 15, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. Tourism is vital to the Southeast Asian nation's economy, but officials say the move is part of an effort to curb crime involving foreign nationals. A string of recent arrests has included foreigners accused of drug offenses, sex trafficking and operating businesses such as hotels and schools without proper permits. Under Thailand's current tourism scheme, travelers from more than 90 countries – including Europe's 29-nation Schengen area, China, India, the United States and several South American countries – are eligible to visit for up to 60 days without a visa. The reduction to 30 days visa-free applies to over 60 countries and territories, including China, the United States and 27 EU countries, the Thai foreign ministry's consular affairs department said on Tuesday. The visa-free status for around 20 other countries was unclear, with a foreign ministry official declining to comment on Tuesday. Visitors from Peru, Brazil and South Korea will be granted 90-day visa-free stays, up from 60 previously. Tourists will be able to extend their stays once, at the discretion of an immigration officer, a government spokeswoman told AFP in May when the cabinet approved the measure. Foreign Minister Sihanak Phuangketkiew said that month that the plan to trim visa-free visits. —APP



Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Alisher Tukhtaev and Chief Editor Daily Islamabad POST/DNA News Agency Ansar Mahmood Bhatti exchanged documents.



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Briefs

Pakistan
now has 40m
crypto-linked
accounts

ISLAMABAD: Around 40 million Pakistanis now hold cryptocurrency-linked accounts, Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) Chairman Bilal Bin Saqib told the Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat. Briefing the committee, chaired by Senator Rana Mahmoodul Hassan, Saqib said the State Bank of Pakistan's eight-year restriction on digital assets had frozen the country's ability to adapt to the technology. Pakistan, he said, was not trying to promote cryptocurrency but to regulate an activity that had already gained significant traction among young people, noting that the UAE, Hong Kong and Thailand were pursuing similar initiatives. The committee took up a wide agenda at the meeting, including taxation on digital devices, 5G readiness, virtual-asset regulation, illegal migration, Islamabad Club membership, declaration of foreign citizenship by civil servants, and proposed rules on the use of social media by government employees. The Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat was informed that the PVARA had established its virtual-asset regulatory regime within five months, describing it as one of the fastest such frameworks in the world. Saqib estimated the size of Pakistan's virtual-asset market at \$250 billion, with \$10 billion to \$20 billion of Pakistani money invested in the sector, and said the majority of users were below the age of 40. — APP

India endures
hottest
August
since 1901

NEW DELHI: India endured its hottest August since records began in 1901, with the country's mean temperature reaching 28.01°C, the India Meteorological Department said. The mean temperature was 0.67°C above the long-term average for August, the department said, releasing the results at the end of the month. It broke the previous record for August set in 2023, when the mean temperature was 28.0°C, it added. India's monsoon rainfall was 16 percent below normal in August, the meteorological department said, which increased heat, due in part to El Nino conditions. El Nino is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that brings worldwide changes in winds, air pressure and rainfall patterns. In India and Southeast Asia, it typically causes drier conditions. Scientists fear it will exacerbate the heat of a planet already warming from burning fossil fuels, while amping up weather extremes. India, the world's most populous country, is particularly vulnerable to extreme heat. — APP

Sardar Yasir for simplified
visa regimes to boost tourism

Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtayev, in his keynote speech, underscored the historical depth and future promise of Uzbekistan as a hub where tradition meets modernity



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Tourism and connectivity emerged as the central themes during a vibrant road show highlighting Uzbekistan's immense potential as a destination for cultural exchange, investment, and regional integration. The event, held in Islamabad brought together key stakeholders from both countries to explore new routes, better packages, and stronger business-to-business (B2B) and people-to-people (P2P) links. Sardar Yasir, Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism, emphasized the need to simplify visa regimes to make travel easier and more accessible. He noted that the Govern-

ment of Pakistan is keen to take concrete steps to remove barriers and encourage greater tourism flows, thereby strengthening cultural and economic bonds. Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtayev, in his keynote speech, underscored the historical depth and future promise of Uzbekistan as a hub where tradition meets modernity. He emphasized that new technologies, fresh opportunities, and innovative avenues are reshaping Uzbekistan's tourism landscape, making it a magnet for travelers and investors alike. "Tourism can become the main pillar of our strategic partnership," he remarked, noting the huge number of Pakistani delegations that have already visited Uzbekistan and the



potential to further increase this figure. Managing Director of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Aftab ur Rehman Rana, also addressed the gathering. He assured that PTDC would extend full support to promote tourism ties between the two countries, highlighting the importance of structured packages and facilitation measures to attract more visitors. Rana stressed that Pakistan sees Uzbekistan not only as a tourism partner but also as a gateway to Central Asia's broader connectivity ambitions. Adil Mirza of Centrum Air Uzbekistan, also spoke. He highlighted the role of aviation in enhancing connectivity and underscored the importance of direct routes between Pa-

kistan and Uzbekistan to facilitate tourism and trade. Karimov stressed that better travel packages and simplified processes would encourage more visitors to explore Uzbekistan's cultural and economic offerings. The road show highlighted the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway as a transformative project that could redefine regional connectivity. By linking Central Asia to Pakistan's seaports, the railway promises to open new corridors for trade, tourism, and investment, turning geographical proximity into tangible prosperity. The event also celebrated the contributions of the private sector. Travel agents and tour operators were recognized with awards for their role in promoting tourism between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Schools
closed in
Rawalpindi
as heavy
rain lashes
twin cities

RAWALPINDI: Heavy rain lashed Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Tuesday morning, inundating low-lying areas, raising the water level in Leh Nullah and prompting the district administration in the garrison city to announce a holiday for educational institutions. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said that the water level in Leh Nullah had risen to 29 feet at Kattarian and 23.5 feet at Gawalmandi. Evacuation began along Kattarian and Gawalmandi as 200mm of rain was recorded in the catchment areas of Leh Nullah. Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said the raised water levels have led to "urban flooding risks in low-lying areas" of the twin cities. He said "all relief and emergency departments", including the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa), Rescue 1122 and the district administration, were on high alert and deployed on the ground to manage drainage and ensure safety. PMD data till 8:20am showed that Saidpur received 104mm of rainfall, 157mm in Golra, 72mm in Bokra, 155 mm at the PMD site near H-8/2, 74mm at Kutchery, 201mm at Shamsabad, 86mm at Pir Widhai, 186mm at New Kattarian. — APP

Dubai
property
no longer
safe haven

KARACHI: The Gulf war has curbed the outflow of black money from Pakistan to Dubai, while funds already invested are returning and being diverted into property in the country, according to sources in the property and currency markets. Thousands of Pakistanis have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Dubai, particularly in property. Pakistan was identified twice as the second-largest foreign investor in Dubai property. It was widely believed that black money created in Pakistan had a safe haven in Dubai and was a catalyst for property price hikes there. "About \$60 million in illegal (or black) money is created in Pakistan per month and has been invested in Dubai, but this has now stopped," said All Pakistan Builders Association Chairman Hassan Bakhshi. — APP

Iran says it has enough foreign
currency despite US sanctions

Hemmati says central bank continuing to collect foreign currency receivables

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran has sufficient foreign currency reserves despite US sanctions, Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati said on Tuesday, after US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Tehran was lashing out because it was losing the economic war. The central bank was ready to inject up to \$2 billion into the foreign exchange market to calm recent volatility, Hemmati said, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency. "I am telling the President of the United States: Iran has (foreign) currency and it has enough," he added. His comments appeared aimed at reassuring markets after Iranian officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian, pointed to growing difficulties for an economy fac-

ing US sanctions and a naval blockade. Hemmati said the central bank was continuing to collect foreign currency receivables and had domestic reserves as well as other resources, though he added details of those could not be disclosed. "I tell the people with complete honesty that economic conditions and livelihood management have become difficult, but collapse has never happened and will never happen. These claims are just psychological warfare and the dust will settle soon," Hemmati said. Iran's currency plunged to a record low in August, crossing the psychological threshold of two million rials to the US dollar, while annual inflation reached 66% in July. Bessent said on Monday that Iran was taking US sanctions seriously and was "lashing out kinetically because they are losing economically".

EU worried
over Russian
new moves

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: EU defence ministers grappled Tuesday with bolstering Ukraine's air defences, as worries grow over Russia's campaign to destabilise Kyiv's European backers. Moscow has taken advantage of Ukraine running low on US-built air defence missiles to pummel the country, while Kyiv has hit back against Russian infrastructure with its own long-range strikes. A barrage of Russian drones and ballistic missiles killed at least 12 people in Kyiv and its region overnight Monday to Tuesday, according to Ukraine, just as children were to return to school after the summer. "Russia is really escalating to hurt the

people of Ukraine as much as possible, to break them," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas told journalists as two days of talks kicked off in the Irish town of Wicklow. Defence ministers, who met on Tuesday before EU foreign ministers hold their own talks Wednesday, were set to speak to Ukraine's new acting defence minister Yevgeniy Khmara. But there appears to be little they can do to massively increase the supply of desperately needed air interceptors to Ukraine, beyond pressuring European countries that still have stockpiles and urging the likes of Japan and South Korea to share more. "We know that some of the countries have interceptors that will expire soon. So it would be very good if those would be given to Ukraine," Kallas said. While the Kremlin escalates its air campaign against Ukraine, there have been growing worries that Moscow is also looking to deflect from its battlefield troubles by ramping up so-called "hybrid" operations in Europe.

US army secretary
submits resignation

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: United States Army Secretary Dan Driscoll has submitted his resignation, the White House confirmed on Monday, following reports of tensions with Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth. Asked about a Wall Street Journal report that Driscoll had resigned, White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Anna Kelly did not deny it. "Driscoll has been highly effective in advancing President Trump's agenda to Make America Strong Again at the Department of the Army," Kelly said. She cited his "outstanding leadership" during US military operations, "restoring an emphasis on readiness and lethality, assisting with negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, and more". She added: "The US army is more powerful than ever thanks to his work alongside the Commander-in-Chief and Secretary of War." If accepted, Driscoll's resignation would

mark the latest departure of a senior military leader under President Donald Trump's administration. A former law school classmate of Vice President JD Vance, Driscoll had reportedly benefited from their friendship within the administration, but clashed with Hegseth. The most senior Democrat on the Senate's Armed Services Committee, Jack Reed, laid the departure's blame at the defence secretary's feet, saying, "I do not welcome Secretary Driscoll's resignation ... It is far past time for President Trump to recognise the lasting harm that Pete Hegseth is inflicting on the Department of Defence." An Army veteran who served in Iraq, Driscoll ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 2020 and later advised Trump's 2024 reelection campaign. With the Iran war entering its seventh month, the resignation could effectively leave the army without permanent civilian or uniformed leadership. Hegseth fired Army Chief of Staff General Randy George in April and has yet to nominate a permanent successor.

Nepal-China flood death
toll exceeds 1,000

In India, authorities in Uttar Pradesh state said they had recovered 17 bodies from rivers flowing from Nepal, believed to be flood victims. Indian authorities are seeking to identify them, and they are not included in the toll

DNA

KATHMANDU: Devastating floods on the China-Nepal border have killed at least 987 people in Nepal, the disaster authority said on Tuesday, taking overall deaths to more than 1,000. Chinese state media earlier confirmed 16 people were killed in Tibet, bringing the total toll from Wednesday's disaster to 1,003. The number of missing in Nepal dropped to 3,916, as rescue efforts entered a seventh day, and the bodies recovered rose. In China, state media say 546 people are missing, taking the overall number of missing to 4,462. The missing in Nepal include 583 foreigners from over 30 nationalities. The missing in China include 261 foreigners from 23 countries. Among the missing foreigners, Indians make up one of the largest proportions, with 275 citizens and another 128 people of Indian origin missing in Nepal, according to New Delhi. There are 85 US citizens missing, according to the State Department on Sunday. There are also 62 Ukrainians, 51 Malaysians, 42 Australians, and 33 British citizens, according to reports, including both Nepal's tourist board and embassies. In India, authorities in Uttar Pradesh state said they had recovered 17 bodies from rivers flowing from Nepal, be-

lieved to be flood victims. Indian authorities are seeking to identify them, and they are not included in the toll. Meanwhile, Nepali Prime Minister Balendra Shah said last week's deadly Himalayan flood was "not an ordinary" event but driven by climate change, as he demanded international action. "The flood in the Bhote Koshi River in Rasuwa was not an ordinary flood," Shah said in a social media post late on Monday. "It was one of the region's major disasters, triggered by an avalanche of snow and ice in the Himalayan region," he said. While the exact cause of the collapse is unclear, climate change is causing glaciers to melt worldwide, increasing the risk of such disasters. Scientists say the Himalayas, the world's highest mountain range, are melting faster as global temperatures rise. "This incident indicates that the risks we face in the Himalayan region are increasing alongside climate change," Shah added. "Therefore, this region must remain vigilant." Shah said Nepal should press its case internationally. "It is now time for us to strongly raise with the international community the issue of the disasters we are experiencing as a result of climate change," he said. Nepal, a largely rural nation of 30 million people, has contributed little to the emissions driving global warming churned out by wealthy and industrialised nations, but is suffering its consequences.





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