



Islamabad POST

Thursday, September 03, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 40

US President says he is thinking to rename Hormuz

Detailed News On Page-01

Empoerment of people key ASEAN goal

Detailed News On Page-02



Uzbek envoy greets Pak on SCO chair

Detailed News On Page-08



US-Iran escalation

Pak pledges continued peace efforts

Islamabad welcomes Hague court's ruling reaffirming IWT obligations, treaty-based dispute settlement under int'l law

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has vowed to continue its efforts to promote peace between the US and Iran after the two countries exchanged strikes following a month-long lull in hostilities. "Despite recent escalations, we remain hopeful, and we will continue to strive for dialogue and diplomacy," Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said at a weekly press briefing on Wednesday. Renewed fighting ends a period of relative calm since July, during which Washington and Tehran largely withheld fire but showed little interest in resuming talks. Andrabi said both sides had carried out armed attacks and retaliatory strikes in the US-Iran conflict, while Islamabad was closely monitoring the situation. He said armed conflicts typically move through stages of de-escalation, calm, ceasefire and eventually a return to the negotiating table. Describing the current escalation as "concerning and undesirable", he said Pakistan had not lost hope in the peace process. The spokesperson said the latest US-Iran escalation could not be characterised as a failure of Islamabad's diplomatic efforts, adding that the country was engaging in the peace process with complete sincerity to help resolve the US-Iran conflict. Andrabi said Pakistan's diplomatic efforts would continue and expressed hope that the two sides would eventually return to the negotiating table once the current escalation subsided.

He said the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provided a framework for bringing the parties back to negotiations and could be used if they were willing to resume talks. The Islamabad MoU was agreed between Tehran and Washington on June 18 as a 14-point interim framework aimed at ending the conflict. Islamabad has since continued to facilitate communication between the two sides and promote dialogue, de-escalation and a peaceful resolution. Under the Islamabad MoU, the parties could restart negotiations at political and technical levels to work towards a long-term and sustainable solution, the FO spokesperson added. Andrabi said the peace framework outlined in the Islamabad MoU remained in place and there was no question of declaring it dead or ineffective. He said it was not unusual for both sides to issue strong statements during periods of heightened tensions, adding that Islamabad remained hopeful about the eventual resumption of negotiations. Andrabi said Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's visit to Tehran last week had been an important part of those diplomatic efforts. He said the CDF's visit focused on reducing regional tensions and resolving the conflict through negotiations, while creating fresh momentum in the diplomatic process. The spokesperson said visits by the leadership of Oman and

Continued on Page 06

Middle East flares up again

Saudi Arabia says Iran attacked vessel, killing two sailors

Kingdom stressed necessity of halting escalations, respecting int'l maritime safety, says Saudi foreign ministry

NEWS DESK

RIYAD: Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude exporter, said on Wednesday that an Iranian attack on an oil tanker owned by its national shipping company had killed two Filipino seafarers. Sidr, owned by Bahri, was one of two supertankers carrying Saudi oil reported to have been hit late on Monday while transiting the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran has threatened tankers attempting to sail through the narrow waterway without authorisation, impeding energy exports from neighbouring oil-rich Gulf countries. About one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas trade used to pass through the Strait of Hormuz before the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28. Bahri said the seafarers were killed in a security incident involving Sidr at 11:40 local time on Monday. "The kingdom stressed the necessity of halting escalations, and respecting international maritime safety and

Continued on Page 06

Iran targets US assets in Middle East

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran pushed ahead with strikes targeting American interests around the Middle East on Wednesday after vowing "severe" consequences to a fresh wave of US attacks. The latest flare-up is part of a cycle of retaliation that followed US strikes on Iran, with fighting over the Hormuz Strait expanding to Washington's Gulf allies, military bases and commercial shipping. Tehran said it launched ballistic missile attacks on two US bases in Jordan, according to Iranian media.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Ministry of National Health Services and PIMS fire incident. Islamabad, 02 September 2026. – DNA

London Mayor becomes a victim

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Mayor of London Lord Sadiq Khan of Tooting says he has fallen victim to a scam after he was convicted and fined for not taxing a 24-year-old Nissan Micra. The Labour politician, 55, was prosecuted last month by the DVLA for keeping an unlicensed vehicle and ended up being handed a £220 fine by a court in Herefordshire, after the case was dealt with in private in a fast-track court process. His office insisted the vehicle did not belong to Lord Khan and it has been wrongly registered in his name. In a strongly-worded statement on Wednesday morning, a spokesperson for

Continued on Page 06

Naqvi defends cricket changes

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi defended the sweeping mid-series changes made during the England Test series as "essential", dismissing critics who he said had themselves achieved nothing. Speaking exclusively to Geo News from London, Naqvi said the decisions taken in England were necessary, adding that beyond performance, there were other matters he was currently examining but that it was not the right time to discuss anything beyond cricket. He said he deeply felt the pain of the national team's poor performance.

Continued on Page 06

Reaching out to Central Asia

PM Shehbaz Sharif vows to boost bilateral trade with Kyrgyzstan

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan sign treaty on extradition, MoUs on trade, security and education

DNA

BISHKEK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed his resolve to boost bilateral trade with Kyrgyzstan to \$200 million within next two years, calling for greater engagement between the two countries. "Our present day bilateral trade hovers around \$16 million which is not a patch on our friendship, our brotherhood and our very strong relations," the premier remarked while addressing a joint presser alongside Kyrgyzstan President Sadyr Nurgozhoevich Japarov at the Kyrgyz presidential palace in Bishkek. According to the prime minister, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in education, science and technology, and culture. "During the bilateral talks, focus was placed on promoting trade relations," he said, adding that both countries wanted to increase bilateral trade to \$200 million per annum. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan will help expand trade relations between the private sectors, he said. PM Shehbaz described the transit trade agreement between

Continued on Page 06

PM convenes emergency meeting on PIMS affairs

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, upon his return from Kyrgyzstan, chaired an emergency meeting regarding national health affairs and the recent fire incident at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Health Secretary Captain (R) Muhammad Mahmood, and PIMS Executive Director Dr. Muhammad Salman. During the session, the Prime Minister was briefed on the overall state of the health sector and received a special update on the ongoing investigation into the PIMS fire incident.

Continued on Page 06

Jailed Imran's sister files another contempt plea in SC

Additional documents have also been submitted with the contempt petition, along with two miscellaneous applications seeking to place further documents on record

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan's sister Dr Uzma Khan on Thursday filed a second contempt of court petition in the Supreme Court over non-compliance with an August 18 top court's order concerning the incarcerated former prime minister's medical treatment and meetings with family members. In the petition, she contended that Imran has not been allowed to meet family members despite the court's order. The petitioner maintained that the former premier has not been provided with the facili-

ty to speak to his sons by phone. According to the petition, Dr Uzma, Aleeema Khan and Qasim Zaman have been prevented from meeting jailed PTI founder. Additional documents have also been submitted with the contempt petition, along with two miscellaneous applications seeking to place further documents on record. Imran has remained in prison since August 2023 following convictions he and his party describe as politically motivated. Since his ouster in April 2022 following a no-confidence vote, he has faced multiple legal cases. The latest plea comes two days after the Supreme Court rejected an application filed by Dr Uzma, seeking an early hearing of her contempt of court petition concerning her brother's hospital transfer, sources said.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Pakistan Naval Farms declared legal

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) division bench on Wednesday set aside a 2022 judgment by then-chief justice Athar Minallah declaring the Pakistan Naval Farms and Pakistan Navy Sailing Club along Rawal Lake illegal. The court also nullified directions for the demolition of the sailing club and the initiation of misconduct and criminal proceedings against former naval chief Admiral (retd) Zafar Mahmood Abbasi and other officers. A division bench comprising Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas and Justice Shahrukh Arjumand allowed the intra-court appeals filed against the single-bench judgment. The bench also set aside the direction to the Auditor General of Pakistan to assess the alleged loss caused to the national exchequer and recover the amount from the officers held responsible.

Body of Irish climber recovered

BUREAU REPORT

MANSEHRA: The body of Irish mountaineer Alexander, who went missing while descending from the 13,500-foot-high Musa Da Musalla peak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Siran Valley amid rough weather, was recovered on Wednesday from the dense forests of the Paracha Khatta area. On Monday, it was reported that the two mountaineers – Irish national Alexander, along with a British national, Alun David Cooper Cledwyn – went missing while descending the peak. The police had maintained that the climbers went to Siran Valley on Friday to summit Musa Da Musalla without obtaining a no-objection certificate from the police or other relevant departments.

China's Xi urges new ME security framework

Xi's first trip to ME in years comes as US partners in region reassess their strategic relationships amid war

DNA

CAIRO/BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping called on Middle Eastern nations to oppose external interference and consider reshaping the region's security order during a visit to Egypt on Wednesday, as Beijing seeks to expand its influence amid the US war against Iran. Xi's first trip to the Middle East in four years comes as US partners in the region reassess their strategic relationships after months of conflict that have disrupted trade, shaken economies and raised questions about Washington's long-term role. Egypt, itself a major US defence partner that receives around \$1.3 billion annually in military aid from Washington, has been steadily increasing economic and military cooperation with China in recent years. Welcomed by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi with a military ceremony in Cairo, Xi said countries in the

region should be "masters of their own destiny" and explore a new regional "security architecture", according to China's state news agency Xinhua. Xi also said China was ready to work with regional countries to safeguard shipping routes, an issue that has taken on greater importance after conflict disrupted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb. The leaders agreed to deepen security cooperation and counterterrorism coordination, Xinhua said. The two sides also agreed to expand cooperation in data centres, semiconductors and critical metals supply chains and strengthen the use of each other's currencies in trade and investment, according to a joint statement. For Egypt, stronger ties with China fit a broader effort to diversify international partnerships. In an article published ahead of the visit, Sisi said Egypt pursued a policy of "strategic balance" at a time of growing global rivalry.

Trump suggests renaming Strait of Hormuz 'Trump Strait'

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has suggested renaming the Strait of Hormuz the "Trump Strait", despite the fact that the crucial waterway remains contested amid the war with Iran, AFP reports. "Now that we have it under USA control, should we change the name Hormuz Strait to Trump Strait??? Like America itself, it would be 'hotter' than ever before!" Trump writes on his Truth Social network.

"Egypt wants to widen the circle of its relations with major world powers, including China," former Egyptian diplomat Ayman Zaineldine told Reuters. "So the visions converge." For China, Egypt's regional influence and strategic location make it an important partner as Beijing seeks a broader economic role and tries to chip away at US influence in the region. "Egypt represents something quite valuable to Beijing – a large domestic market for investment opportunities, and a lot of diplomatic weight in the region, including the Palestine question, as well as connectivity to Africa," said H A Hellyer, a scholar at the Royal United Services Institute think tank. Growing military ties were on display last month during Egypt's "Eagles of Civilization" exercises with China, which included a rare air combat drill involving Chinese-made J-16 jets and French-made Rafale aircraft. Enthusiasm for the Chinese president's visit has been evident for days in

Egypt's capital, where streets have been decked out in Chinese flags and images of iconic sites including Egypt's Sphinx and China's Great Wall. Home to the Suez Canal and a population of more than 110 million, Egypt is an important market for China, importing some \$10 billion of Chinese goods in the first half of this year alone. Chinese investment has risen rapidly since Sisi visited China and signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2014, with Chinese companies pouring billions into container ports, green hydrogen projects and facilities to make iron pipes, car tyres, and satellites. Egypt's cabinet says the Suez Canal Economic Zone has attracted about \$4 billion in Chinese investment. On Wednesday, Egyptian authorities announced plans to expand a Chinese-developed industrial area in the zone, while ZC Rubber Group signed a preliminary agreement to study a \$500 million tyre making complex.

KP CM okays free electric scooters for females

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi on Wednesday gave in-principle approval for providing free electric scooters to female students and working women across the province. Chairing a meeting on the proposed initiative, the CM directed the authorities to take immediate steps for launching the first phase of the scheme in Peshawar. Under the first phase, female students and working women in the provincial capital will be provided electric scooters free of cost. Officials briefed the meeting that beneficiaries would be selected through a computerized balloting process to ensure transparency and merit Afridi directed that a steering committee, technical working group and grievance redressal committee be notified immediately to oversee implementation of the scheme. He also directed the provision of full funding for the initiative and said that the scheme would subsequently be extended to other districts of the province. Sohail Afridi said the initiative would help empower women and enable them to become more independent by ensuring safe, convenient and affordable access to educational institutions and workplaces. He said the environment-friendly electric scooters would also contribute to reducing air pollution while promoting women's economic empowerment. The CM said the provincial government would continue practical measures aimed at investing in people and promoting women's development, confidence and empowerment.—APP

Ugandan envoy calls for eco bridges with RCCI

RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Uganda to Pakistan, Twaha Matata has called for bilateral economic bridges with Pakistani entrepreneurs during a high-level interaction at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI). The envoy, accompanied by Additional Foreign Secretary (Africa) Hamid Asghar Khan, met with RCCI leadership to chalk out roadmap for expanding bilateral trade, joint investment ventures and private-sector ties between both nations. During the meeting, the two sides discussed range of opportunities in various sectors, and shared views on identifying means to further strengthen trade ties. Welcoming the delegation along with Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi and Vice President Fahad Barlas, RCCI President Usman Shaukat emphasized that establishing direct business-to-business linkages and joint ventures is essential to translating diplomatic relations into tangible commercial gains. Discussions centered on identifying high potential export sectors, streamlining trade channels and positioning Rawalpindi's industrial base to tap into emerging African consumer markets Addressing on the occasion, RCCI President Usman Shaukat reaffirmed the Chamber's institutional commitment to spearheading economic diplomacy, providing active facilitation to local exporters.—APP

Pakistan and ASEAN : Navigating our future together People empowerment at heart of ASEAN's future: Fernandez

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Peace and security, prosperity and people empowerment remain at the heart of ASEAN's future, while its three pillars—political-security, economic and socio-cultural cooperation—continue to hold relevance for the evolving Pakistan-ASEAN partnership, Ambassador of the Philippines Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez said on Wednesday He was delivering the keynote address at a special seminar titled "Pakistan and ASEAN: Navigating Our Future Together", organised by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) to commemorate the 59th ASEAN Day. Dr. Fernandez, who is also the current Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Islamabad, said that closer engagement between Pakistan and ASEAN could help address emerging regional challenges while opening new avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation. In a



special video message, ASEAN Deputy Secretary General H.E. Dato Astanah Abdul Aziz highlighted the strong foundation of ASEAN-Pakistan relations and identified dialogue, economic and technological cooperation, connectivity, and people-centred development as key areas for future collaboration. Reaffirming the importance

attached to Pakistan as a long-standing partner, the heads and representatives of ASEAN missions in Islamabad expressed support for further deepening Pakistan-ASEAN relations and expanding practical cooperation. The participants included H.E. Colonel (R) Pengiran Haji Kamal Bashah, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam;

H.E. Pham Anh Tuan, Ambassador of Viet Nam; H.E. Wunna Han, Ambassador of Myanmar; H.E. Rongvudhi Virabutr, Ambassador of Thailand; Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of Indonesia; and Mohamad Alif Syafiq Bin Mohd Faudzi, First Secretary and Deputy Head of Mission

at the High Commission of Malaysia. They highlighted opportunities for cooperation in trade and investment, tourism, the digital economy and cybersecurity, agriculture and food security, connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges. Pakistan's Ambassador to ASEAN, Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its engagement with ASEAN and reiterated the country's aspiration for Full Dialogue Partnership. Meanwhile, Haseen Fatima, Deputy Director at the East Asia and Pacific Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noted the steady expansion of institutional cooperation and stressed the need to translate existing frameworks into tangible outcomes. In his welcome remarks, ISSI Director General Ambassador Moin-ul-Haque described ASEAN as an important model of regional cooperation and called for a more substantive and results-oriented Pakistan-ASEAN relationship. He particularly drew attention to opportunities arising from ASEAN's regional economic integration, includ-

ing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and proposed a dedicated ISSI engagement with Pakistan's business community to raise awareness about emerging opportunities and strengthen economic linkages. Earlier, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of the Centre for Strategic Perspectives at ISSI, called for sustained engagement and greater mutual understanding between Pakistan and ASEAN. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman of the ISSI Board of Governors, stressed the need for a broader, deeper and forward-looking Pakistan-ASEAN partnership, supported by stronger institutional, academic, business and think-tank linkages. The seminar reaffirmed the shared commitment of Pakistan and ASEAN member states to advancing their relationship through sustained dialogue, practical cooperation and enhanced connectivity. The event was attended by heads of mission and representatives of ASEAN member states, as well as members of academia and the media.

Govt okays Rs 6.48b 'Billion Trees Plus' project

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mohammad Sohail Khan Afridi has approved the five-year 'Billion Trees Plus' project, allocating Rs 6.487 billion to expand forest cover and combat climate change, an official statement said on Tuesday. The project entails plantation on 7,150 hectares, restoration of degraded forests, establishment of 1,200 kanals of wild fruit orchards, and free distribution of around 44 million saplings to farms. It also includes developing over 278 hectares of departmental nurseries and integrated land restoration initiatives. In a statement, the Chief

Minister said the project is not limited to tree plantation but is a comprehensive strategy for ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, and pasture rehabilitation. "Modern GIS mapping, wildlife surveys, advanced monitoring systems, and carbon credit mechanisms will be used to ensure scientific management of forests and natural resources," he added. Under the project, seven wildlife parks and breeding centres will be rehabilitated, and plans for protecting large predators and conducting environmental assessments across various regions have also

been included, the statement said. The Chief Minister noted that the province's forest cover has already increased from 20 percent to 26.3 percent owing to previous afforestation efforts. Through the Billion Trees Plus project, he expressed the commitment to raise it further to 26.8 percent, with a future target of achieving 30 percent forest cover. "Our vision is to ensure protected forests, thriving biodiversity, reduced carbon emissions, and resilience against climate risks," he said, adding that the project aims to secure a green, safe, and sustainable future for coming generations.—APP

Kundi for women, minorities role in decision-making

DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday underscored the need for ensuring equal opportunities and meaningful representation of women and minorities in the decision-making process, saying it was essential for social harmony, democratic stability and national development. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Minorities Rights Defender Forum, working under the Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM), at the Governor House here. The meeting discussed a range of issues, including minority rights, women empowerment, political representation, youth participation and social inclusion. The delegation briefed the Governor on its initiatives aimed at promoting education and strengthening coordination between marginalized communities and state institutions. The delegation also proposed greater representation of women and minorities in political and decision-making processes and suggested increasing the quota reserved for minorities to at least five percent. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said the Pakistan Peoples Party had always remained at the forefront of safeguarding the rights of minorities, women and other marginalized segments of society. He said ensuring equal opportunities and effective participation of women and minorities in national affairs was vital for building an inclusive and progressive society. The delegation appreciated the role of the Pakistan Peoples Party leadership and Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in promoting and protecting the rights of minority communities.

CM approves Rs 1bn road schemes for Sargodha

The deputy commissioner added that completion of the schemes would improve transportation facilities in both urban and rural areas of Sargodha

SARGODHA: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved eight major schemes for the construction, rehabilitation and improvement of roads in Sargodha district under the Own Source Revenue initiative, at an estimated cost of around Rs1 billion. According to a press release issued by the DC Office, the approved schemes include the construction and rehabilitation of Dairy Road, Azad Road, New Urdu Bazaar Road, Grain Market Road, Pilot School Road and Ara Market Road, at an estimated cost of Rs175.79 million. The rehabilitation of Khayam Chowk Overhead Bridge has also been approved at an estimated cost of Rs88.981 million. Another scheme covers

the rehabilitation of the road from Johar Colony Road to Fatima Jinnah Road via Gillwala Railway Crossing to Haripurah Bridge, at an estimated cost of Rs228.674 million. The road from Shama Chowk to Stadium Gate and the link road to Cheema Heart Centre will be rehabilitated at an estimated cost of Rs164.645 million. Similarly, the rehabilitation of Main Bazaar Bhagtanwala Road and the Lahore Road-Bhirowal-Kot Momin Link Road has been approved at an estimated cost of Rs127.715 million. A scheme for the improvement and rehabilitation of Jail Road to Shahpur Saddar Road in Shahpur has also been approved at an estimated cost of Rs 98.888

million, while Rs 56.684 million will be spent on the rehabilitation of Farooka Road to Sial Dhulaka Road. In addition, a beautification project for interchanges along Sial Mor Road has been approved at an estimated cost of Rs60 million. Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Hussain Ahmad Raza Chaudhry said the projects would significantly improve the district's road infrastructure. He said the rehabilitation of the roads would help improve traffic flow and provide citizens with safer and more comfortable travelling facilities. The deputy commissioner added that completion of the schemes would improve transportation facilities in both urban and rural areas of Sargodha.—APP

Weaponization of resources and vulnerable regions

ISLAMABAD: "The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must," wrote Thucydides in The History of the Peloponnesian War. Written more than two millennia ago, these words capture a reality that continues to shape international politics, power often rests not only in military strength, but in the ability to control what others depend upon. Today, resources have become one of the most important instruments through which such power is exercised. The weaponization of resources operates differently across developed, developing, and vulnerable states. Even within sovereign states, powerful groups can exploit control over resources to consolidate authority and influence communities. In the 21st century, wars are no longer fought solely with tanks, missiles, or military alliances. Oil, natural gas, water, food, critical minerals, and semiconductors have become strategic assets capable of shaping national power and altering the balance of power. Whoever controls these resources, or the supply chains through which they move, can exert influence far beyond the battlefield. Historically, resources have been central to economic development and national power. The First Industrial Revolution (1760–1840) introduced mechanization and large-scale factory production, while the Second Industrial Revolution (1870–1914) expanded steel, electricity, chemicals, and mass production. These advances enabled states to mobilize resources on an unprecedented scale, transforming warfare from localized conflicts into industrialized mass destruction. The California Gold Rush (1848–1855) further demonstrates how resource discoveries can reshape economies and power structures. The discovery of gold attracted hundreds of thousands of people to California and accelerated the region's economic transformation. Today, however, competition over resources has moved beyond economic gain. Major powers increasingly view critical commodities through a strategic and national-security lens, treating control over supply chains as a source of geopolitical influence. The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960 illustrates this vulnerability in South Asia. India's upstream geographical position gives it greater leverage over river management and water infrastructure, while Pakistan's agrarian economy depends heavily on the Indus Basin Irrigation System (IBIS). Agriculture contributes significantly to Pakistan's economy and relies on the Indus River system, particularly the Jhelum and Chenab, for irrigation and food production. Water is therefore not simply an economic resource for Pakistan; it is a national lifeline and a potential strategic vulnerability. Following the Pahalgam attack, India's move to suspend the IWT highlighted how upstream control can potentially be used as a tool of strategic pressure. Pakistan's position received further support when a Hague-based international tribunal on last Monday ruled that India must continue to comply with its treaty obligations.—DNA

CDA chief conducts detailed visit to sector C-14

C-14 infrastructure complete, plot possession process begins

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad conducted a detailed visit to Sector C-14 and Sangiani Interchange, where he reviewed ongoing development and construction activities, the pace of work, quality standards, and progress towards completion of various projects at both sites. Member Building, Member Estate, Member Administration, Director General Works, Director General Infrastructure, Chief Officer Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, and other senior officers concerned were also present during the visit. During his visit to Sector C-14, the concerned senior officers gave the CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad a detailed briefing on the development works completed as well as those currently underway in the sector. The Chairman was informed that the basic infrastructure development works in Sector C-14 have been completed, while work related to electricity provision has also entered its final stage. The concerned authorities further informed him that the installation of light poles along the major roads of Sector C-14 has been

completed, while the installation of signboards on the main roads and streets has also been completed. Meanwhile, landscaping and horticulture work along the main roads is progressing rapidly with the objective of making the sector modern, attractive, and conducive to a better residential environment for citizens. The briefing further revealed that, following the completion of development works in Sector C-14, the process of handing over possession of developed plots to the allottees has formally commenced. The process of handing over possession of plots to the remaining allottees is also underway so that citizens can be facilitated and unnecessary administrative procedures and delays can be avoided. The CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad directed the concerned officers to com-



plete all remaining development-related works in Sector C-14 on a priority basis and remove all impediments hindering the development of the sector without delay. He stated that, in accordance with the directions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Federal Minister for Interior, meeting the residential needs of citizens in Islamabad remains among the top priorities of CDA. He emphasized that, alongside mega development projects, the timely development of new residential sectors is equally important for the planned growth and development of Islamabad. The CDA Chairman further directed that possession of plots be handed over to citizens at the earliest and that all necessary administrative and technical measures in this regard be expedited. He said that these initiatives would contribute significantly towards meeting the growing residential needs of citizens and providing them with improved urban facilities in Islamabad. He directed the concerned officers to further accelerate all necessary procedures relating to the remaining plots and ensure timely facilitation of the allottees. He emphasized that the objective of development projects is not merely the completion of infrastructure but also the practical provision of better residential facilities to citizens.

DNA

DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY

Connecting Pakistan to the World

Credible News. Global Reach. Trusted by All.

DNA delivers fast, accurate and balanced news from Pakistan and around the globe. Your trusted source for real-time updates on diplomacy, politics, economy and more.

REAL-TIME UPDATES Fast and timely news from around the world.	CREDIBLE & DEPENDABLE Committed to accuracy, fairness and integrity.	GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE In-depth coverage with a diplomatic lens.	WIDEST NETWORK Connecting sources, stories and societies.	DIVERSE COVERAGE Politics, diplomacy, economy, culture and beyond.
--	---	---	--	---

FOLLOW DNA

Stay informed. Stay connected. Stay ahead.

www.dnanews.com.pk

A M Bhatti

@EditorDnanews

DNA

DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY

Connecting Pakistan to the World

National Days and Armed Forces Days

SEPTEMBER

Sept01/Libya Revolution Day

Sept01/Tanzania Defence day

Sept01/Uzbekistan Independence Day

Sept07/Brazil Independence Day

Sept09/DPR Korea National Day

Sept09/Tajikistan Independence Day

Sept16/Malaysia Armed Forces Day

Sept16/Mexico National Day

Sept16/Papua New Guinea Independence Day

Sept18/Chile National Day

Sept21/Malta Independence Day

Sept23/Saudi Arabia National Day

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi..5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

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

Radio Pak integrates with NADRA’s digital pensioner app

The 2025 digitization was carried out under the patronage and supervision of Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mr. Ataullah Tarar. PBC Director General Saeed Ahmed Sheikh led the initiative with the corporation’s in-house IT team, using PBC’s own technical expertise to modernize pension administration and simplify procedures for retired employees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), popularly known as Radio Pakistan, has become the first public sector corporation and the first state-owned enterprise (SOE) to integrate with NADRA’s digital pensioner verification app, enabling its current 3,681 pensioners to complete biometric verification remotely. The achievement builds on a milestone reached in 2025, when Radio Pakistan became the first public sector corporation to digitize its pension management system. The 2025 digitization was carried out under the patronage and supervision of Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mr. Ataullah Tarar. PBC Director General Saeed Ahmed Sheikh led the initia-

tive with the corporation’s in-house IT team, using PBC’s own technical expertise to modernize pension administration and simplify procedures for retired employees. PBC completed synchronization with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) a few months ago. This early coordination enabled its pensioners

to access the verification service as soon as the app became functional. Earlier, speaking at the national launch of NADRA’s “Proof of Life” verification system in Islamabad on August 20, 2026, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif described the biometric and facial verification facility as “a service to humanity” and said millions of pensioners across the country would benefit from the digital system and app. With the app now operational, Radio Pakistan’s pensioners have begun benefiting from remote verification, removing the need for routine visits to banks or government offices for this purpose. The facility is expected to provide particular relief to elderly pensioners and those who face difficulties travelling to complete verification formalities. It also aims to maintain accurate pension records, prevent fraudulent or duplicate claims and reduce payment delays associated with verification.

Sharper training for field readiness ordered

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Security Islamabad Rana Umar Farooq on Wednesday reviewed the ongoing anti-riot course at the Security Division and directed officials to further improve training to enhance the professional skills of police personnel. An official told reporter on Wednesday that during the visit, the DIG Umar observed the training of officers and personnel, including practical exercises and different stages of the anti-riot course, said a press release here. Umar reviewed the training process and assessed the practical exercises being carried out to prepare personnel for their duties. He issued necessary directions to further improve the training process and strengthen the professional capabilities of officers and personnel undergoing the course. —APP

Judiciary staff trained for emergency response

MALAKAND: Rescue 1122 Malakand has launched a specialised training programme for judges, officers and officials of the district judiciary to enhance their preparedness for emergencies. The training was arranged by the Rescue 1122 Training Wing under the supervision of District Emergency Officer Nasir Khan, in line with the directives of Director General Rescue 1122 KP Shah Fahad and Director Operations North Region Arshad Iqbal. The participants received practical instruction in first aid, CPR, firefighting, use of fire extinguishers, emergency response procedures and safe shifting of injured persons. Practical demonstrations and exercises were also conducted to familiarise participants with appropriate action during critical situations. District and Sessions Judge Malakand Iftikhar Elahi attended the session and appreciated Rescue 1122 for imparting hands-on emergency response training. —APP

UK varsity fee used as cover for hawala-hundi transfer

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Islamabad Zone has booked four suspects for allegedly using a UK university fee payment as a cover to transfer Rs5.62 million through an illegal hawala-hundi network, arresting one of them. An FIA official told APP on Wednesday that the Commercial Banking Circle (CBC) Islamabad registered case No. 42/2025 after completing inquiry No. 75/2024 and arrested accused Muhammad Mubashir son of Muhammad Shabbir. The case was registered against Hamza Faisal, Abid Hussain Butt, Uzair Qureshi and Muhammad Mubashir under Section 406 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), read with Sections 5 and 23 of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1947, as amended in 2020. According to the investigation, the suspects allegedly received Rs5.62 million from complainant Asad Ali son of Manzoor Hussain, a resident of Bahria Town, Rawalpindi, on the pretext of sending the university fee of his son, Shabeeh-ul-Hassan, to Lancaster University in the United Kingdom through a banking channel. The investigation found that instead of using the formal banking channel, the money was allegedly transferred through an illegal hawala-hundi network. The matter came to light when Lancaster University’s Finance Department sought information about the person who had deposited the amount, but no details could be found. The university subsequently returned the money to an unknown source in April 2024. The investigation of the case has been assigned to Sub-Inspector Hassan. FIA Islamabad Zone reiterated that action would continue against those involved in hawala-hundi networks and illegal financial transactions, and such elements would be brought to justice. —APP

Gul lauds security forces for successful operations

ISLAMABAD :Chairman of Tehreek-e-Jawanan Pakistan (TJP), Muhammad Abdullah Hamid Gul, has paid tribute to the security forces for their successful counter-terrorism operations in Balochistan, in which 21 terrorists were killed. Gul described the operations as a reflection of the professionalism, courage and determination of Pakistan’s security forces in combating terrorism and safeguarding national security, said a press release here on Wednesday. He expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of six brave personnel, including two security officers and a Customs official, during the operations. He conveyed his heartfelt condolences and solidarity to the families of the martyrs and prayed for the elevation of their ranks and for strength and patience for the bereaved families. Gul said that the sacrifices of the martyrs would further strengthen the nation’s resolve and determination to eliminate terrorism from the country. He said that hostile elements and terrorism allegedly backed by external forces could not undermine the resolve of the Pakistani nation. “The nation stands firmly with its security forces and law-enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism,” he said. The TJP chairman reiterated that his party would continue to stand alongside the security forces and law-enforcement agencies until the complete elimination of terrorism. He stressed that defeating terrorism required unwavering national resolve, unity and a collective sense of responsibility, adding that the sacrifices of Pakistan’s security personnel would continue to inspire the nation in its struggle for peace and stability. —APP

Pakistan, Belgium to launch student exchange, port upgrades

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belgium have agreed to deepen maritime institutional cooperation, expand student training and exchange programs beside exploring new avenues in port development and the blue economy during a meeting between Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and Belgian Ambassador Idesbald Van der Gracht here on Tuesday. The meeting, held at the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, focused on forging stronger institutional linkages between the two countries’ maritime sectors, with particular emphasis on maritime education, professional training, port infrastructure and knowledge sharing. Mr Chaudhry said the Pakistan Marine Academy was being upgraded into a degree awarding institution,

with most of the work on the initiative already completed. He said Pakistani students could benefit from training and educational opportunities at Belgian maritime institutions. A proposed student exchange programme would enable young people from both countries to gain exposure to each other’s maritime expertise, practices and professional experience. The minister said Pakistan and Belgium had considerable scope for collaboration in the marine sector, adding that closer institutional ties and the exchange of technical expertise could help unlock the potential of their respective blue economies. The talks also covered Pakistan’s ambitious plans to expand and modernise its port infrastructure and enhance the country’s role as a regional maritime and trade hub.

Chaudhry said the government was seeking to increase transshipment activity at Pakistani ports while pursuing projects aimed at broadening their commercial and industrial footprint. At Port Qasim, these projects included a multipurpose terminal, an automobile zone and a garment zone. The automobile zone would also undergo refurbishment, while the garment zone would facilitate the development of an industrial park. The minister said an energy city was also planned to provide storage facilities for oil producing countries, including white oil, crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas. At Karachi Port Trust, the government was pursuing the development of on dock and off dock terminals to further strengthen port operations and handling capacity.—DNA

Kansa wand gains popularity as wellness tool

ISLAMABAD: Traditional wellness practices are finding a place in modern self-care routines in the capital, with handcrafted Kansa wands being promoted as tools for facial and foot massage and relaxation. Made from Kansa, a traditional copper-based alloy, the double-sided wand is marketed as an adaptation of traditional Ayurvedic wellness practices. Designed for use on the face and feet, the tool is intended to provide a gentle massage experience and is commonly used with foot or massage oil to facilitate smooth movement over the skin. The wand generally features a polished metal head and a natural wooden handle designed to provide a comfortable grip. For foot massage, users typically apply a small amount of oil to clean feet before gently moving the wand from the heel towards the toes. Slow strokes and gentle circular movements may also be used on areas of tension. The growing interest in such products reflects consumers’ broader interest in traditional and home-based

approaches to relaxation and personal wellness. Users of the Kansa wand have reported that incorporating it into their daily routines gives them a relaxing experience, particularly after work or prolonged periods of activity. Talking to reporter , Bilal, a resident of G-7 and a regular Kansa wand user, said he used the handcrafted tool as part of his relaxation routine and found the massage soothing and comfortable. “I usually use it after a tiring day, particularly when I feel tension in my face or feet. The gentle pressure and the cool feel of the metal make the massage a relaxing experience,” he said. Another user, Karim, told reporter that he had purchased the product for his mother after learning about its use for traditional massage. He said he initially used it for foot massage and found it convenient for home use. “My mother feels comfortable when I use it for a gentle foot massage, especially after she has spent a long day on her feet. It has become a simple way for us to help her relax at home,” he said. A resident of

F-7, Abdul, described the Kansa wand as “value for money”, saying its simple design and reusable nature made it a convenient addition to his personal wellness routine. He said he generally used it with a small amount of oil while massaging his feet. “I do not consider it a medical treatment, but I find the massage comforting, particularly when my feet feel tired or uncomfortable. It is easy to use and does not require much preparation,” he said. In conversation with reporter, Bakhtawar, another user, said using the wand after a long working day provided her with a relaxing experience and helped her incorporate a few moments of self-care into her routine. “After spending several hours working, I like to take some time for myself. Using the wand with oil gives me a gentle massage and helps me unwind,” she said. She said the product was particularly appealing because it could be used at home without requiring complicated equipment or a lengthy routine. “For me, it is more about relaxation and taking a break from the day’s activities rather than expecting any medical results,” she added. Health and wellness experts, however, generally advise consumers to distinguish between traditional wellness practices and medically established treatments. Massage may provide relaxation and, in some circumstances, short-term relief from muscle tension or certain types of pain, but the evidence varies depending on the condition and type of massage.—DNA

SCO at 25: The Shanghai spirit, new journey with Islamabad

Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister and Chairman, Board of Investment, was the Chief Guest. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Pakistan-China Institute, delivered the keynote address, while Ms. Zhuang Xinyan, Counselor at the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, delivered special remarks

ISLAMABAD: A joint seminar, “SCO at 25: The Shanghai Spirit and a New Journey with Islamabad,” brought together federal ministers, senators, ambassadors, academics, think-tank representatives and media practitioners to reflect on the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’s (SCO) 25-year evolution, the Shanghai Spirit, and Pakistan’s assumption of the SCO chairmanship. The seminar was organised by the China Program of the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with China Media (CMG). Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister and Chairman, Board of Investment, was the Chief Guest. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Pakistan-China Institute, delivered the keynote address, while Ms. Zhuang Xinyan, Counselor at the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, delivered special remarks. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, delivered the opening address. He described SCO’s 25 years as a worthwhile journey towards a more peaceful, secure and connected world. He noted that the SCO now spans 36 million square kilometres and represents 3.4 billion people, having reached this point “without a treaty of alliance, a standing army, or a single dominant vote.” Drawing upon his diplomatic experience, he said that most international formulations do not survive the test of time, but “the Shanghai spirit has not only survived, but also prospered.” He attributed the SCO’s resilience to the Shanghai Spirit, which does not require member

states to fit any particular mould. Against the backdrop of the wars in Ukraine and West Asia and last year’s Pakistan-India conflict, he said the SCO could serve as “a factor of stability, a factor for peace and a factor of development.” Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said the SCO had evolved from a confidence-building mechanism into a platform encompassing security, business, economic cooperation and people-to-people contacts, representing around 25 per cent of the global economy. He attributed this evolution in part to China’s approach to consensus-building. With Afghanistan, India and Pakistan all members, he said, the SCO provided an important platform for the region to sit together and seek solutions to shared challenges. Recalling his many visits to China since 1972, he highlighted the country’s emphasis on education and its achievement in lifting around 800 million people out of poverty. “How they did it, we have to study that,” he said. Noting that Pakistan spends more on defence than education, he called for greater emphasis on consensus-building in educational institutions and across society. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said the summit came at a time of “transformation, turbulence and transition,” marked by the unravelling of the Western-led order. Referring to Allama Iqbal’s vision of the rise of Asia, he described the SCO as providing the Global South with “a strategic option,” in contrast to alliance-based arrangements such as the Quad and AUKUS. He also

highlighted the organisation’s potential to make landlocked Central Asian states “land-linked” through connectivity with Gwadar, describing the SCO as “the institutional voice of the Asian century.” Ms. Zhuang Xinyan said China, as a founding member of the SCO, had helped “forge a new path of regional cooperation,” with seven cooperation platforms generating more than 160 projects. Describing Pakistan’s chairmanship as “a major event for the SCO family and a significant milestone in Pakistan’s diplomacy,” she called for upholding the Shanghai Spirit, strengthening security cooperation against the “three evil forces,” pursuing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and upholding true multilateralism. She reaffirmed that China, as Pakistan’s “iron brother,” stood ready to fully support Pakistan’s chairmanship. Ambassador Naela Chohan described the Shanghai Spirit as “a beautiful spirit of friendship” and traced the SCO’s evolution from a border-security mechanism into a major Eurasian platform. Recalling Pakistan’s progression from observer status in 2005 to full membership in 2017, she said integrating CPEC with SCO transit routes could make “the new journey with Islamabad positive, fruitful and progressive.” Dr. Muhammad Khan said the SCO had never sought to become a military organisation and was contributing to a vision of a multipolar world. He described Pakistan’s chairmanship as “a challenging task, a daunting task.—DNA

Briefs

Russian
embassy
school
starts new
academic
year

ISLAMABAD The Embassy of Russia in Pakistan celebrated the beginning of the new academic year on Monday with a special concert at the Russian Embassy School in Islamabad. Addressing the gathering on 'Knowledge Day', Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan Albert P. Khorev congratulated teachers, students, and parents on the start of the academic year. The Ambassador extended a special welcome to diplomats from brotherly CIS countries whose children have joined the Embassy School this year. The event featured cultural performances by students and highlighted the spirit of learning and unity. In a message on the occasion, the Embassy of Russia in Pakistan congratulated all schoolchildren, students, and teachers on Knowledge Day. "We wish everyone a successful academic year filled with new discoveries and achievements," the Embassy stated.—APP

IRSA releases
345,700
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 345,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 362,400 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 235,900 cusecs each. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1220.45 feet, which was 170.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 40,700 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 291,800, 175,800, 129,700, and 134,900 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 30,000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 48,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

TDS testing
pens gain
popularity
water-quality
concerns

ISLAMABAD: Compact digital TDS meters, commonly known as water-testing pens, are increasingly finding their way into households in the federal capital as consumers show growing interest in checking the quality of drinking water and monitoring the performance of domestic filtration systems. The pocket-sized devices, which can provide a Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) reading within seconds, are being widely marketed through online shopping platforms in Pakistan, with prices of basic models generally ranging from around below Rs1000 to Rs2,000, while more advanced multi-function devices cost more. The increased consumer interest comes as households increasingly rely on filtration plants, bottled water and reverse-osmosis (RO) systems and seek convenient ways to monitor their water. A TDS meter measures the estimated concentration of dissolved substances in water, including salts and minerals, and generally displays the reading in parts per million (ppm). Consumers can use the device to compare water from different sources or monitor changes in the performance of an RO or filtration system. However, water-quality specialists caution that a TDS reading should not be confused with a complete test of drinking-water safety. TDS indicates the amount of dissolved material but does not identify individual substances. A handheld TDS meter cannot establish whether water contains bacteria, viruses, pesticides, arsenic, lead or other specific contaminants.—APP

Study says Balochistan
can adapt China's
poverty reduction model

The research argues that while China's development model cannot be replicated wholesale due to differences in political, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts, several policy instruments offer valuable lessons for Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: A newly published policy paper by the University of Balochistan says Balochistan can draw practical lessons from China's internationally recognized poverty alleviation experience by adapting, rather than replicating, its development strategies to local conditions. The 49-page study, China's Anti-Poverty Model and Lessons for Balochistan: Policy Options for Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Balochistan, was authored by Dr. Siraj Bashir Baloch and published on August 28 by the Government Innovation Lab (GIL), housed at the University of Balochistan, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. GIL is an initiative of the Planning and Development Department of the Government of Balochistan, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), while the university's Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) promotes research-driven policy solutions. Drawing on secondary data from government reports, policy documents, international development agencies and scholarly literature, the study employed document analysis, comparative policy analysis and thematic analysis to examine China's anti-poverty policies and assess how relevant policy instruments could be adapted to Balochistan's socioeconomic conditions. The research notes that it relies exclusively on secondary data and emphasizes



es "contextual adaptation and policy learning rather than replication." The paper argues that China's experience offers valuable policy lessons despite differences in governance systems between the two regions. "The research argues that while China's development model cannot be replicated wholesale due to differences in political, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts, several policy instruments offer valuable lessons for Balochistan." According to the study, China's success in eliminating extreme rural poverty stemmed from an integrated development approach combining long-term planning, targeted interventions, institutional coordination and sustained investment in both human and

physical capital. "The thematic analysis identified China's anti-poverty model as a comprehensive and integrated approach that combined strong political commitment, long-term planning, targeted interventions, institutional coordination, and sustained investment in human and physical capital," the paper says. Rather than relying solely on welfare programmes, the research says China addressed poverty through rural transformation, agricultural modernization, employment generation, education, healthcare, digital innovation and effective governance, creating conditions for inclusive and sustainable development. The author argues that Balochistan's poverty is multidimensional, shaped by weak infra-

structure, human capital deficits, governance challenges, climate vulnerability and unequal development opportunities. The study suggests that localized adaptation of China's experience could strengthen poverty reduction by improving rural connectivity, expanding vocational education, promoting agriculture and livestock value chains, supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and enhancing public service delivery. Among the most transferable lessons identified are targeted poverty identification, rural road development and skills training.

"Targeted poverty identification is one of the most transferable elements of China's anti-poverty model for Balochistan," the study states, noting that Pakistan already possesses institutional foundations such as the National Socio-Economic Registry and the Benazir Income Support Programme that could be strengthened through multidimensional poverty indicators and stronger links to education, health and employment programmes. The paper also highlights the importance of expanding rural infrastructure, arguing that better road connectivity would improve market access, reduce production costs and strengthen access to education, healthcare and government services in remote districts. It further recommends greater investment in technical and vocational education to improve employability.—DNA

DIG reviews
training of
officers

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Law and Order, Muhammad Ateeq Tahir on Wednesday visited the Capital Police College and reviewed the academic and practical training activities of officers undergoing training. An official told reporter that the DIG Ateeq inspected the ongoing training process and reviewed measures being taken to improve the professional skills of the officers. During the visit, Ateeq was briefed on the academic and practical training being provided to the officers and efforts to further improve the training process. He also reviewed measures aimed at sharpening the knowledge and practical skills of the trainees to better prepare them for their professional duties.—APP

Efforts afoot
to maintain
greenery of
Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: The Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi is actively carrying out landscaping, plantation, plant maintenance and cleanliness activities across parks, green belts and major roads of the city to make Rawalpindi greener, cleaner and more attractive for citizens. On the special directives of Managing Director Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, daily horticultural and cleanliness activities are being carried out at Qari Khushi Muhammad Park, including watering of plants, pruning, grass cutting, removal of dry branches and maintenance of green areas. According to the agency, sanitation staff are also engaged in daily cleaning of the park, including removal of garbage, dry leaves and other waste. Special attention is being given to walking tracks, seating areas and other public spaces to provide visitors with a clean and pleasant recreational environment. The agency said that maintaining parks and green belts was among its key priorities as greenery not only enhanced the beauty of the city but also contributed to improving air quality and reducing environmental pollution. Field staff are regularly monitoring the condition of plants and trees, while irrigation, trimming, pruning and other horticultural activities are being undertaken according to seasonal requirements. The Horticulture Agency has appealed to citizens to cooperate with the authorities by avoiding littering and refraining from damaging plants and flowers in parks. The agency said horticultural and cleanliness activities would continue across various parks, green belts.—APP

German
lawmakers
visits BISP

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation led by Christoph Schmid, Member of the German Parliament and a member of its Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development, visited the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Headquarters to gain first-hand insights into Germany's development cooperation with Pakistan and its practical impact in the social protection sector. The delegation consisted of Dr. Manuel Winkenbach, Deputy Head of Development Cooperation, German Embassy Islamabad; Maria-Jose Poddey, Country Director, GIZ Pakistan; Tilman Nagel, Head of Unit, GIZ; and Johanna Knoess, Project Head, Adaptive Social Protection, GIZ Pakistan. Additional Secretary BISP Dr. Asmat Nawaz welcomed the delegation and highlighted the importance of Germany-Pakistan development cooperation in strengthening social protection initiatives. Director General NSER/CCT BISP Dr. Asim Ijaz briefed the delegation on BISP's key social protection initiatives, including Benazir Kafaalat, Benazir Nashonuma, Benazir Taleemi Wazaif, Nutrition for Adolescent Girls, Benazir Hunarmand Programme, Mobile Registration Vehicles (MRVs) and Digital Wallets. During

the visit, the delegation observed the practical application of Germany's development cooperation through Mobile Registration Vehicles (MRVs), which take the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) registration process beyond fixed registration centres and closer to communities in remote and underserved areas. Through digital registration and household surveys, the MRVs collect essential household information that helps identify families eligible for social protection programmes. Through German Development Cooperation, 32 MRVs have been provided to BISP, reaching and registering more than 1.37 million people since their deployment across hard-to-reach areas of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. The mobile outreach mechanism is particularly important for vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities and households facing difficulties in travelling to registration centres. The MRVs also strengthen the responsiveness of the social protection system during crises. When floods or other climate-related shocks disrupt access to communities, mobile registration teams can help reach and register eligible households more quickly, enabling them to reconnect with the social protection system. Future satellite connectivity for the MRVs is expected to further strengthen their ability to operate in crisis-affected and connectivity-constrained areas. The delegation appreciated BISP's efforts to strengthen the social protection system through digitalisation, mobile outreach and innovative service delivery mechanisms, and expressed interest in continued cooperation between Pakistan and Germany to advance inclusive and effective social protection. The visit provided an opportunity for the delegation to learn how cooperation between Germany and Pakistan is translating shared development priorities into practical solutions that make social protection more accessible.—DNA

PIDE Senate okays reforms
to boost governance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 19th Meeting of the Senate of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) approved a sweeping set of institutional reforms at a sitting held in Islamabad, chaired by Prof. Ahsan Iqbal (NI), Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives and Chancellor, PIDE. Proceedings opened with recitation from the Holy Quran, after which the Chancellor, in his opening remarks, spoke of Pakistan's development trajectory and the need for a holistic, integrated policy framework — bringing together the public sector, private sector, and academia — to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth. He placed particular emphasis on the role of evidence-based policy in building a sustainable export surplus, underscoring that research must be results-oriented and directly useful to policymakers if it is to move the needle on Pakistan's trade performance. Before turning to the agenda, the Senate paused to place on record its appreciation for the distinguished service of the late Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, a valued member of the Senate, with the House joining in a recitation of Surah Al-Fatiha in her memory. The

Chancellor also welcomed two members joining the Senate for the first time — Dr. Ifkhar Ahmed, elected from the faculty, and Ms. Sima Kamil, former Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan. The Senate confirmed the minutes and compliance report of its 18th Meeting, noting that eleven of the twelve decisions taken at that sitting stand fully implemented, with the allotment of land for the PIDE campus continuing to be pursued with the concerned authorities. The Senate then received a detailed Progress Review and Compliance Report for 2025-26, presented through a documentary narrated by Vice Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Nadeem Javid (SI). Reflecting on the year, Dr. Javid recalled: "When I took on this responsibility, I had one simple belief — that PIDE must matter to Pakistan and its people." He described the year's work not as incremental activity but as a strategic reset built on relevance, national purpose, and doing more with the resources available — framed around the Institute's Institutional Development Strategy 2025–2030 and its central idea of REACH: ensuring that research reaches policy, knowledge reaches government, learning reaches the marketplace, and Pakistani ideas reach wider national and international audiences. Dr. Javid thanked the Chancellor and the Secretary of Planning for their continued support throughout the year.

Pakistan National Pavilion spotlights
culture and literature at China Book Fair

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Pavilion was inaugurated at the 2026 Southern China Book Fair, held at the China Import and Export Fair Complex in Guangzhou from August 27 to 31. The dedicated pavilion, featuring an array of cultural exhibits and literary works, marked an expansion of Pakistan's participation in one of China's largest and most influential book fairs, underscoring the deep cultural and people-to-people ties between the two countries. Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The Southern China Book Fair, first launched in 1993, is a comprehensive book and cultural exhibition that adheres to principles of public welfare, accessibility, mass engagement, and high quality cura-

tion. This year's edition covers approximately 40,000 square meters of exhibition space, featuring 31 specialized pavilions. More than 300 publishing institutions from China and abroad are showcasing over 500,000 titles of publications and cultural creative products, alongside nearly 30,000 original foreign language editions. At the opening ceremony of the Eurasian Pavilion, Sardar Muhammad, Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou, highlighted that books serve as a timeless bridge connecting different languages, peoples, and civilizations. The pavilion features a themed photo exhibition commemorating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. —DNA



MOST EXPERIENCED
MANUFACTURERS &
EXPORTERS OF
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
IN
PAKISTAN

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND
COLOURED BELTS

JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan
Phones: +92-52-3256000 / 3256798
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

ashraf

AI addicts won’t make better workers

US Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh is convinced, and prominent economists agree, that artificial intelligence will meaningfully increase labor productivity. Don’t bet on it. In fact, wider adoption of these models could reduce output per worker. Widespread adoption of new technologies is a cornerstone of economic dynamism. And in the internet era, accessible user interfaces and affordability have been indispensable enablers. Until the early 1990s, technical wizards relied on rigidly structured, text-based tools like Gopher to exchange documents on the internet. Then, the more flexible World Wide Web emerged, spawning browsers – Mosaic, Netscape Navigator and Microsoft’s Internet Explorer – and search engines that were quick, easy to use and cheap. AltaVista, the first “full-text” searchable index of the World Wide Web went from receiving 300,000 hits on its first day in 1995 to more than 80 million daily hits. But AltaVista defaced its results with ugly banners. So, when Google launched its search engine in 1998, users like me fell for its design, without regard to the quality of its results. Google’s success crushed rival search engines and traditional print publishers and its engineers miraculously maintained the efficiency of computing infrastructure to ensure that searching for information remained quick, easy and cheap. But success also then undermined user experience and productivity. As Google became a monopolist, search engine optimizers flooded results with useless links. Traditional media resorted to clickbait. This flotsam forced users to learn new skills: how to select keywords, use Boolean operators (like “AND”) and recognize clickbait. Google further degraded the experience by displaying “sponsored” results at the top of the page. AI chatbots have followed a similar path. ChatGPT attracted a million users in the first five days after its launch in November 2022. As with Google’s initially clean search page, the chatbot’s interface was compelling: users could ask questions in plain English, no Boolean operators required. Unfortunately, ChatGPT turned out to be a mendacious talking horse. Filtering out its fabrications took more time than conducting keyword searches on Google, reducing productivity. Bard – the chatbot that Google, facing an existential threat to its search dominance, rushed to release – was equally disappointing. Filtering out ChatGPT’s fabrications took more time than conducting keyword searches on Google, reducing productivity. Now, more than three years later, Google has shut down Bard and replaced it with both an “AI overview” above its traditional search results and an “AI Mode” option – a chatbot that urges users to

Pakistan’s First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 07 Issue: 08

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



“ask anything.” In my experience, though, the results remain mad-deningly unreliable, even for simple queries. Compared to traditional statistical models, including Google’s pioneering algorithms, large language models appear to offer compelling advantages. With trillions of parameters, they can incorporate contextual factors that earlier models had to ignore. And large language models do not merely inform; they use metaphors and humor in what the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein called “language games” that reassure, explain, flatter, assert and cajole. Like their earlier counterparts, however, large language models rely on statistical extrapolation, assuming futures that repeat the past. That is fine for natural phenomena like protein folding but not for ever-changing goods and services. Small modifications to the layout of a laptop battery, for example, can make instructions on how to replace it useless. Despite this, users – like the participants in Stanley Milgram’s notorious shock experiments – reflexively obey a chatbot’s confident answer. By contrast, traditional search links are better at displaying the outdatedness of information and the unreliability of sources. This gives users more discretion to exercise their judgment, which reduces misfires and costs. Indiscriminately including trillions of parameters magnifies large language models’ extrapolation problems by increasing the likelihood that they will find nonexistent patterns or select irrelevant or unreliable answers from exhaustive, uncured catalogs. Designers of traditional statistical models can restrict variables and data sources to avoid that outcome while controlling computational costs. Once users are hooked, hyperscalers will surely charge high prices to recoup their steep development and operating costs. Large language models’ reliance on statistical extrapolation also makes their conversational interfaces linguistic chimeras. Because they cannot replicate human sense-making and have no real contextual understanding of intent, they do not use language as a “form of life,” to borrow from Wittgenstein again. The pretense that they do has enabled AI peddlers to push chatbots indiscriminately, especially as the narrower applications for which large language models are actually useful cannot justify multitrillion-dollar investments. AI pushers are going all out to addict people. Google’s AI overviews and AI Mode are like a free taste. Once users are hooked, hyperscalers will surely charge high prices to recoup their steep development and operating costs. One might hope that even the most powerful firms cannot dupe consumers into submission. Despite seemingly unlimited resources, Google has had at least as many flops as hits. Meta’s very name memorializes a failed multibillion-dollar bet on virtual reality. But the marketing blitz that has turned junk food addiction into a booming business provides a disheartening counterexample.

The Global Data-Center Race: An Opening Pakistan Cannot Afford to Miss

Qamar Bashir



China recognized this reality early and began constructing not merely individual data centers but an entire computing ecosystem. Its “East Data, West Computing” programme connects demand in the populous and commercially developed east with land, energy and computing facilities in western regions. By mid-2024, China had invested more than \$6 billion directly in eight national computing hubs, with the wider investment stimulated by those hubs exceeding \$28 billion. The clusters contained more than 1.95 million server racks

PRESIDENT Donald Trump has issued a blunt warning to American communities resisting artificial-intelligence data centers: reject them, he argued, and they risk becoming “backwards and poor.” In his August 31 statement, Trump presented data centers as essential infrastructure for economic prosperity, technological leadership and competition with China. His language was confrontational, but the strategic concern behind it deserves serious attention. Artificial intelligence and robotics are likely to be among the most consequential technologies of the coming decades. The countries controlling the computing power required to train and operate advanced AI systems will gain economic influence, scientific capabilities and national-security advantages. Data centers are therefore becoming to the digital age what ports, railways, power stations and industrial zones were to earlier periods of development. China recognized this reality early and began constructing not merely individual data centers but an entire computing ecosystem. Its “East Data, West Computing” programme connects demand in the populous and commercially developed east with land, energy and computing facilities in western regions. By mid-2024, China had invested more than \$6 billion directly in eight national computing hubs, with the wider investment stimulated by those hubs exceeding \$28 billion. The clusters contained more than 1.95 million server racks. China’s approach incorporates electricity generation, high-capacity transmission networks, fibre-optic connectivity, cooling systems, equipment manufacturing and workforce development. Five of its eight national computing hubs are in western China, where comparatively inexpensive land and abundant wind and solar resources can reduce operating costs. Computing requirements generated in eastern technology centres can consequently be transferred to facilities thousands of kilometres away. With a futuristic approach, China built capacity ahead of immediate demand, while setting aside the cost of underutilization in the initial stage. This strategy worked and now these 10 principal national data-center clusters had an overall utilization rate of approximately 63 percent in early 2024. This encouraged China to improve national scheduling, connectivity and coordination. By 2025, China reportedly had 10.43 million standard computing racks in use, while its major hubs were increasingly devoted to intelligent computing. China is, in effect, making a long-term wager: capacity that appears underused today will become strategically indispensable as demand for AI services accelerates. The International Energy Agency estimates that Chinese data centers consumed more than 100 terawatt-hours of electricity in 2024 and that their consumption could double by 2027. China can accommodate such growth because it has simultaneously expanded power generation. At the end of 2025, its installed solar capacity exceeded 1,200 gigawatts and its wind capacity reached approximately 640 gigawatts. The United States possesses superior companies, ad-

vanced semiconductors, enormous capital and many of the world’s best AI researchers. Nevertheless, it is encountering a different problem: translating technological leadership into physical infrastructure. Data-center projects are facing resistance from communities worried about electricity prices, water consumption, industrial noise, loss of agricultural land and tax concessions offered to wealthy technology companies. Residents also question the employment benefits. A hyperscale facility can create thousands of temporary construction jobs, but its highly automated operation may provide relatively few permanent positions. These concerns cannot simply be dismissed as hostility to progress. U.S. data centers consumed approximately 4.4 percent of national electricity in 2023, and researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory projected that their share could reach between 6.7 and 12 percent by 2028. A 2026 analysis identified at least 46 American AI data-center projects delayed or cancelled following community opposition. The backlash has crossed party lines and encouraged municipalities to introduce moratoriums or stricter conditions. Trump is correct that rejecting digital infrastructure indiscriminately could weaken American competitiveness. Local communities are equally justified in demanding that private companies should not transfer their electricity, water and environmental costs to ordinary citizens. The workable solution is a new social contract: developers must finance required grid upgrades, disclose resource requirements, reuse water wherever possible and generate or procure additional electricity. Requiring companies to build dedicated generation can protect households and even add surplus power to the grid. It will, however, increase capital costs. American AI services could become more expensive if every project must separately negotiate land, power, water and local approval while Chinese competitors operate within coordinated national industrial plans. Europe faces comparable constraints. Its difficulty is not necessarily an absolute shortage of electricity but insufficient grid capacity in established data-center centres such as Frankfurt, London, Amsterdam, Paris and Dublin. The European Investment Bank estimates Europe’s installed data-center capacity at about 11 gigawatts, with 15–20 gigawatts in the development pipeline. In Dublin, grid pressure produced a de facto restriction on new connections and requirements for on-site generation. Planning procedures, high energy costs and environmental rules can further slow construction. This combination creates an opportunity for countries able to offer politically acceptable sites, reliable energy and competitive costs. Pakistan should consider positioning itself as one such destination. Pakistan possesses important advantages: a large and young population, an English-speaking technology workforce, relatively inexpensive land and labour, growing digital demand and a geographic position connecting South Asia, Central Asia, China and the Middle East. Its government has already adopted a Cloud First Policy and

approved a National Artificial Intelligence Policy. A domestic data-center industry could improve cloud availability, strengthen data sovereignty, develop specialized engineering skills and attract foreign investment. Nevertheless, Pakistan cannot sell ambition alone. Electricity is its central challenge. Data centers require continuous, high-quality power; outages of even seconds can be costly. Pakistan should therefore identify dedicated “digital infrastructure zones” where investors can construct captive solar, wind, hydro, gas or nuclear-supported generation, combined with batteries and reliable grid connections. Any surplus electricity could be supplied to neighbouring communities under transparent agreements. Water policy must be equally rigorous. Pakistan is already water-stressed, so offering unlimited cheap water would be economically and environmentally irresponsible. Facilities should be directed toward locations where they can employ closed-loop cooling, treated wastewater, air cooling or other low-water technologies. Projects must undergo credible environmental review and guarantee that household and agricultural supplies will not be displaced. The government must also establish dependable data-protection rules, cybersecurity standards, tax certainty, streamlined approvals and international connectivity through diversified fibre and submarine-cable routes. Pakistan must compete through reliability and sound policy—not merely low wages or weak regulation. Security, political continuity and contractual enforcement will matter as much as land prices. The objective should be a negotiated partnership with companies such as Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Meta, Oracle and major international data-center operators. Pakistan could offer prepared sites and coordinated approvals in return for locally generated power, workforce training, university partnerships, environmental safeguards and minimum domestic investment commitments. China’s experience demonstrates that successful computing infrastructure depends on an ecosystem, not a warehouse filled with servers. The American and European experience demonstrates that ignoring local costs produces resistance and delay. Pakistan should learn from both: plan with China’s strategic horizon while protecting communities through transparent and enforceable standards. The opportunity is real, but it will not remain open indefinitely. Pakistan’s Ministry of Information Technology, energy authorities, provincial governments and investment agencies should jointly prepare a credible national data-center strategy and begin presenting bankable projects to global investors. If Pakistan acts quickly and responsibly, the worldwide struggle to accommodate AI infrastructure could become a powerful source of technology, skills, electricity investment and long-term national prosperity.

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

To end global hunger, invest in rural communities

Esther Ngumbi

Unfortunately, recent studies suggest that agricultural productivity in hunger-affected regions remains severely constrained by extensive soil degradation despite decades of attempts to improve soil health. Recognizing that poor soil threatens food and nutrition security, rural livelihoods and environmental sustainability, African leaders endorsed the 10-year African Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and the longer-term Soil Initiative for Africa Framework in 2024. Food insecurity remains more prevalent in rural communities...

THE UN recently released its “State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026” report, which, perhaps surprisingly, delivered some encouraging news. While roughly 645 million people experienced hunger in 2025, that was nearly 14 million fewer than in the previous year. For the first time in a decade, the number of hungry people in Africa also declined. But despite these positive developments, significant regional disparities persist. Most notably, the report found that food insecurity remains more prevalent in rural communities and disproportionately affects women. The key question facing governments and development organizations, then, is how to improve food security in those communities and accelerate progress toward eliminating hunger. Four priorities stand out. First, enhancing food security in rural communities requires boosting agricultural productivity on existing farmland in ways that are sustainable and minimize environmental impacts. As growing populations place increasing demands on agricultural systems, simply expanding farmland risks accelerating deforestation and environmental degradation. Producing more on existing farmland is thus essential to meet rising demand without further damaging natural ecosystems. Healthier soils are critical to efforts to boost agricultural productivity. Any strategy to strengthen food security in rural communities must therefore begin with a simple but fundamental question: Are soils healthy enough to support sustainable increases in crop production? Unfortunately, recent studies suggest that agricultural productivity in hunger-affected regions remains severely constrained by extensive soil degradation despite decades of attempts to improve soil health. Rec-

ognizing that poor soil threatens food and nutrition security, rural livelihoods and environmental sustainability, African leaders endorsed the 10-year African Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan and the longer-term Soil Initiative for Africa Framework in 2024. Food insecurity remains more prevalent in rural communities and disproportionately affects women. The good news is that once the foundational questions about soil health and quality have been answered – using available soil health tests, as well as science-based indicators and assessments – corrective measures can be taken. There are numerous principles and practices for building soil health, including cover cropping, intercropping, crop rotation, rotational grazing and the use of organic fertilizers and biofertilizers, as well as minimizing soil tillage, maximizing soil cover, increasing biodiversity and maintaining living roots. Second, efforts to improve soil health must be accompanied by investments in rural farming communities. Food producers need access to improved seed varieties, biofertilizers, water and emerging technologies such as precision agriculture. Together, these investments could further boost agricultural productivity and bolster food security. Third, stronger land tenure is crucial to improving food security in rural communities. Land tenure security has long been recognized as a fundamental pillar of agricultural production, development and rural transformation, incentivizing farmers to make long-term investments in restoring soil health and adopt other productivity-enhancing practices. The link between stronger land rights and agricultural productivity is well documented. This link is particularly important for women, who contribute significantly

to agricultural production yet remain disadvantaged in land ownership and tenure security. Although the effects of greater land tenure security vary across regions and policy contexts, ensuring women’s ownership rights can advance gender equality, enhance agricultural productivity, support rural livelihoods and deliver lasting improvements in food security. Greater productivity will protect livelihoods and help rural communities move from hunger to abundance. Lastly, governments must invest in the infrastructure that connects rural producers to markets, including electricity, refrigerated transportation and roads. Better access to urban markets can help farmers generate additional income by enabling them to sell more of what they produce. Improved transport networks can also lower costs, enabling farmers to reinvest their savings in advanced technologies, thereby reducing postharvest losses while diversifying into a wider range of higher-input crops. With healthy soils, access to agricultural inputs and emerging technologies such as precision agriculture and artificial intelligence, robust land tenure rights and upgraded infrastructure, rural farms around the world could sustainably increase agricultural productivity. Greater productivity would, in turn, protect livelihoods and help rural communities move from hunger to abundance. But time is of the essence. While the latest decline in global hunger is encouraging, sustaining and building on this progress will require considerable investment in the rural communities where food insecurity is most entrenched, in Africa and beyond.

– Esther Ngumbi is Associate Professor of Entomology and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. ©Project Syndicate

Briefs

Pak pledges continued peace efforts

FROM PAGE 01
Qatar following the Tehran trip also demonstrated momentum in efforts to resolve the conflict. He said Pakistan would continue pursuing dialogue and diplomacy to promote peace and stability in the region. On the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), Andrabi said the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague had reaffirmed that the treaty remained fully enforced and binding, rejecting India's unilateral attempt to place it in so-called abeyance. Two days ago, the Hague-based court said that the treaty between the two countries remained fully in force, as India had no justification for ending or suspending the agreement.

Saudi Arabia says Iran attacked...

FROM PAGE 01
the security of global energy supplies," the Saudi foreign ministry said. "Bahri remains in continuous contact with the vessel and is coordinating closely with the relevant authorities and maritime industry stakeholders, while continuing to closely monitor developments," the company said in a statement. In July, another Bahri vessel, the Wedyan supertanker, was hit while passing through the strait close to Oman's coast. Two other Bahri vessels, Masa and Amzan, were attacked in the Red Sea in July and August after the Iran-backed Yemen's Houthis declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia.

Iran targets US assets in Middle East

FROM PAGE 01
Washington did not immediately comment on the reports, although US President Donald Trump had warned earlier of "much harder and higher" attacks if Iran retaliated to US strikes. The Jordanian army said it intercepted 10 ballistic missiles fired from Iran, and did not confirm any injuries or hits. Three other missiles landed in remote areas, it said. Missile and drone attacks were also reported in Kuwait, where the army said they were responding to Iranian hostilities, and AFP reporters in Bahrain heard alert sirens for airborne attacks ring out early on Wednesday. Iran's army said it launched drone attacks targeting US forces at an air base in Bahrain, a key Washington ally in the Gulf. In Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Wednesday that they struck US bases with missiles and drones, destroying a maintenance centre, warehouses and equipment, state-run IRNA reported.

Jailed Imran's sister files...

FROM PAGE 01
Dr Uzma filed her first contempt plea on August 25 after the government transferred the jailed former prime minister to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) for a medical examination instead of Shifa International Hospital as per the top court's directives. The Supreme Court, in its August 18 order, had directed the authorities to transfer the former premier, incarcerated at Adiala Jail, to Shifa International Hospital for a medical examination. A day ago, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered jail authorities not to keep former prime minister Imran and his wife Bushra Bibi in solitary confinement while disposing of petitions challenging their alleged isolation in jail. IHC's Justice Khadim Hussain Somroo announced the verdict reserved on petitions seeking to declare the alleged solitary confinement of Imran and his spouse Bushra illegal. The petitions were filed by Aleema Khanum on behalf of Imran and Mubashra Khawar Maneke, the daughter of Bushra Bibi, against the alleged solitary confinement of the former first couple.

Fin Minister meets Deutsche Bank's Regional CEO

The Finance Minister highlighted opportunities to attract greater investment from international as well as regional, particularly Saudi-based companies, specifically in infrastructure, energy, oil and gas, utilities, mining and minerals, technology and blockchain, and other productive sectors



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Mr. Jamal Al Kishi, Regional CEO, Middle East & Africa, Deutsche Bank, accompanied by Ali Haider Zaidi, Country Manager Pakistan, to discuss Pakistan's economic outlook, investment opportunities and avenues for greater engagement by Deutsche Bank. The Finance Minister briefed the participants on Pakistan's recent economic pro-

gress and the Government's efforts to institutionalize structural reforms and establish a sustainable, export-led growth trajectory. He highlighted improvements in the country's fiscal position, external account and overall macroeconomic stability, as well as positive validation from international rating agencies and partners. He noted that the improvement in Pakistan's credit profile was an important milestone and that the Government remained focused on further strengthening the country's standing in international markets. Mr. Jamal Al Kishi congratulated the Fi-

nance Minister and his team on the progress achieved over the past two years, particularly in fiscal consolidation, balance of payments, exports and remittances. He appreciated the improvements and expressed confidence that these developments provided a strong foundation for more sustainable and well-grounded economic progress. On external financing, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb outlined Pakistan's medium-term strategy, including efforts to manage and diversify the composition of the country's external debt and deepen engagement with international capital mar-

kets and financial institutions. He highlighted the fiscal space created through ongoing reforms and stressed the importance of expanding access to diversified sources of external financing.

The Finance Minister highlighted opportunities to attract greater investment from international as well as regional, particularly Saudi-based companies, specifically in infrastructure, energy, oil and gas, utilities, mining and minerals, technology and blockchain, and other productive sectors. He underscored the importance of strengthening private-sector participation and facilitating greater engagement by Saudi-based multinational companies interested in exploring opportunities in Pakistan.

Mr. Al Kishi reaffirmed Deutsche Bank's long-term commitment to Pakistan and expressed interest in broadening the Bank's product offering and coverage across corporate banking and investment banking. He noted the Bank's interest in developing a broader appetite for Pakistani exposure and further strengthening its presence in the country. He also highlighted opportunities to support greater engagement with MENA region, particularly Saudi-based companies, and explore investment and financing opportunities across key sectors. The Finance Minister welcomed Deutsche Bank's continued engagement and appreciated its support for Pakistan. He emphasized the importance of sustained collaboration with international financial institutions and private-sector partners to mobilize investment, deepen financial markets and support Pakistan's long-term economic growth.

Swiatek banks on renewed confidence as Medvedev battles to regain lost form

DNA

NEW YORK: The U.S. Open kicks off its second round on Wednesday, with seventh seed Daniil Medvedev looking to shake off his struggles in the lead-up to the tournament, while former champion Iga Swiatek looks to build on newfound confidence. Top seed Aryna Sabalenka also continues her title defence, while finalist Jessica Pegula looks to end the Belarusian's reign as the world's number one. Despite winning Wimbledon last year, Swiatek could not make the most of the season, suffering two semifinal exits at the Australian Open and the French Open,

before losing in the US Open's quarterfinals. She partnered with coach Francisco Roig in April, working to improve her serve and forehand. But the results were not immediate as she exited the French Open in the fourth round, before a third-round stumble at Wimbledon. But the eighth seed clinched a smooth victory in the US Open's first round, boosting her confidence as the six-time Grand Slam winner looks to claim a second US Open title. "I just feel like my work clicked. All these things that I needed to do with Francis ... it became more automatic," Swiatek said. "I'm happy that this work paid off and it's getting the

results now." Former champion Medvedev has often struggled with consistency on the biggest stages, as he has yet to reach a Grand Slam's quarterfinals since the 2024 US Open. The 30-year-old suffered a third-round loss at Wimbledon in July and things went further downhill last month with early exits from three tournaments. But Medvedev looked calm and determined as he beat Hugo Gaston in straight sets in the first round. "Last couple of weeks weren't easy, but you know how it is, sometimes you lose matches, sometimes you win ... I'm really glad the way I played," said Medvedev. But for Medvedev, known for his fiery temper and fre-

quent on-court outbursts, maintaining consistency has been the biggest challenge, and he will be tested by wildcard Sebastian Gorzny, who made his Grand Slam main draw debut with a first-round win over world number 38 Raphael Collignon. Pegula, who lost to Sabalenka in the US Open final in 2024 and last year's semifinals, is not worried that she has yet to win a major. The American, ranked number three in the world, is more interested in reaching the summit of the WTA rankings, dethroning Sabalenka. "I'd like to win a major, and I think the number one spot will be more available if I'm able to do that."

Australia axe Marnus Labuschagne for Zimbabwe, South Africa ODI series

DNA

THE experienced batsman, a key pillar of their World Cup-winning side in 2023, paid the price for poor recent form with his future as a Test player also on the line. Australia three ODIs in Zimbabwe and another three in South Africa this month, before a three-Test series against the Proteas in Durban, Gqeberha and Cape Town in October. The Test squad will be named at a later date. With Australia's World Cup defence just a year away, selectors included batting prodigy Peake, 19, and talented all-rounders Davies, 22, and Connolly, 23, as they usher in a new generation. Mitch Marsh, fellow opener Travis Head and quick Josh Hazlewood return after missing ODI series in Pakistan and Bangladesh earlier this year. Fast bowlers Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc will only play the three matches in South Africa as their workloads are managed. But there are plenty of other pace options with Spencer Johnson, Nathan Ellis, Xavier Bartlett and Billy Stanlake all in the 17-player touring party. Adam Zampa is the only specialist spinner, with Matthew Kuhnemann dropped. "This six-game series is an important lead-in to next year's World Cup, being played in the same countries, for the group," said chief selector George Bailey. "As such it's great to have Mitch (Marsh), Travis and Josh returning, then Pat and Mitch (Starc) for the SA leg.

Jasprit Bumrah back in India's T20 squad

DNA

NEW DELHI: India, led by Shreyas Iyer, have a near full-strength 15-man squad for the matches to be held at New Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium on September 13, 15 and 17. The 32-year-old Bumrah has not bowled since the second ODI of the England series in Cardiff on July 16 due to an impact injury he suffered in the match. Apart from Bumrah, three other players including Harshit Rana, Washington Sundar and Nitish Kumar Reddy have made the squad but will need fitness clearance by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to play. Teenager Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was also named in the squad after responding to a disappointing debut series in England with two half-centuries against Zimbabwe in July. Afghanistan, who have long used India and the United Arab Emirates as home venues, will officially be the hosts for the series. Squad: Shreyas Iyer (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Sanju Samson (wicket-keeper), Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Tilak Varma (vice-captain), Shivam Dube, Nitish Kumar Reddy*, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar*, Varun.

Aaqib Javed defends Pakistan's mid-series shake-up

THE PCB's to sack red-ball head coach Sarfraz Ahmed — to replace him with white-ball head coach Mike Hesson — send seven players home and replace bowling coach Umar Gul with Australian Ashley Noffke has attracted widespread criticism, with former players and coaches questioning the wisdom of making sweeping changes with a Test still remaining in the series. Selection committee member Misbah-ul-Haq subsequently resigned after reportedly not being consulted over the changes. Speaking on a private news channel after the developments, Aaqib acknowledged that the selectors would have to take responsibility for the 17-member squad they had originally chosen but argued that the team's management had failed to make the required decisions during the tour. "When we select a team, we sit with the coach and captain and build a squad. We are absolutely prepared to take responsibility for that squad," Aaqib said. "But when you go on tour, you have to make the kind of combination you need from match to match." Pakistan have lost both Tests against England, by an innings and 103 runs at Headingley and by 194 runs at Lord's, leaving them 2-0 down in the series. Aaqib said the selectors had identified options within the touring squad, including an all-rounder, a

second wicket-keeper and fast bowler Ubaid Shah, but those options were not used. "I also spoke to the captain and the coach before this Test match and told them to play your fast bowler, Ubaid Shah, because you have played three fast bowlers of essentially the same type," he said. He also pointed to the lack of bowling options among Pakistan's top seven batters as a reason for considering an all-rounder. According to Aaqib, the inclusion of a bowler such as Ubaid, who can shoulder a significant workload, would have changed the balance of the attack. "When you include a fast bowler like that, your entire bowling composition changes," he said. The selector also defended the decision to alter the wicket-keeping arrangement, saying Ghazi Ghori, who was part of the touring squad, could have been considered in place of Mohammad Rizwan. Aaqib's comments appeared aimed at drawing a distinction between the selectors' responsibility for picking the squad and the management's responsibility for deploying it effectively. However, he acknowledged that the selectors could not escape responsibility altogether. "The 17-member squad... I don't think anyone had any doubts that there was something wrong with the players' performances or that there was some deficiency in the squad," he said. — DNA

Naqvi defends cricket...

FROM PAGE 01

"I have never been afraid of criticism, and I never will be," Naqvi said, adding that criticism from those who had not achieved anything themselves made no difference to him. He said if a great player like former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram spoke, he would take it seriously, but dismissed others who claimed he was not giving enough time to cricket, saying they simply did not know the facts. He said those raising concerns about Pakistan cricket were not genuinely worried about the game — their real issue was with him personally. Naqvi acknowledged that Pakistan's Test cricket performance had been very poor but said the team's white-ball form had improved during his tenure. He noted that Pakistan currently ranked fifth in ICC ODI rankings and sixth in T20 rankings. "Those who say cricket has been destroyed since I came — look at what the rankings were before," he said. He also said he would not tolerate the humiliation of players and that his confidence in them remained intact.

PM Shehbaz Sharif vows to boost...

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan as a welcome development. He said declaring Lahore and the Kyrgyz city of Osh twin cities would help strengthen cultural ties between the two countries. PM Shehbaz said that both countries will also work together against terrorism and extremism, and address climate change. The prime minister thanked the Kyrgyz president for his "excellent hospitality" and congratulated the leadership and people of Kyrgyzstan on Independence Day. He also congratulated Kyrgyzstan on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and praised its leadership for successfully hosting the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. Following their bilateral meeting, the Kyrgyz president personally drove PM Shehbaz to the airport to see him off. Earlier, PM Shehbaz was warmly received upon arrival at the presidential palace, where he was accorded a guard of honour.

London Mayor becomes...

FROM PAGE 01

the mayor said he is the victim in this case and should not have been prosecuted and convicted. "This is a scam, which is a crime," the spokesperson said. "It's not the first time the mayor has been victim of a scam involving people falsely stating that Sadiq is the owner of a vehicle. "Such behaviour is illegal, and the DVLA are aware." After Lord Khan expanded the Ultra Low Emission Zone (Ulez) to cover the whole of London, he faced a wave of protests, including from motorists who said they planned to register their car in the mayor's name — supposedly to make him liable for the £12.50 daily charge. The prosecution was brought by the DVLA through the Single Justice Procedure, a controversial fast-track court process which allows magistrates to sit in private to deal with low-level criminal cases.

PM convenes emergency meeting on PIMS affairs

FROM PAGE 01

Officials informed him that interim findings are being implemented in line with the Prime Minister's directives. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that no leniency will be shown to officials found guilty of criminal negligence. He instructed the Minister for Health and the Health Secretary to personally ensure their presence at PIMS Hospital on alternate days, overseeing reforms and improvements under their direct supervision.

Second goal for Summerville and first for Watkins as Al-Hilal brush past Al-Ahli

DNA

RIYADH: If there was any doubt the recent off-field tensions between Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli might spill onto the pitch, the doubt was emphatically dispelled on Tuesday evening. Ten cards were shown during their delayed Saudi Pro League matchday 3 clash, including a booking for Al-Hilal head coach Simone Inzaghi. Despite the behind-the-scenes drama, however, the result never really appeared in any doubt after an early Al-Hilal goal, and in the end, the Blues cruised to a 3-0 home victory with the goals coming courtesy of Sergei Milinkovic-Savic, Crysencio Summerville and Ollie Watkins. Both clubs have been dealing with issues of various kinds in these early stages of the season, some of which have caused conflicts between them, given that they are connected by the common threads of ownership by the Public Investment Fund, Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund. Their comparative transfer activity, for example, has sparked controversy. With Al-Ahli in desperate need of a midfielder to replace the departing Franck Kessie, the signing of Artem Bondarenko did little to

appease supporters, and his glaring miss in a 3-1 defeat by Al-Kholood last weekend did little to help the Ukrainian's cause as he struggles to win favour with the fans. Al-Hilal, meanwhile, secured the services of Ollie Watkins, offloaded Karim Benzema and Ali Al-Bulayhi by mutual consent, and are reportedly finalizing a deal with Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli. After the PIF announced in August the acquisition of the remaining shares in both clubs (as well as the other two members of Saudi football's "big four," Al-Nassr and Al-Ittihad), an aggressive social media campaign alleging favoritism toward Al-Hilal emerged online. Adding fuel to the fire in the lead-up to Tuesday's game, retired Al-Ahli icon Taiseer Al-Jassam, during an appearance on official Saudi football broadcaster Thmanyah, compared the two sides' transfer activity and alleged that Al-Hilal's deals were being financed by an "unknown source." This prompted Al-Hilal to release an official statement expressing their displeasure about the comments — which was followed, just hours before kickoff, by the blockbuster announcement that many fans had been waiting for: Kingdom Holdings, headed by Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, had officially

acquired 70 percent of Al-Hilal, making the club the first of the big four to be privatized. Whether or not all the controversy and behind-the-scenes developments were the reason, what followed when the actual match got underway was one of Al-Hilal's best performances under Inzaghi. In the ninth minute, Summerville received the ball deep in his own half before weaving past Mohammed Bakor and driving toward the box, carrying the move into the final third. His pass toward Sultan Mandash was intercepted by Zakaria Hawasawi but Mandash quickly recovered to slip Milinkovic-Savic through on goal, and the Serbian blasted the ball past Edouard Mendy for the opener. Summerville got a goal of his own just 15 minutes later, after a Roger Ibanez clearance fell to Ruben Neves outside the box. The midfielder evaded Eduard Spertsyan and Ziyad Al-Johani to thread a through ball to Summerville, who finished from a tight angle at the near post to give Al-Hilal a two-goal lead. It was his second strike in two games, after grabbing his first goal for the club against Al-Khaleej on Friday. The pressure on Al-Ahli continued to mount and they conceded an indirect

free-kick in the box when Mendy handled a back pass around the half-hour mark. But it was in the minutes just before the half-time whistle when Al-Ahli's game completely fell apart. In the third minute of first-half stoppage time, Ivan Toney was booked for a challenge on Al-Hilal right-back Mohammed Mahzari. Merih Demiral decided to enter the fray, pulling Mahzari up from the ground by his shirt and sparking a scuffle between the players. Demiral was booked, a member of Al-Ahli's coaching staff was sent off, and the team found themselves playing with two center-backs each on a yellow card, Ibanez having been booked in the 11th minute. It took only three minutes for Al-Ahli's worst fears in this situation to be realized, when Demiral fouled Summerville in transition to earn his marching orders just before half-time, capping a dismal first 45 for the visitors. The second half began with the introduction of Watkins for Mohammed Kader Meite. Meanwhile, Al-Ahli made three changes as they shifted into a 4-4-1, with Firas Al-Buraykan coming on at right wing in place of Francisco Trincao, who had failed to make much of an impression against an energetic Al-Hilal.

Briefs

Pakistan,
KSA sign
Cybersecurity
agreement

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in the field of cybersecurity. The agreement was signed by Pakistan's Federal Minister for Information Technology, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and Saudi Arabia's National Cybersecurity Authority (NCA) Governor, Engineer Majed AlMazayed, said a news release issued by the ministry of IT and Telecommunication. The MoU aims to protect the cyberspace and vital interests of both countries. It will also facilitate the exchange of expertise to address emerging cyber threats. The agreement is expected to further enhance bilateral and global cooperation in the field of cybersecurity. Earlier, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday met the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organisation (DCO), Deemah AlYahya, on the sidelines of the LEAP 2026 global technology conference in Riyadh. The meeting discussed ways to promote and strengthen bilateral cooperation in the digital sector. The two sides also exchanged views on emerging technologies and digital transformation. They agreed to promote innovation in the digital economy and enhance cooperation among DCO member states. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further promoting technical exchange and digital cooperation among member countries.—APP

PSX sheds
over 1,690
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a sharp bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 1,690.40 points, a negative change of 0.96 percent, to close at 174,776.60 points against 176,466.99 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 610.181 million shares, compared to 784.466 million shares traded in the previous session, while the traded value decreased to Rs31.861 billion from Rs37.410 billion. Market capitalization declined to Rs19.581 trillion from Rs19.782 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 501 companies that traded in the ready market, 113 posted gains, 356 suffered losses, while 32 remained unchanged, reflecting a strong downward trend in the market. Cnergyco PK led the volume chart with 124.890 million shares, followed by WorldCall Telecom with 38.703 million shares and Pak Refinery with 37.676 million shares. Among the top gainers, PIA Holding Company Limited B surged by Rs100.00 to close at Rs17,400.00, while Buxly Paints Limited advanced by Rs92.68 to settle at Rs1,019.45. On the losing side, The Thal Industries Corporation Limited declined by Rs54.11 to close at Rs1,151.35, while National Refinery Limited fell by Rs36.12 to Rs524.55. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 191.215 million shares with a traded value of Rs12.220 billion, compared with 254.050 million shares worth Rs13.967 billion in the previous session.—APP

FM, ADB VP discuss expanded
coop as ADB hails eco progress

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb noted that the Government's focus was now shifting from macroeconomic stabilisation towards sustainable and inclusive growth, with greater emphasis on investment, exports, employment generation and private-sector participation

ISLAMABAD: Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday hailed Pakistan's progress in macroeconomic stabilisation, fiscal management and economic stability, while reaffirming its readiness to expand cooperation with the government on structural reforms, SME value chain financing, and other sectoral priorities areas. ADB Vice President for South, Central and West Asia, Yingming Yang, called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, along with his team, and discussed Pakistan-ADB cooperation, investment, SME value-chain financing and other development priorities. Yingming Yang congratulated the minister and government's progress in macroeconomic stabilisation and commended the improvements achieved in fiscal management, the external account and overall economic stability, according to press release issued by finance ministry. He also appreciated the positive developments in Pakistan's sovereign credit ratings, describing the

progress as evidence of the country's continued reform efforts and improved economic fundamentals. Yang reaffirmed ADB's commitment to supporting Pakistan's development priorities and noted the strong alignment between the Bank's strategic priorities and the government's reform agenda. The ADB Vice President highlighted the importance of maintaining fiscal prudence while supporting Pakistan's transition towards sustainable growth. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb appreciated ADB's longstanding partnership with Pakistan and its continued support for the government's reform agenda. He highlighted the importance of institutionalising reforms in areas including domestic resource mobilisation, public finance, energy, insurance, pensions and other key sectors to establish a sustainable growth trajectory. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb noted that the Government's focus was now shifting from macroeconomic stabilisation towards sustainable and inclusive growth, with greater emphasis on

investment, exports, employment generation and private-sector participation. He welcomed ADB's expanding engagement beyond sovereign financing, including support for private-sector operations and public-private partnerships. Access to finance, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), was discussed as an important component of Pakistan's growth and export strategy. Aurangzeb highlighted the government's efforts to expand financing for SMEs and strengthen their capacity to contribute to employment, investment and exports. The importance of integrating SMEs into global value chains and enhancing their competitiveness was also underscored. The meeting also reviewed the insurance transformation programme, public-private partnership initiatives and efforts to improve project readiness and implementation capacity. The Finance Minister further stressed the need to mobilise greater domestic and private capital, including through innovative financing

structures, co-financing and stronger participation of international development and financial institutions. He highlighted the potential for expanding cooperation in infrastructure, transport, clean energy, water resource management, climate resilience and other priority areas. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed ADB's continued engagement under Pakistan's Country Partnership Strategy and stressed the importance of aligning future support with the Government's priorities of private-sector-led growth, export competitiveness, access to finance, infrastructure development, climate resilience and social protection. The discussion also covered pension reforms and institutional strengthening, with the Finance Minister appreciating ADB's continued technical support. Both sides discussed ongoing and pipeline policy-based operations, recognising their role in supporting key structural reforms and long-term economic transformation.—DNA

PM Apna
Ghar Scheme
spurs 117%
surge in
housing
finance

ISLAMABAD: Housing finance under the "Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Scheme" has recorded a significant 117 percent increase in just two months, with financing approvals exceeding Rs313 billion, reflecting growing demand for affordable housing and construction activity across the country. According to the latest figures by the Ministry of Finance on Wednesday, more than 53,100 housing loans have been approved under the initiative, while over Rs45 billion has already been disbursed to beneficiaries. The sharp rise in housing finance is expected to generate economic activity well beyond home ownership by stimulating demand for construction materials, creating employment opportunities and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) associated with the housing and construction sectors. The expanding flow of housing finance is also opening up new investment opportunities for both domestic and international investors, particularly in construction, building materials, housing development, allied services and related industries. Pakistan continues to face a substantial housing deficit, estimated at around 10 to 12 million housing units, highlighting the scale of unmet demand and the potential for sustained investment in the sector. The growing housing finance market could therefore serve as an important catalyst for economic activity, linking home ownership with investment, employment generation and broader economic growth. Homes, investment, jobs and growth are increasingly becoming interconnected through the expansion of housing finance under the PM Apna Ghar initiative.—APP

Uber plans
10% work-
force cut to
trim staff

LONDON: Uber Technologies said on Wednesday it will cut about 3,300 jobs, or roughly 10% of its workforce, in a restructuring aimed at removing management layers, consolidating teams and reducing costs. The cuts follow a difficult year for Uber shares, which have fallen nearly 8% and underperformed the broader S&P 500, amid investor concerns that autonomous ride-hailing companies such as Waymo could threaten Uber's dominant North American market share. The company had about 34,000 employees globally at the end of last year, according to its annual report. The layoffs would be Uber's largest since May 2020, when the company cut about 6,700 jobs, or nearly a quarter of its workforce, as pandemic restrictions crushed demand for ride-hailing services. Echoing a broader push across the tech industry to stay nimble, CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said the cuts would reduce organizational complexity that had slowed down Uber's decision-making and created roles focused on co-ordination. But unlike several tech executives, he did not blame the cuts on AI.—APP

Scientists urged to formulate
agri projects for CPEC

Rana Tanveer Hussain lauded the enduring strategic partnership between Pakistan and China and emphasized that the livestock sector constitutes 60 percent of the country's agricultural economy and remains vital for rural livelihoods and food security

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday called upon agricultural scientists and researchers to develop focused and innovative projects under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0). Addressing a vaccine handover ceremony, which was held at the National Agricultural Research Center (NARC), the minister said that the agriculture would be a key component of the mega initiative aimed at enhancing productivity, modernizing the sector and strengthening Pakistan's economy. Rana Tanveer Hussain lauded the enduring strategic partnership between Pakistan and China and emphasized that the livestock sector constitutes 60 percent of the country's agricultural economy and remains vital for rural livelihoods and food security. The minister said that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China donated veterinary vaccines against Lumpy Skin disease and Brucellosis. He expressed profound gratitude to the Chinese government, its ministry and the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan. Highlighting the critical economic weight of the sector, Rana Tanveer noted that livestock contributes significantly to agricultural GDP, provides employment to millions of rural households and sup-



plies essential commodities including milk, meat, hides and skins. He warned that dangerous diseases like lumpy skin disease and Brucella melitensis pose serious threats to animal health, reproduction and milk production, resulting in heavy economic burdens for smallholder farmers. Under the directives of Prime Minister, the government was placing a paramount focus on boosting agricultural productivity, he said adding that as part of these reforms, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences has been engaged to provide recommendations for modernizing premier research institutions like the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), with implementation slated to begin over the next two to three months. Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to leveraging China's advanced expertise in agricultural science, technology and disease control, the minister noted that

1,000 Pakistani students have already returned after acquiring practical knowledge in China and are being integrated into various agricultural sectors. He announced that the process to send an additional 1,000 students to China is already underway and will be completed by March. Turning to bilateral frameworks, Rana Tanveer stressed that agriculture forms a major component of the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0). He urged PARC scientists and researchers to formulate targeted projects to maximize developmental benefits from CPEC 2.0. Rana Tanveer Hussain assured that the donated vaccines will be administered efficiently under strict regulatory guidelines, proper cold-chain management and effective monitoring.—DNA

Punjab industries
minister chairs PBTE
Board meeting

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industries & Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain Wednesday visited the Punjab Board of Technical Education (PBTE), where he inspected the working of the One-Window Services and Complaints Cell and chaired a meeting of the Board members. The meeting reviewed a 15-point agenda items. PBTE Chairman Dr. Faisal Mahmood gave a detailed briefing on the digitization of the Board's operations, reforms introduced in the institution, and its restructuring. The Board approved various administrative and financial matters including the appointment of a Medical Advisor and hiring of an HR company for human resource management. Eleven policies relating to assessment and certification were assigned to different Board members for review. The policies will be finalized and implemented in light of the recommendations of the Board members. Addressing the meeting, Provincial Minister Chaudhry Shafay Hussain said, the affairs of Punjab Board of Technical Education had been digitized to ensure transparency in the examination system. Digital monitoring of examination centres, e-marking of examination papers, and their digital transmission system had been introduced. He said, agreements were also being made with international organizations for international certification. "Promotion of quality technical education and preparation of a skilled workforce according to market needs is the government's top priority," he added. The provincial minister said that laboratories at various TEVTA institutions had been upgraded with funds provided by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Courses in Arabic, German, Japanese and Korean languages, in addition to Chinese, had also been introduced at TEVTA institutions. He said, AI courses were also being launched this month at the Punjab Tianjin University of Technology. Chaudhry Shafay Hussain directed the authorities to review the working of technical education boards in China, Canada and other countries and explore best practices. The provincial minister observed that there was a huge demand for skilled manpower in the international market. He said the federal and provincial governments were focusing on sending skilled workers abroad through legal channels. PBTE Chairman Dr. Faisal Mahmood said, the Punjab Board of Technical Education was being restructured in line with modern requirements.—DNA

10 missing as
Turkish cargo
ship sinks

ISTANBUL: A Turkish cargo ship sank in the Marmara Sea near Istanbul after colliding with a second vessel, with rescuers searching for its 10 crew members, Turkish officials said Wednesday. The incident occurred before dawn when the ALSU, an empty oil tanker, collided with the Tugberk Imamoglu, a cargo ship carrying rolled steel which sank shortly afterwards, the transport ministry's maritime directorate said on X. "Due to the Tugberk Imamoglu not responding to any calls and the crew not answering their mobiles... it is believed the cargo ship has sunk," it said. The collision occurred 18 nautical miles off Silivri district on the western edge of Istanbul province, with Transport Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu telling journalists the damaged vessel had sunk "very quickly". "We received the emergency call at 3:26 am. If we accept the captain's reported (collision) time of 3:15, we can say the sinking occurred very rapidly, within just 11 minutes," he said. "We spotted life buoys and a lifeboat but it was empty. Unfortunately, no survivors have been found so far," he said, indicating that search and rescue operations were ongoing. He said there were 10 people on board: the captain and nine other crew members, all of them Turkish nationals. The cargo ship went down in waters that were approximately 900 meters (more than half a mile) deep, with 14 vessels and a helicopter involved in search and rescue efforts, the maritime directorate said.—APP

Can Syria-Israel talks
deliver deal or only
delay the next clash?

LONDON: Syria says it remains committed to US-mediated negotiations with Israel, even though days before Damascus reaffirmed this position Israel's defense minister stood on the captured slopes of Mount Hermon and made it clear that Israeli troops had no plans to leave. Analysts say the negotiations appear less like a route to a comprehensive settlement than a channel to prevent the conflict from escalating. "The process currently serves to manage escalation more than to close an agreement," said Nanar Hawach, a senior Syria analyst at the International Crisis Group. The core disputes, including Israel's withdrawal from Syrian territory, the extent of demilitarization in southern Syria, and the future of the southern governorate of Sweida, remain unsettled, Hawach told Arab News. Samy Akil, a Syrian political researcher and analyst, described the effort as a "renewed and genuine diplomatic push, driven largely by US and regional pressure," but said Israel had little incentive to negotiate in earnest. The talks could become "a mechanism for managing escalation" that might eventually pave the way for a security agreement, Akil told Arab News. But he added: "I don't see this happening anytime soon." Damascus, he said, had indicated it was willing to provide security guarantees for Israel. Israeli officials, however, continue to regard Syria as a "potential threat," and have faced little in the way of deterrence to discourage their operations inside the country. "I don't think that the Israelis will be willing to engage constructively or in good faith at the current stage, largely because they don't have to," Akil said. Domestic politics might further narrow the room for compromise. "Israeli elections in late October constrain what Israeli leaders can concede" on the core questions under negotiation, Hawach said. "Any potential breakthrough would likely come after the vote." Akil agreed, saying Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government was likely to showcase its military superiority and image as Israel's security guarantor ahead of the vote. Ghassan Ibrahim, editor-in-chief of Syria Focus, said Israel's public messaging on Syria should be viewed through a political lens. Netanyahu seeks to project strength by portraying himself as a leader who will deal with Syria as he has dealt with Gaza and Lebanon, he added. "The current Israeli government, led by Netanyahu, sees war not simply as war, but as a political tool — for popularity and, ultimately, to avoid court proceedings," Ibrahim said.—DNA

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

DAILY ISLAMABAD POST/DNA AND UZBEKISTAN OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY "DUNYO" JOIN HANDS

STRONGER TOGETHER: BUILDING BRIDGES OF INFORMATION AND FRIENDSHIP

Daily Islamabad POST/Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) and Uzbekistan's official news agency "DUNYO" join hands to promote accurate reporting, cultural understanding, and stronger diplomatic relations.

Islamabad POST
A Credible Daily Newspaper
CENTRELINE
Largest Diplomatic Magazine

DNA
DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY

DUNYO
UZBEKISTON MILLI AXBOROT AGENTLIGI



Briefs

Trump
nominates
Hung Cao
as US Navy
secretary

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he would nominate acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao for the permanent position. Trump said he could think of "no one better" to be the US Navy's top civilian leader. "We need Patriots like Hung leading our Navy and Marine Corps," he wrote on Truth Social, calling for the Senate to confirm his choice as quickly as possible. The Pentagon announced in April the departure of Cao's predecessor, John Phelan, without providing an explanation for the sudden exit. Since returning to office in January, Trump has overseen a purge of top military personnel. Army Secretary Dan Driscoll submitted his resignation on Monday, following reports of tensions with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. Hung Cao was born in Vietnam and resettled as a refugee in the United States in 1975. He retired from the Navy five years ago. In 2022, he failed in his bid to be elected to the US Congress as a Republican in Virginia. — APP

Most Swedish
parties want
action against
Israel

STOCKHOLM: Most Swedish parliamentary parties support greater national measures against Israel to curb its abuses in the Occupied Territories, Human Rights Watch reported on Wednesday. The organization, citing six civil society groups, said the findings contradict existing Swedish government policies, suggesting that there is a far greater appetite for punitive measures against Israel than policy reflects. The six groups released a survey ahead of general elections on Sept. 13. Seven of the eight parties in parliament responded to the poll, a joint scheme by Act Church of Sweden, Amnesty International Sweden, Diakonia, HRW, the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society. Christina Abdulahad, advocacy officer at HRW, said: "This survey provides important information from the Swedish parliamentary parties on the steps Sweden needs to take to address grave human rights concerns with the Israeli government."

"It is crucial for Sweden's next government, whatever its composition, to bring Swedish policy in line with its international legal obligations." All seven parties support Sweden's obligation to enforce International Criminal Court arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as targeted EU sanctions. — APP

Ebola outbreak
surpasses
3,000 deaths

LONDON: The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has killed 3,007 people out of 6,186 confirmed cases (people), according to Dr. Jean-Jacques Muyembe, director of the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in a statement released Wednesday. Dr. Muyembe said, "The disease is spreading at an unprecedented rate, outpacing our efforts to track and contain it." According to Dr. Muyembe, the outbreak has resulted in 6,186 confirmed cases (people) and 3,007 deaths (people) since it was declared in mid-May. Dr. Muyembe added, "This is the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak ever recorded." The World Health Organization (WHO) has corroborated these figures and described the situation as requiring urgent international attention. Factors contributing to rapid spread Health officials and international observers have attributed the rapid spread to several factors. Ongoing conflict in the eastern region, where the outbreak is concentrated. — APP

Uzbek envoy greets Pakistan
on assuming SCO chair

The ambassador spotlighted the Uzbekistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan railway project as a transformative initiative, stating: "Uzbekistan believes that this railway can become much more than just a transport route. It can become a bridge between Central and South Asia"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad hosted a grand reception this evening to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Republic of Uzbekistan's independence. The event, attended by senior government officials, diplomats, parliamentarians, and business leaders, highlighted the robust and expanding strategic ties between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Geographic Reference Federal Minister for Energy, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In his welcome address, Uzbekistan's Ambassador extended heartfelt gratitude to Minister Leghari, describing his presence as a "clear sign of the friendship, respect, and strong partnership between Uzbekistan and Pakistan." In his remarks, the Ambassador detailed the sweeping transformations witnessed in Uzbekistan over the past decade under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. He emphasized that the country's reforms are centered on human dignity, economic growth, and international openness. Key figures shared during the speech included a significant reduction in poverty from 35% to approximately 4% and a dramatic increase in higher education enrollment, which now stands at 1.6 million students. "For millions of Uzbek families, higher education for their children is no longer only a dream; today, it is a real opportunity," the Ambassador noted.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev welcomes Federal Energy Minister Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari at the Independence Day reception. — DNA

The Ambassador characterized the current state of Uzbekistan-Pakistan relations as "one of the most active and successful periods in their history." He reflected on the landmark state visit of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Pakistan earlier this year and the reciprocal visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Tashkent, which resulted in

the establishment of a High-Level Council of Strategic Partnership and the signing of 30 bilateral agreements. Highlighting the personal rapport between the two leaders, the Ambassador stated, "The friendship and trust between President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif are the

main driving force behind the growing relations between our countries."

The Ambassador also congratulated Pakistan on assuming the Chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), reaffirming Uzbekistan's full support for Pakistan's leadership in fostering regional stability and cooperation.

A key focus of the address was the ambitious goal to increase bilateral trade to \$2 billion within the next five years. The Ambassador noted rapid progress in direct connectivity, with weekly flights between the two countries set to increase to nine by October 2026, including routes to Karachi. He spotlighted the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project as a transformative initiative, stating: "Uzbekistan believes that this railway can become much more than just a transport route. It can become a bridge between Central and South Asia." The evening featured traditional Uzbek cuisine and a cultural performance, aiming to bring a "small part of Uzbekistan" to Islamabad. The Ambassador concluded his speech by emphasizing the enduring fraternal ties between the two nations.

"May the friendship between Uzbekistan and Pakistan pass from generation to generation," he said. "May our two nations always stand together—in friendship, in prosperity, and in brotherhood." The event concluded with a collective toast to the Republic of Uzbekistan and the enduring partnership between the two brotherly countries.

Pak set to sign agreements
with five oil refineries for
\$6 billion investment

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to sign long-delayed agreements with five oil refineries on Thursday, paving the way for more than \$6 billion in planned investment to modernise ageing plants, boost local petrol and diesel production and reduce reliance on imports. The agreements with Pak-Arab Refinery Ltd. (Parco), Pakistan Refinery Ltd. (PRL), National Refinery Ltd. (NRL), Cnergycio and Attock Refinery Ltd. (ARL) are being finalised through back-to-back meetings between the Petroleum Division and Inter-State Gas Systems (ISGS), a senior official of the Petroleum Division told The News on Tuesday. "The signing parties are ready, and most probably these will be inked on Thursday," the official said. The government has authorised ISGS to sign the agreements and oversee implementation, replacing an earlier arrangement under which the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) was expected to manage the process. Upgraded plants would also be able to process a

wider range of crude, including Iranian and Russian supplies, subject to applicable laws and international sanctions, according to an ISGS official.

Meanwhile, the multibillion-dollar refinery upgrade programme risks getting stuck at the stage of "paper agreements" if changes in the incentive mechanism make projects difficult to finance, with industry circles warning that replacing jointly controlled escrow accounts with government-controlled accounts could undermine bankability and create fresh hurdles in achieving financial close. Industry sources told The News that getting refineries to sign agreements under the Brownfield Refinery Policy should not itself be considered an achievement if the contractual and financial framework ultimately fails to satisfy lenders. "Signing an agreement is only the first step. Agreements and MoUs do not bring investment — bankable projects do," a senior industry source said. "The real achievement will be when lenders accept the structure, financial close is achieved and investment actually starts flowing into refinery upgrades."

number of flights reflects passenger confidence and rising demand," the statement added.

Pakistani flights had been banned from flying to the European Union, the United Kingdom and the US in June 2020, after one of its aircraft crashed in Karachi, killing nearly 100 people on board. The European Union Air Safety Agency had barred PIA from operating in EU countries over safety concerns, and the ban on flights followed then-aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan's statement on the floor of parliament, where he termed pilots' licences "dubious". The European agency lifted the ban after more than four years on Nov 28, 2024. In July 2025, the UK also removed Pakistan from its Air Safety List, allowing Pakistani airlines to apply to operate flights in Britain. In September 2025, PIA received approval to resume direct flights to the UK after a gap of nearly five years. The airline subsequently restarted operations, with Manchester becoming the first destination. In March, PIA also resumed direct flights to London.

PIA to increase
weekly flights
to London

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Wednesday said that it would be increasing its weekly flights to London from four to seven starting October 27. Under the new schedule, five flights would depart from Islamabad while two would operate on the Lahore-London route, the airline said in a statement. "The increase in the

Pakistan Navy commences
SEASPARK-2026 exercise

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy commenced a major maritime exercise in Karachi on Wednesday to test combat readiness against threats, according to the Inter-Services Public

Relations (ISPR). The opening brief of the maritime exercise, named SEASPARK-2026, was presided over by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and attended by senior officers from other branches of the armed forces, the military's media wing said in a press release.

"The exercise rigorously tests Pakistan Navy's combat readiness against conventional and emerging maritime threats, integrating ships, submarines, aircraft, unmanned systems, marines, special forces and joint Army and Air Force elements," the statement said.

The ISPR added that the exercise focuses on rehearsing multi-domain operations by "integrating maritime, air, land, cyber and space-enabled capabilities", as well as operations in the information environment to "secure decisive advantage in the information battlespace" alongside kinetic operations at sea. Earlier, the naval chief also visited fleet units of the Pakistan Navy and reviewed ongoing operations. In an address, he stressed that the evolving security environment demands "uncompromising readiness, enhanced tri-service integration, adaptability and effectiveness across physical and information domains". In April, the navy conducted a successful test of the indigenously developed "Taimoor" air-launched cruise missile. The same month, it concluded a bilateral maritime exercise aimed to enhance interoperability and maritime cooperation between the navies of Pakistan and China. The exercise comprised two phases, including a five-day port visit to Karachi and a two-day sea phase in the North Arabian Sea.

At least 21
die in bus
accident
in Egypt's
South Sinai

CAIRO: At least 21 people were killed in a bus accident on Egypt's Dahab-Nuweiba road in South Sinai on Wednesday, the health ministry said. A number of Jordanians were on the bus and initial information indicated some were killed and injured, Jordan's foreign ministry said. The area along the Red Sea coast is popular with tourists. Twenty ambulances rushed to the scene of the accident, between the popular tourist towns of Dahab and Nuweiba on South Sinai's eastern coast, the ministry said.

The victims included 10 people from Jordan, according to state television in the kingdom. "Ten Jordanians died after a passenger bus overturned on the Dahab-Nuweiba road in Egypt's South Sinai governorate," Jordan's official Al-Mamlaka channel said, adding that the bus was carrying 43 people in total. Authorities said the injured were receiving medical care, but did not reveal the cause of the crash. The area is a popular tourist destination, known for its marine biodiversity, natural beauty, and mountain hiking trails. Car crashes are common in Egypt and often blamed on reckless driving, poor maintenance, and uneven law enforcement. — APP

Afghan girls
find refuge
Rwanda
campus

KABUL: According to SOLA officials, the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA) inaugurated its permanent campus in Rwanda in 2024, marking a significant milestone for Afghan girls' education. The campus, which began classes this month, is not visible from outside the compound, and its location is closely guarded for safety reasons, according to SOLA officials. Shabana Basij-Rasikh, founder of SOLA, stated, "That's exactly what this place represents for us — a permanent home for our girls. I'm so grateful for the welcome that we have received."

SOLA's relocation and new beginnings in Rwanda Following the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to power, Basij-Rasikh and SOLA's students and faculty relocated to Rwanda. — APP

Families hold
symbolic funerals
in Nepal

KATHMANDU: Nepali families held symbolic funerals on Wednesday to "liberate the souls" of relatives missing since deadly flash floods swept away their villages and homes in the Himalayan region a week ago. Emergency teams have recovered more than 1,100 bodies, and nearly 4,500 people are missing after the gigantic wave of freezing water, rocks and debris triggered by a high-altitude glacial collapse roared down the China-Nepal border on August 26. After days of searching shelters and mortuaries, relatives of some of the missing lost hope and began conducting last rites, burning straw effigies in Hindu rituals. "We had to do this to set his soul free, so that he is at peace and happy wherever he is," said Dolma Newar Tamang, flanked by her sobbing son, at a funeral for her husband. He had been en route to China when the disaster struck. "I called repeatedly, but he never picked up." A week on from the colossal disaster, Nepali rescuers are still seeking survivors, including by digging through packed sludge that has entombed multiple tunnels of hydropower plants. So far, rescuers have recovered only bodies from tunnels, but teams were still digging, drilling and blasting through debris. Nepal's Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said he still hoped some missing could be alive. — APP







Stay. Dine. Relax. Get Rewarded.

Join Prestige Club today and turn every dollar you spend into rewarding experiences.

Earn points and redeem them across rooms, dining, Maisha Spa, and laundry.

Download the app and earn 500 bonus points after your first USD 50 spend as a member.

serenahotels.com | prestigeclub@serenahotels.com

Democratic Republic of Congo | Kenya | Mozambique | Pakistan | Rwanda | Tajikistan | Tanzania | Uganda