



Islamabad POST

Saturday, September 05, 2026

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 40

Govt committed to enhance ties with private sector

Detailed News On Page-08

PPPs sell off critical for Pak economy

Detailed News On Page-07



Elon Musk's wheel-free taxi service

Detailed News On Page-06



Meets ADB VP

Pak economy put on right track: PM

Reaffirming the government's steadfast commitment to long-term economic transformation, the Prime Minister stressed that the administrative bottlenecks are being actively dismantled through dedicated execution task forces

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif hosted a breakfast meeting in honour of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice President for South, Central, and West Asia, Mr. Yingming Yang. The meeting reviewed the multi-decade development partnership and chart out priority interventions under the new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) 2026-2030. Welcoming Mr. Yang on his first official visit to Pakistan in this capacity, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded ADB's consistent professionalism and responsiveness in delivering transformative urban infrastructure, transport, and public service projects in Pakistan. The Prime Minister emphasized that Pakistan has successfully navigated a difficult economic turnaround through rigorous fiscal, structural, and governance reforms. These corrective actions have restored macroeconomic stability, reinforced investor confidence, and earned stable outlook upgrades from major international credit rating agencies including Fitch, Moody's, and S&P. Reaffirming the government's steadfast commitment to long-term economic transformation, the Prime Minister stressed that the administrative bottlenecks are being actively dismantled through dedicated execution task forces. A central focus of the discussions was the modernization of the

Continued on Page 06

PM's meeting with Ambassador Olara Otunnu

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Ambassador Olara Otunnu, candidate for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif today. He was accompanied by H.E. Mr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Special Envoy of the President of Uganda and Former Prime Minister of Uganda. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, and Foreign Secretary Amb. Amna Baloch were also present. During the meeting, the Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. He also underscored the need for ensuring respect for international law and international treaties. He emphasized that Pakistan would continue to render strong and abiding support for

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Over 21 killed in South Sudan

CAIRO: Clashes in southern Sudan have killed at least 21 people, including women and children, a doctors' group said Friday. Sudan Doctors Network, which tracks violence throughout the war in Sudan, said that the rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, or SPLM-N, launched an attack on Thursday in the areas of Debi and Luweri in the town of Kauda in South Kordofan. Rebel leader Abdel Aziz al-Hilu has aligned his fighters with the Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which has been battling the Sudanese military since 2023. The war killed at least 59,000 people, displaced some 13 million and pushed parts of the country into famine. Al-Hilu's group has been active in South Kordofan and joined a local government set up by the RSF. - APP

Israeli PM renews calls to expel Gazans

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Two Israeli ministers floated proposals this week for the mass removal of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, resurfacing an idea voiced repeatedly by right-wing politicians over the past three years as they seek to rally supporters ahead of an election. The calls by two of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's political allies have revived Palestinian fears that Israel ultimately aims to forcibly expel them from Gaza despite US-led diplomatic efforts to end the conflict there. Far-right security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir laid out a seven-year plan for removing Gaza's population through "voluntary emigration" during a press conference on Thursday night. He said he would seek the creation of a "ministry in charge of emigration" in the next government.

Pak rejects India's politically motivated claims over temple

Hindu temple's structure was damaged on July 21 due to torrential rains, says FO spokesperson

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday rejected India's "false and politically motivated assertions" regarding damage to a Hindu temple in Narowal, saying the building was damaged in torrential rains. The rebuttal comes after the Indian foreign ministry said it had noted with "deep concern" the reports about the alleged destruction of the historic Hindu temple in Adda Siraj, an area of Punjab's Narowal district. "We categorically reject the false and politically motivated assertions made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs regarding the Hindu temple at Adda Siraj, Narowal," FO Spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan said. According to the FO spokesperson, the temple's structure was damaged on July 21 due to torrential rains, unlike the false propaganda being peddled by India. "The local authorities have already surveyed the rain damage and initiated steps for the restoration of the building," Khan said, terming it "shameful" that India was distorting facts and resorting to "cheap gimmicks". The FO spokesperson main-

tained that India's deliberate distortion of facts cannot distract attention from its abysmal record of systematic persecution of minorities and state-sponsored attacks against their places of worship. "The world is well aware of the weaponisation of Hindutva ideology against minorities," he said, adding it must hold the Indian leadership accountable for the persecution of Muslim, Sikh and Christian communities. United Nations and human rights groups say abuse of Indian minorities has risen in recent years. They point to rising hate speech, a religion-based citizenship law, the demolition of Muslim-owned properties, the removal of Muslim-majority Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's (IIOJK) autonomy and an anti-conversion legislation that challenges freedom of belief. The FO's response comes amid a wider Hindutva push targeting medieval mosques and Islamic-era monuments in India, with campaigners claiming that they were built over Hindu temples. Such claims have gained momentum since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014.

Continued on Page 06

48 India-backed terrorists killed across Balochistan

Cache of ammunition and improvised explosive devices destroyed on-site, says military's media wing

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have neutralised 48 terrorists associated with Indian proxies, Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khawarij, over the last 48 to 72 hours in different parts of Balochistan, said Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Friday. According to the military's media wing, the security forces have conducted multiple intelligence-based operations in Balochistan's Mastung, Quetta, Kalat, and Sibi against Indian proxies, killing 36 terrorists. On September 4, during an operation in Mastung, terrorists' movement was identified and engaged by security forces; an intense fire exchange resulted in the killing of six Indian sponsored terrorists. A cache of ammunition and improvised explosive devices were also destroyed on-site, said ISPR. "In another engagement, an IBO was conducted in general area Shaban, district Quetta. During the conduct of operation, own troops identified four Khwarij hideouts and after an ensuing fire exchange neutralised 26 Khwarij," read the statement. In Kalat, the security forces raided a hideout and killed two Indian sponsored terrorists. In the Bhag area of district Sibi, swift response by security forces in conjunction with the local pop-

ulation foiled a terrorist attempt to raid the police station, Bhag. During the exchange of fire, two Indian sponsored terrorists were killed, said the ISPR. The military's media wing said that sanitisation operations were being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area. The ISPR vows that the relentless counter terrorism campaign under the vision "Azam e Istehkam" by the security forces and law enforcement agencies will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country. Pakistan witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban came into power. According to a report by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), the two provinces remained the country's main hotspots for violence during the second quarter of 2026, with KP emerging as the worst-affected region. The report stated that KP and Balochistan together accounted for nearly 96% of all violence-related fatalities recorded during the quarter. Of the total deaths, more than 61% (475) were reported in KP, while Balochistan accounted for 34% (265). KP also recorded the highest number of

Continued on Page 06

NATIONAL DAY OF VIETNAM



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest MNA Nasir Shah, Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan Pham An Tuan, Heads of Missions of the ASEAN countries cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Vietnam. - DNA

Trump says will ask EU states to repay US aid

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said he will ask Europeans to repay the American aid provided to Ukraine under the administration of his predecessor Joe Biden. Trump has long demanded that Europeans shoulder more of the cost of Western support for Ukraine in its war with Russia, which began more than four years ago. "Hundreds of Billions of Dollars was given to Ukraine and NATO, free of charge, that Europe would have paid for - If they were only asked, but we will be asking for that money, though somewhat belatedly!"

Continued on Page 06

US strategic petroleum reserve at a 44-year low

DNA

ANADOLU reports that the US' Strategic Petroleum Reserve has fallen to 286.6 million barrels - its lowest level since 1982. Since the US launched its war on Iran, 30 per cent of the 415m barrel stockpile have been lost. Meanwhile, The US Treasury has announced new sanctions targeting a Turkish bank over its alleged ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), part of Washington's renewed attempts to economically isolate Tehran, AFP reports.

Continued on Page 06

PPP has rejected the move

Planning minister proposes creation of up to 15 new provinces

Ahsan Iqbal calls for constitution of committee to start national debate on country's administrative structure

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal has proposed the creation of 12 to 15 new provinces, urging Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to constitute a committee to review the country's administrative structure. "I have proposed that a committee be made, on administrative reforms, through the law minister that can at least start a national and political debate on what can and cannot be done," he told The News. "At the end of the day, you need to build a political consensus to do this [create new provinces]." Iqbal added that he was waiting for the prime minister to return from Kyrgyzstan before taking up the matter with him. Iqbal's proposal comes as a decades-old debate over Pakistan's provincial structure has resurfaced. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi raised the issue in July, and Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry called for a serious debate a day later. Minister Iqbal said Pakistan's four provinces had become increasingly centralised and monopolistic over the years, contributing to a breakdown in the delivery of social services such as health and education. "I would say we need 12-15 new provinces," Iqbal said. "Divided all provinces into three each.

Continued on Page 06

Close contest expected in Skardu election

NEWS DESK

GILGIT: A close contest between a PPP and an independent candidate is expected as the by-election in the GBA-09 (Skardu-III) constituency is set for Saturday. The GB Election Commission had announced the by-election in the constituency after the GB Supreme Appellate Court had disqualified PPP candidate Fida Muhammad Nashad, who had been notified as a returned candidate in the June polls. Nashad's son, Akhtar Abbas, will now contest the elections on PPP's ticket, while Mohammad Ajmal will be in the field from PML-N. Former minister Mohammad Saleem, who is contesting as an independent, will also be among 10 candidates who have filed their nomination papers. According to the election schedule, 33,000 voters will cast their ballots as polling will run from 8am to 5pm. In a statement issued on Friday, GB Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

Continued on Page 06

ChikTok
BY MONAL GROUP

WHERE EVERY BITE GOES VIRAL

NOW OPEN IN F-11 & I-8 MARKAZ

Shimla interchange vital for better connectivity

ABBOTTABAD: Commissioner Hazara Division Shahidullah Khan has said that the proposed Shimla Interchange on the Hazara Motorway will help improve connectivity between Abbottabad and Sherwan Road and facilitate smoother movement for commuters. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting at his office to review the proposed construction of the Shimla Interchange near Sherwan Road, immediately after the Shimla Hill Tunnel, the first tunnel on the Hazara Motorway. The meeting was attended by Station Commander, Station Headquarters Abbottabad, General (R) Ayaz Saleem Rana, Additional Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad and Assistant Director of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Highway Authority, Abbottabad. The Commissioner directed the relevant authorities to carefully examine all technical and administrative aspects of the project, particularly the proposed access road linking the interchange with Sherwan Road. Officials briefed the meeting on the proposed location, need and utility of the interchange, as well as the access road and its connectivity with the existing road network.—APP

IAEA course on Nuclear Crop Breeding concludes

ISLAMABAD: A two-week International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Regional Training Course on the "Application of Nuclear and Molecular Technologies for Enhancing Biotic and Abiotic Stress Resistance in Crop Breeding" concluded at the Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB), Faisalabad. Organized by NIAB, a constituent institution of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), in collaboration with the IAEA, the course brought together 34 participants from 17 countries, including six from Pakistan, said a news release. Dr. Shakeel Abbas Rofi, Member (Science), PAEC, was the Chief Guest at the concluding ceremony, highlighted PAEC's contribution to Pakistan's socio-economic development through the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology. He said PAEC's four specialised institutes in agriculture and biotechnology, NIA, NIAB, NIFA and NIBGE, are working to develop climate-resilient crops, promote sustainable farming practices and support national food security. Highlighting PAEC's wider contribution, he said its 21 cancer hospitals cater to nearly 80 per cent of the country's cancer patients, while its six nuclear power plants contribute around 3,500 MW of electricity to the national grid. He also referred to PAEC's work in advanced research and human resource development through institutions including PIEAS, KIN-POE, CHASCENT and PINSTECH. Dr. Rofi noted that NIAB is an IAEA Collaborating Centre for nuclear techniques in food and agriculture, reflecting its recognized expertise and longstanding.—APP

Haroon discusses digital media landscape with Ciarlatani

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, Ugo Ciarlatani, has called on Minister of State/Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Digital Media Fahd Haroon at his office in Islamabad. SAPM Fahd Haroon welcomed Ambassador Ugo Ciarlatani on assuming his diplomatic responsibilities in Pakistan and wished him a successful tenure. He expressed the hope that his appointment would further deepen the longstanding and friendly relations between Pakistan and Italy. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on the evolving new media landscape, international media trends and

Nayyar for national consensus on new administrative units

Policy decisions without stakeholders input cannot deliver sustainable solutions: Sardar Tahir Mehmood

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Chairman Senate and senior political leader Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari has called for a broad-based national debate and consensus among all provinces and political parties before proceeding with the creation of new administrative units, stressing that such an important decision must be based on consultation, mutual understanding and consensus of all stakeholders. Speaking during an interactive session at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) here on Friday Syed Nayyar Bukhari said that the concerns raised by ICCI leadership regarding Islamabad's governance were valid and deserved proper consideration and implementation. Referring to sealing of buildings, notices and deadlines issued to commercial property owners, he stressed that responsibility should be fixed and CDA officers and staff held accountable wherever negligence or failure to perform duties had contributed to the present situation. On NFC distribution, he said that since the existing mechanism primarily provided for distribution among provinces, the issue of Islamabad's share also needed to be taken up and an appropriate solution found. ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood in his welcome address emphasized that the business community must be meaningfully involved in the formulation of any new governance structure or policy. He said that businessmen were among the major contributors to the national exchequer and, therefore, deserved an effective role in decision-making. He stressed that businessmen, MNAs, public representatives and other stakeholders should be taken on board to develop workable and sustainable solutions. Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that CDA's planning, infrastructure and civic facilities must be aligned with the city's actual and future requirements. He further raised concerns over the practice of taking broad action against private institutions, businesses and commercial buildings after incidents



such as fires, saying that the recent 15-day deadline issued to private plazas for the installation of holistic firefighting equipment demonstrated the need for a strong, practical and transparent framework rather than ad-hoc measures. Former Minister Chaudhry Imtiaz Safdar Warrich, former State Minister Tasneem Qureshi as well as former MPA Ms. Sania Kamran also shared their views on governance, institutional coordination and issues confronting the business community. They emphasized that the Chamber should maintain stronger

engagement with decision-makers, stakeholders and influencers and regularly bring them together to discuss business concerns, with the objective of achieving clear and practical outcomes rather than limiting the process to discussion alone. ICCI senior member Babar Bhatti highlighted the ICCI role for ease of doing businesses for the benefit of the community as well as the country. The session was hugely attended by ICCI Executive members as well as the business community representatives.

KP to introduce comprehensive transport policy

PESHAWAR: Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to introduce a comprehensive transport policy for the first time in the history of the province. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transport Policy 2026 will be the first policy of its kind in the transport sector in the province and among other provinces of the country. The policy will be formally implemented after approval from the provincial cabinet. A consultative session of stakeholders from various institutions and departments was held on the Draft Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transport Policy 2026 at a local hotel in Peshawar on Friday. Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Transport and Mass Transit, Samiullah Khan, attended the session as the chief guest. The session was attended by Secretary Transport Muhammad Zubair, Managing Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority Iftikhar Ahmad, Chief Executive Officer TransPeshawar Dr. Syed Murtaza Asghar Bukhari, Secretary Provincial Transport Authority, Director Transport and representatives of various government departments and institutions. During the session, participants shared their valuable suggestions and recommendations regarding the draft policy, while the policy's lead consultant, Dr. Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, gave a detailed presentation on its key features, objectives, and important aspects. Addressing the consultative session, Special Assistant Samiullah Khan said that introducing a transport policy is an honour for the province and

the credit goes to the entire team of the Transport Department. He stated that this policy is a major achievement for the transport sector, as no other province in the country has previously introduced such a comprehensive transport policy.

He said that the government will continue to introduce effective projects for the improvement of the transport sector through teamwork, while incorporating suggestions and feedback from the public and stakeholders. He added that the vision of public service and welfare provided by the founding Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Imran Khan, through his decades-long struggle, will continue to guide efforts for public welfare. Samiullah Khan further said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi, the provincial government will continue working for the betterment of the people with a transparent vision focused on public facilitation. The Special Assistant said that several new projects are being introduced in the transport sector. An MoU has been signed with the Federal Ministry of Railways regarding the Circular Railway Project. Similarly, an electric bikes project is being launched to facilitate women and female students in commuting to educational institutions and other destinations. He said preparations for the initial launch of the electric bikes project in Peshawar have been completed, while the project will later be expanded to other areas of the province.—APP

Kundi directs committee to resolve withholding sales tax issue

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday directed the formation of a committee comprising officials of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department to resolve the issue of withholding sales tax deduction on purchases made by government departments. He issued these directives while chairing a high-level meeting held at Governor House regarding the deduction of withholding sales tax on procurement of goods by government departments. The meeting was attended by Adviser to Chief Minister on Finance, Muzammil Aslam, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, officials of Finance Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA), Planning and Development Department, Local Government Department, FBR, Accountant General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other concerned officials. The participants held a detailed discussion on the federal withholding sales tax applicable to purchases made by government departments. Legal and financial aspects of tax deductions, existing procedures and challenges faced by departments were also reviewed during the meeting. Governor Kundi emphasized that matters related to withholding taxes should be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution and law. He said the issue should be resolved in line with the practices and arrangements of other provinces, adding that the committee comprising FBR and Finance Department officials would work towards finding a viable solution to the matter.—DNA

Efforts afoot to beautify Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: The Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi is taking various measures to enhance the beauty and greenery of the city by carrying out plantation and horticultural maintenance activities along major roads, green belts, intersections, flyovers and other important locations. On the directives of Managing Director Horticulture Agency Rawalpindi, Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, lush green plants and seasonal flowers have been planted in planters installed along the Sixth Road Flyover. According to officials, regular watering, pruning, trimming and cleaning of the plants are being carried out to maintain their healthy and attractive appearance. Dry or damaged plants are also being replaced with new ones. The officials said the Sixth Road Flyover, being one of the major road corridors of the city and used by thousands of commuters daily, has been given special attention to enhance its aesthetic appeal and provide citizens with a pleasant environment. They said horticultural teams were working on a daily basis at various locations of the city to maintain plants, trees, green belts and roadside greenery. New plants and seasonal flowers were also being planted at different locations, while existing green spaces were being rehabilitated. Officials said plantation and landscaping not only improved the aesthetic appeal of the city but also helped reduce environmental pollution, improve air quality and mitigate the impact of rising urban temperatures.—APP

FJWU, KOICA partner to advance women's AI empowerment

RAWALPIND: Marking a milestone in female technological leadership and higher education, Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) hosted a high-level delegation from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to institute bilateral cooperation in Artificial Intelligence (AI), computing, capacity building and advanced academic research. The visiting KOICA delegation comprised Deputy Country Director Harim Go, Young Professional/Researcher Dae-Yeon Kim and Manager Abdul Rehman Khan. FJWU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza (TI) presided over the high-level meeting, joined by Dean Faculty of Science and Technology Prof. Dr. Azra Yasmin, Director Institute of Computer Science and Engineering Prof. Dr. Nargis Bibi, and Director Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) Dr. Hisham alongside senior university officials. During the proceedings, Prof. Dr. Nargis Bibi delivered an exhaustive briefing detailing FJWU's academic evolution, research milestones—APP

Students commemorate Defence Day

RAWALPINDI: Highlighting the historic resolve between the armed forces and the nation during the 1965 war, students and administrative leadership commemorated Defence Day with intense patriotic fervor, academic speeches, and cultural performances at Allama Iqbal Mission High School on Friday. Addressing the gathering, Principal Yasir Rehman underlined the strategic and moral significance of September 6, saying that the defence of the homeland during the 1965 conflict remains an enduring testament to national unity, faith and military valour. He emphasized that the joint resolve demonstrated by the armed forces and the civilian population successfully thwarted enemy designs, establishing a legacy of supreme sacrifice that continues to guide national defence policy. Vice Principal Misbah Tahir appraised students how courageous armed forces countered enemy's attack and saved the motherland.—APP

Alternative learning opportunities to bring back OOSC

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Department is placing special emphasis on bringing out-of-school children back into the formal education system and alongside expanding the capacity of existing schools is also focusing on creating alternative learning opportunities through distance learning and Non-Formal Education (NFE). This was stated by Muhammad Ejaz Khalil, Procurement Specialist, Elementary and Secondary Education Department KP, while addressing a post-budget seminar on girls' education organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of

Women (KPCSW) in collaboration with Blue Veins Organization here Thursday. The seminar was attended by Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Syed Wiqar Shah, parliamentarians, representatives of the Education Department, civil society and media. Speaking on the occasion, Ejaz Khalil said various schemes had been launched under the 2026 budget to increase student enrolment, with a special focus on girls' education. He said 73 new projects had been included in the Education sector for fiscal year 2026-27 at a total cost of Rs125,142.348 million, with an allocation of Rs. 3,893.582 million

for the first quarter. He said the government was working on construction of around 10,000 additional classrooms to enhance the accommodation capacity of existing educational institutions. Similarly, he said, work was underway to convert 50 mosques into government primary schools, enabling children in the respective areas to access formal education through existing religious institutions. Around 300 Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) centres have also been established across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to provide educational opportunities to out-of-school and over-age children through the Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation (ESEF) and partner organizations, he added. Ejaz Khalil further said that, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP)—APP

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..555489
- 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

Pak, Huawei vow to expand digital opportunities for youth

Huawei has been involved in initiatives providing training in areas including Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, cybersecurity, and other emerging technologies, supporting the broader national objective of developing a future-ready workforce

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Huawei Pakistan, led by Ahmed Bilal Masud, CEO AI & Cloud, Huawei Pakistan Friday called on the Chairman, Prime Minister's Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan to discuss the opportunities for collaboration under the Huawei Talent Ecosystem Program in Pakistan. During the meeting, the two sides discussed avenues to further strengthen Pakistan's digital talent ecosystem by providing young people with access to advanced training, industry-relevant skills, and emerging technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cloud Computing. The Chairman PMYP highlighted the government's commitment to equipping Pakistan's youth with future-ready skills and creating pathways for meaningful employment, entrepreneurship, freelancing, and participation in the global digital economy. He highly appreciated Huawei Pakistan's continued commitment to supporting Pakistan's youth and contributing to the country's digital transformation through advanced technology training, skills development, and capacity building. He stated that Pakistan's youth are the country's greatest asset and that equipping them with cutting-edge digital skills is essential for building a competitive knowledge economy. He emphasized that partnerships with leading technology companies such as Huawei can help bridge the digital skills



gap, expand access to quality training, and connect young Pakistanis with emerging opportunities in the technology sector. He particularly appreciated Huawei's efforts to provide young Pakistanis with access to advanced technologies, professional certifications, and industry-relevant skills. The Chairman further underscored the importance of expanding such initiatives across Pakistan, ensuring that youth from all regions have equitable access to modern technology training and internationally relevant skills. Ahmed Bilal Masud, CEO

AI & Cloud, Huawei Pakistan, reaffirmed Huawei's commitment to supporting Pakistan's digital transformation and youth development agenda. He said that Huawei remains committed to investing in Pakistan's digital talent and helping young Pakistanis develop the skills required to succeed in the global technology ecosystem. He highlighted that AI and Cloud Computing are among the most transformative technologies of the present era and expressed Huawei's readiness to deepen collaboration with PMYP to provide high-quality training, certifications, practical

learning opportunities, and career pathways for Pakistani youth. The Huawei representative emphasized that a strong partnership between the government, academia, industry, and technology companies is essential for developing a sustainable digital talent pipeline and enabling Pakistani youth to compete in international markets. The meeting also discussed opportunities to strengthen industry-academia linkages, expand technical training, promote professional certifications, and create greater exposure for young people to global technology standards and career opportunities. —APP

ISPR internship programme students visit PMA

RAWALPINDI: As part of their study tour, participants of the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Internship Programme 2026 visited the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul, where they were given an opportunity to gain first-hand insight into the training and professional development of future officers. During the visit, the interns witnessed the cadets' parade and observed various training activities conducted at the academy. They were also briefed about the functioning of different departments and the comprehensive educational and professional training imparted to cadets.

An interactive session was also arranged with the Commandant of Pakistan Military Academy Kakul, providing the students an opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion and gain a deeper understanding of the academy's role and training framework. The interns further interacted with male and female cadets and exchanged views on different aspects of their routine, training, education and overall development. Reflecting on their experience, the students described the visit to PMA Kakul as highly informative and memorable. They particularly appreciated the opportunity to witness first-hand the rigorous education, training, discipline and professional grooming that prepare cadets for their future responsibilities as military officers. —APP

Interior Minister praises security forces

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday commended Pakistan's security forces following a series of operations in Balochistan that resulted in the killing of 36 militants in Mastung, Quetta, Kalat and Sibi. In a statement, Mohsin Naqvi paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out successful operations against militants identified by the government as Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khawarij. He said the elimination of 36 militants during coordinated actions in different parts of Balochistan reflected the forces' operational capabilities and commitment

to maintaining security. The interior minister praised the professionalism of the security personnel involved in the operations and acknowledged their efforts in responding to security threats. He said the forces had thwarted the plans of militant elements seeking to destabilize the country. Naqvi also saluted the determination of security forces for continuing sustained operations against militant networks. He noted that the forces have been conducting effective actions in different regions to counter terrorism and prevent attacks on civilians and state institutions. He

reiterated that operations against militant groups would continue until the threat of terrorism would be fully eliminated. He said security agencies remained committed to pursuing those involved in violence and ensuring that terrorist networks were dismantled. The interior minister emphasized that Pakistan's fight against terrorism required continued national unity and support for the institutions responsible for maintaining peace and security. He said the people of Pakistan stood alongside the security forces in efforts to counter terrorism and safeguard the country. —APP

SC continues consultations on e-filing framework

After finalization, the templates would be placed before the NJPMC for consideration and policy directions

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC), on Friday held a consultative meeting with representatives of the Punjab Bar Council and Islamabad Bar Council at the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The meeting was part of the ongoing consultation process aimed at developing a uniform and standardized national e-filing framework for the Supreme Court, High Courts and District Courts. Representatives of the Punjab Bar Council, including Fakhar Hayat Awan, Faisal Malik, Ch. Qaisar Mushtaq and Shahid Mahmood Abbassi, and Islamabad Bar Council members, including Vice Chairman Ch. Asif Irfan, Executive Committee

Chairman Muhammad Zafar Khokhar, Disciplinary Committee Chairman Raja M. Al-eem Khan Abbasi, Ch. Hafeez Ullah Yaqub and Abdul Rahman Hur Bajwa, attended the meeting. Punjab Bar Council Executive Committee Chairman Ch. Arshad Ali Hanjra participated through Zoom. The participants were briefed on the proposed National Standardized E-Filing System, envisaged as a structured, intelligent and rules-compliant platform aligned with the procedural and legal requirements governing judicial proceedings. The initiative is part of the judiciary's broader reform agenda to leverage technology for modernizing court processes, enhancing efficiency and transparency. —APP

US-Iran conflict evolving into economic war: Masood

ISLAMABAD: The US-Iran confrontation is increasingly turning into an economic war, with prolonged tensions posing serious risks to the global economy, said former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations, and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Masood Khan. According to press release issued here Friday, while commenting on the deteriorating situation between Washington and Tehran, Sardar Masood Khan said military tensions were escalating while Pakistan and other regional countries continued diplomatic efforts to prevent a full-scale war. He said the surge in international oil prices following the latest attacks could fuel inflation. —APP

PEC launches skill uplift training

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) has commenced a one-month Skill Development Training for the second cohort (Phase-II: Graduates of 2025) under its Graduate Engineer Trainee (GET) Placement Program, a structured house job programme for young engineers. The initiative covers 1,400 trainee engineers, with the first 700 undergoing training from September 1 to 30, 2026, while the remaining 700 will receive training from October 1 to 31, 2026. PEC is implementing the GET Placement Program in collaboration with more than 60 industrial partners across the country, providing graduate engineers with structured field exposure and professional development opportunities. Under the programme, trainees undergo five months of field training with industrial partners followed by one month of skill development training, while each trainee receives a monthly stipend of Rs50,000 during the programme. The skill development component is being conducted five days a week at eight training centers in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Karachi, Hyderabad and Quetta. The curriculum covers communication, emotional intelligence, executive presence, stress management, business writing, public speaking, conflict resolution, stakeholder management, critical thinking, time management, innovation and engineering ethics. During the final week, trainees will also attend a one-week Certificate Program in Personality Development organized by the National Defence University (NDU). Chairman PEC Engr. Waseem Nazir said the GET Placement Program is aimed at bridging the gap between academic education and professional practice by providing young engineers with hands-on industrial exposure alongside essential workplace skills. He said the house job model for engineers would help improve employability, strengthen industry-academia linkages and prepare graduates to meet evolving industry requirements. He added that PEC remains focused on creating meaningful professional opportunities for young engineers and developing a skilled engineering workforce capable of contributing to Pakistan's economic and technological development. —APP

SPI-based inflation rises 0.65pc

ISLAMABAD: The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI)-based weekly inflation increased by 0.65 percent during the week ended on September 3, for the combined consumption group, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to PBS data, the SPI for the week under review rose to 363.42 points from 361.07 points recorded in the previous week. On a year-on-year basis, the SPI increased by 8.35 percent. The weekly SPI, with base year 2015-16=100, covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group (up to Rs 17,732) increased by 0.91 percent to 352.61 points from 349.42. Likewise, the SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,733-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 0.83 percent, 0.71 percent, 0.68 percent and 0.58 percent respectively. —APP

HEC reviews execution of anti-drug policy

ISLAMABAD: A meeting to review the implementation and monitoring of the HEC Policy on Drug and Tobacco Abuse in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), 2021 in the Islamabad Capital Territory was held here at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Friday. The meeting, chaired by Executive Director HEC Dr Zia Ul Haq, was attended by Director General (Research & Analysis Activities) HEC Engr. Saleemullah Sahoo along with relevant HEC officials and representatives of ICT Police. The Executive Director HEC emphasised the importance of collective and sustained efforts by HEC, law-enforcement agencies, and higher education institutions (HEIs) to prevent drug and tobacco abuse among students and to promote a healthy and conducive learning environment across higher education institutions. During the meeting, the DG (R&AA) briefed the participants on the key provisions of the HEC Policy and the Commission's ongoing efforts to ensure its effective implementation, compliance, and monitoring in HEIs located in the ICT/Federal Area. The meeting also focused on strengthening inter-agency coordination and monitoring mechanisms involving HEC and ICT Police to ensure a safe, healthy, and drug-free educational environment for students. The participants discussed measures for regular monitoring of HEIs, identification of gaps in policy implementation, and coordinated follow-up actions. The meeting concluded with a commitment to further strengthen coordination, monitoring, awareness, and preventive measures for effective implementation of the HEC Policy on Drug and Tobacco Abuse in HEIs in the ICT/Federal Area. APP

Violence against women Call for case tracking dashboard

ISLAMABAD: The Special Committee on Gender Mainstreaming, chaired by Member National Assembly (MNA) Dr. Nafisa Shah, strongly condemned all forms of violence against women and girls and expressed solidarity with the victims and their families. In its 27th meeting, held here on Friday at Parliament House called upon the relevant federal and provincial authorities to ensure swift, impartial, and transparent investigations and timely prosecutions in accordance with due process. It further called for action against officials responsible for negligence, delay, interference, failure to protect victims, or failure to preserve evidence. The Committee reiterated that special mechanisms should be devised to track the complete legal cycle of such cases and ensure punishment for the culprits. The committee members observed that merely registering cases or constituting inquiry committees was not sufficient and that each case must be monitored from the initial complaint and investigation through prosecution, trial, and final disposal. The Chairperson stressed that the criminal justice response must focus on convictions, supported by credible investigations, proper evidence collection, and timely prosecution. In this regard, the Committee recommended that a Serious Case Cell be established within the Islamabad Police to monitor grave cases of violence against women and children and ensure continuous institutional follow-up throughout the legal process. —APP

Founder Group seeks business community support for ICCI polls



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zakria Zia, presidential candidate of the Founder Group for the upcoming Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Elections 2026, received a warm welcome from the Tarnol business community at a gathering hosted by prominent businessman Chaudhry Wajid A large

number of traders and business leaders from Tarnol attended the gathering and expressed their support for the Founder Group team. The event was attended by Zafar Bakhtawari, Founder Group Council Member, Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG) and former president of ICCI. The participants expressed confidence in the Founder Group leadership and discussed the upcoming

ICCI elections. Addressing the gathering, the speakers highlighted the importance of unity among the business community and pledged to work collectively for the success of the Founder Group team in the ICCI Elections 2026. Chaudhry Wajid thanked the participants for their overwhelming response and assured continued support for the Founder Group candidates.

Briefs

Students get inside look at Safe City

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of male and female students from the Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) on Friday visited Safe City Islamabad to learn about the modern technology and systems being used for policing and city surveillance. An official told APP that the Safe City team briefed the visiting students on the central system of Safe City Islamabad, Command and Control Centre, modern surveillance cameras and Police Operations Centre Hall. The students were given an overview of how different parts of the Safe City system operate and support police operations in the federal capital. The delegation was also informed about the use of modern camera technology and the role of the Command and Control Centre in supporting policing activities. The visit provided the students an opportunity to see the technology and operational setup of Safe City Islamabad and understand its role in modern policing.—APP

Dam spillway opened

ISLAMABAD: The Rawal Dam spillway opened at 4pm on Friday (Sept 4) after heavy rains in the catchment area pushed the reservoir's water level to 1,751.40 feet, prompting authorities to release excess water and direct all concerned departments and residents to take necessary precautions. The decision was taken in view of the continued rise in the dam's water level following heavy rainfall in its catchment area. Authorities have urged all concerned to remain alert and take precautionary measures ahead of the opening of the spillway.—APP

Police shift 6 suspects, 9 motorcycles for verification

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police carried out grand combing and search operations in five areas of the federal capital, checking 194 people, 68 houses and 119 vehicles and motorcycles, while shifting six suspicious persons and nine motorcycles to police stations for further verification. An official told APP on Friday that the search operations were conducted in the jurisdictions of Sabzi Mandi, Sumbal, Shehzad Town, Lohi Bher and Golra police stations. During the operations, police teams checked 194 people and 68 houses, besides inspecting six shops as part of the security exercise. The teams also checked 89 motorcycles and 30 vehicles at different locations. The official said six suspicious persons and nine motorcycles were shifted to the respective police stations for further verification. ICT Police urged citizens to cooperate with police teams during checking and immediately report any suspicious activity to the police.—APP

Crime prevention under focus in key meeting

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi reviewed security, law and order and policing matters in Kohsar Division, with focus on strengthening field policing to prevent crime and protect citizens. An official told APP on Friday that the IGP Rizvi the matters during a meeting with AIG Operations Hamza Humayun and SDPO Kohsar Noshervan Ahsan Minhas, said a press release here During the meeting, the officers reviewed the overall security and law and order situation in Kohsar Division and discussed different policing matters. They also discussed measures to make field policing more effective, particularly for crime prevention and protection of citizens' lives and property. The meeting focused on strengthening policing efforts at the field level to ensure better security and maintain law and order in the division.—APP

Govt, agri sector partner boost farm economy

Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Rana Ahsan said agricultural products account for nearly 22 percent of Pakistan's exports but remain heavily concentrated in raw commodities, leaving the sector vulnerable to international price fluctuations and external shocks

ISLAMABAD: The government has brought together agriculture-sector stakeholders to formulate a roadmap aimed at increasing Pakistan's high-value agricultural exports, with a particular focus on processing, certification, traceability, branding and access to international markets. Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal made the remarks while chairing the third session of the Strategic Dialogue Series on "Unlocking Pakistan's High-Value Export Potential," held with key stakeholders from the agriculture sector here Friday. Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Rana Ahsan also attended the session. Ahsan Iqbal has called for a major transformation of Pakistan's agriculture sector, urging a shift from exports of raw commodities to high-value, certified, processed and branded products to unlock billions of dollars in additional export potential. The roundtable brought together around 100 participants, including representatives of federal and provincial institutions, agricultural and engineering universities, chambers of commerce, trade associations, certification agencies, exporters and growers associated with meat, poultry, dairy, rice, dates, horticulture, olive and organic products. Ahsan Iqbal said that the purpose of the dialogue series was to move beyond traditional consultations and establish a practical partnership among government, industry, academia and research institutions to address sector-specific challenges. He pointed out that agriculture contributed nearly one-fourth of Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product and provided employment to around 37 percent of the country's labour force, yet its contribution to exports



remains disproportionately low. Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Rana Ahsan said agricultural products account for nearly 22 percent of Pakistan's exports but remain heavily concentrated in raw commodities, leaving the sector vulnerable to international price fluctuations and external shocks. He said that achieving Pakistan's \$60 billion export target and eventually crossing \$100 billion by 2035 would not be possible without moving towards branding, processing and value addition. He outlined several measures being pursued by the government, including a review of the Export Policy Order and regulatory requirements through the Cabinet Committee on Regulatory Reforms. The government also plans to expand the EXIM Bank export finance pool from Rs1 trillion

to Rs2 trillion between 2026 and 2028, with monthly monitoring to improve access to financing. A dedicated financing window for small and medium-sized enterprises is also being developed in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the State Bank of Pakistan. Other measures include the gradual withdrawal of additional customs and regulatory duties during the second year of the National Tariff Policy and the use of the Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company as a dedicated platform for agricultural exporters, he said. Rana Ahsan further said a National Compliance Authority is expected to become operational within three months to strengthen the country's compliance infrastructure. The conference reviewed Pakistan's agricultural export performance, with food exports reaching

\$5.02 billion in FY2026 compared with a food import bill of \$9.15 billion. The decline was largely attributed to lower exports of commodity rice and sugar, while meat, fish and fruit exports registered growth during the year. The new fiscal year began on a positive note, with food exports increasing 2.5 percent in July 2026. Rice exports rose 19 percent, while meat exports increased 16 percent during the month, he added. The participants highlighted several areas with significant export potential, including halal meat and poultry, premium horticulture, branded basmati rice, processed foods, dates and edible oils. The halal meat sector, in particular, was identified as a major opportunity under the government's target of achieving \$700 million in halal meat exports by 2028. Industry representatives and academics presented a series of proposals aimed at removing barriers to agricultural exports. Among the recommendations was the removal of the sales tax differential that places processed and packaged meat at a disadvantage compared with informal trade. The stakeholders also called for a national cattle and goat farming initiative focusing on disease control, improved breeds and better production standards. The participants stressed the need to strengthen storage infrastructure and protect the electronic warehouse receipt system, particularly ahead of the upcoming wheat cycle, and concern was also expressed over substandard rice exports, with participants urging regulatory action against exporters whose poor-quality shipments have resulted in the closure of foreign markets.

Acting President Gilani lauds security forces

ISLAMABAD: Acting President, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for conducting successful intelligence-based operations (IBOs) against terrorists in Balochistan. He said the killing of terrorists operating in the province with Indian patronage was a major achievement of the security forces, a Presidency's news release issued here on Friday said. The acting president said terrorism had no religion, nationality or race, adding that the terrorist were enemies of humanity and peace. He lauded the courage and professional capabilities of the security forces in the fight against terrorism. Gilani said the entire nation stood united with the armed forces and law enforcement agencies. He said every nefarious conspiracy aimed at undermining peace and stability in the country would be foiled. The acting president reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue its efforts for the complete elimination of the menace of terrorism.—APP

IRSA releases 321,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 321,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 338,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1550.00 feet, which was 148.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 220,800 cusecs each. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1221.35 feet, which was 171.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 25,700 cusecs and 9,000 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Tansa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 349,600, 213,200, 135,200, and 60,200 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 30,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 37,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

CDA, admin continue efforts to ensure smooth drainage

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) conducted a special fire safety mock drill at Parliament House, Islamabad, to assess and strengthen emergency preparedness and response mechanisms in the event of a fire or other emergency

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and district administration teams remained active in the field to ensure smooth drainage and the flow of rainwater during ongoing rains in the federal capital. Officials said teams were continuously monitoring drains, underpasses, low-lying areas and other sensitive locations to prevent water accumulation and provide timely relief to citizens. The relevant departments including CDA, MCI, district administration and emergency services, have been coordinating closely to deal with rain-related

issues and ensure effective drainage at vulnerable points. Special teams have also been deployed to monitor waterways and drainage channels during the rainfall. Authorities said all necessary measures were being taken for the safety of the public and timely evacuation, if required. Citizens have been advised to contact Rescue 1122, Police 15 or CDA helpline 1334 in case of any emergency or rain-related problem. Moreover, The Capital Development Authority (CDA) conducted a special fire safety mock drill at Parliament House, Islamabad, to assess and strengthen emergency preparedness and response mechanisms in the event of a fire or other emergency. As part of the exercise, a simulated fire situation was created inside the Parliament House to assess evacuation procedures, emergency response, timely communication with relevant authorities, rescue operations and other essential safety measures. Officers and officials of the Parliament House actively participated in the drill and extended full cooperation to the CDA staff. The exercise also provided an opportunity to review existing emergency arrangements and identify areas for further improvement. Officials said such drills are aimed at enhancing institutional preparedness, strengthening safety systems and ensuring the protection of human lives while minimizing potential losses during emergencies.—APP

Power Division to improve detection bill system

ISLAMABAD: The Power Division has decided to introduce fundamental reforms in the detection billing system to protect electricity consumers from unnecessary hardships and additional financial burdens. This initiative is part of the ongoing broader reform process in the power sector led by Federal Minister for Power Division, Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, aimed at providing maximum relief to consumers and ensuring the effective protection of their rights, said a press release. In the past, in cases of meter malfunctions, technical faults, or the inability to accurately record electricity consumption, detection bills were issued by estimating consumption under relevant rules and regu-

lations. However, in certain instances, estimated consumption did not correspond to actual usage, resulting in inflated billing and a protracted grievance redressal process for consumers. The potential for human intervention within this system also raised concerns regarding transparency and irregularities. Taking notice of these issues, the Power Division, under the leadership of Federal Minister Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, has decided to digitize and automate the detection billing system to minimize human intervention and unnecessary discretionary powers. In this regard, directions have been issued to all distribution companies to incorporate necessary amendments into NEPRA's Consumer Service Manual and undertake other relevant measures. Under the new system, the detection billing and associated recovery processes will be monitored on a monthly basis to ensure the timely identification of overbilling and abnormal trends, enabling prompt corrective action. The Minister stated that the primary objective of the ongoing reforms in the power sector is to provide maximum convenience to consumers. He added that reforms in the detection billing system will ensure the protection of consumer rights, enhance transparency in the billing process, and further strengthen public confidence in the power system.—APP

Call for translating love for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) into action

ISLAMABAD: As the sacred month of Rabi-ul-Awwal is underway, Islamic scholars have urged Muslims to make the month an opportunity not only to recall the blessed life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) but also to translate their love for him into practical actions by following his teachings and exemplary character. Talking to APP, an Islamic scholar and Information Secretary of the Jamaat-e-Islami Women Wing Islamabad, Sadia Saif, said Rabi-ul-Awwal held special significance for Muslims as it was associated with the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was sent as a mercy for all worlds. She said the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) transformed a society marked by oppression of the weak and poor, tribal conflicts, wars, slavery and denial of women's rights. His teachings restored dignity and honour to women and established principles of justice, compassion and respect for human beings. Sadia Saif said the Holy Prophet (PBUH) exemplified compassion not only towards people but also towards animals. Referring to the well-known incident of a camel, she said the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) noticed the animal shedding tears because its owner was neglecting it and instructed him to properly care for it. She said his noble character was recognised even before his prophethood, as he was known as "Sadiq" (truthful) and "Ameen" (trustworthy). Hazrat Anas (RA), who served the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for ten years, also testified to his exceptional conduct and said he was never harshly reprimanded by him. Quoting the Holy Quran, she said, "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds." (Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:107). She stressed that Rabi-ul-Awwal should not be confined to celebrations, processions or illuminations, but

should serve as a reminder to study the Seerah and adopt the Prophet's teachings in everyday life. Sadia Saif called for the inclusion of Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) in educational curricula and urged print and electronic media as well as religious scholars to play their role in spreading the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). She said the Prophet's message aimed at freeing humanity from oppression and establishing a just society where everyone was entitled to their rights. Talking to APP, Hafiza and religious scholar Ayesha said Rabi-ul-Awwal provided an opportunity to rediscover the mercy, character and message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). She said the essence of the month lay in recognising the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a mercy for all worlds and adopting his qualities of kindness, truthfulness, honesty, care for neighbours and compassion for orphans. "Rabi-ul-Awwal is also a month to understand the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which was not limited to worship alone but also encompassed justice, equality, knowledge and service to humanity," she said Ayesha stressed that expressions of love for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) should go beyond slogans and outward celebrations and should be reflected in personal conduct, social responsibility and respect for the rights of others. She urged Muslims to increase Durood-o-Salam, study the Seerah and strengthen their connection with the Sunnah, saying the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provided an exemplary model for believers. She quoted the Holy Quran: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often." (Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:21).—APP

Skills development vital for poverty alleviation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah Friday stressed the importance of skills development and employability-oriented initiatives to complement social protection programmes and create sustainable pathways towards economic empowerment. He expressed these views during a meeting with Vice Chancellor, National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Saud Altaf, who visited the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety. The meeting focused on strengthening institutional linkages between social protection, skills development, employability and sustainable economic empowerment of youth and vulnerable segments of society. The Federal Minister said the government is committed to protecting vulnerable and underprivileged communities and emphasized that sustainable poverty alleviation required creating opportunities enabling people to become economically productive and self-reliant. He highlighted the importance of education, skills development and employability-oriented interventions in complementing social protection initiatives and creating long-term opportunities for improved livelihoods. Prof. Dr. Saud Altaf highlighted the role of NSU in equipping youth with market-driven, industry-relevant and emerging technology skills. He said skills development could serve as an effective bridge between social assistance and economic self-reliance, enabling individuals from low-income and deserving families to move from beneficiaries of social support to skilled professionals, entrepreneurs and productive contributors to the national economy. The Vice Chancellor highlighted the potential for developing targeted initiatives in digital skills, emerging technologies, entrepreneurship, vocational and technical training and employment-oriented short courses for deserving youth.—APP

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

ASHRAF

When intelligence serves, not replaces

RAFAEL HERNANDEZ DE SANTIAGO

THERE is a sentence circulating quietly, almost like a whisper of resistance in an age of acceleration: “I want AI to do my laundry and dishes so I can create art and write – not for AI to do my art and writing so I can do the laundry and dishes.” It is attributed to the writer and gaming enthusiast Joanna Maejeweka, but it could belong to anyone who senses that something subtle, yet profound, is being inverted in our technological age. This inversion is not merely practical – it is philosophical. For centuries, humanity has defined progress as the gradual liberation of time. From the first mechanical loom to the modern washing machine, technology promised to relieve us of repetitive, physically demanding tasks so that we could ascend toward higher forms of expression: art, thought, contemplation, and meaning. In this narrative, machines serve the body so that the soul may be free. Yet today, we are witnessing a paradox. Artificial intelligence, the most advanced tool humanity has ever created, is increasingly positioned not to liberate human creativity, but to replace it. Meanwhile, humans are still entangled in the mundane: answering emails, managing logistics, and yes, still washing dishes. The question is not whether AI can create. It clearly can. The question is whether it should – at least in the domains that define our humanity. As Aristotle once wrote: “The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.” Can a machine, trained on vast datasets and patterns, truly access that inward significance? Or does it merely simulate it with increasing sophistication? The distinction matters because art is not just output – it is an act of being. In this sense, the rise of AI-generated creativity risks introducing what might be called a “displacement of meaning.” If machines produce our poetry, compose our music, and write our stories, what becomes of the human need to express, to struggle, and to transform experience into narrative? Creativity is not simply a product; it is a process through which individuals understand themselves and their place in the world. Friedrich Nietzsche warned that “he who has a why to live can bear almost any how.” Creativity has long been one of those “whys.” It gives shape to suffering, direction to joy, and co-

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



herence to memory. To outsource it entirely would not just be efficient – it would be existentially costly. This is why the seemingly mundane quote about laundry and dishes resonates so deeply. It is not about chores; it is about priorities. It is about reclaiming a hierarchy in which technology serves human flourishing, rather than redefining it. There is, however, a counterargument worth considering. Some argue that AI-generated art democratizes creativity, allowing those without technical skills to express ideas. Others see it as an evolution, much like photography once challenged painting. These arguments are not without merit. Technology has always reshaped artistic expression, and resistance alone is rarely a viable path. But there is a difference between augmentation and substitution. When the camera was invented, it did not eliminate the painter’s need to see – it changed how seeing could be expressed. When digital tools emerged, they expanded the palette, but the artist remained at the center. The current trajectory of AI, however, risks removing the artist from the equation altogether, reducing creativity to a prompt and a result. In doing so, we risk creating a world where humans become curators of machine-generated meaning rather than creators of their own. Hannah Arendt, reflecting on the nature of human activity, distinguished between labor, work, and action. Labor sustains life, work creates the world, and action gives it meaning. If AI takes over “work” in the creative sense, and humans remain confined to labor, the balance Arendt described begins to collapse. We may find ourselves technologically advanced, yet existentially diminished. This is not an argument against AI. It is an argument for its proper place. AI should excel at what humans find draining: repetitive tasks, complex calculations, and logistical coordination. It should optimize systems, enhance decision-making, and yes, perhaps even help us clean our homes more efficiently. In doing so, it can fulfill its highest promise: to give us back time. Time, however, is only valuable if it is used well. The real challenge, therefore, is not technological but ethical. It is about designing systems, policies, and cultural norms that prioritize human dignity and creativity. It is about asking not just, “What can AI do?” but, “What should humans remain responsible for?” In the end, the future of AI will not be decided solely by engineers or algorithms, but by choices – individual and collective – about what we value. Do we want a world where machines write our stories while we attend to chores? Or one where machines handle the chores so we can write our stories? The distinction may seem trivial, but it carries within it a vision of humanity. And that, in the end, is the true measure of technology: not what it can do, but what it allows us to become.

Israel and the US: All Set to Starve Iran?

Qamar Bashir



Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has used unusually uncompromising language about America’s economic objective. Washington has launched an intensified campaign against Iran’s international financial and commercial lifelines, targeting shipping, aviation, technology, gold, digital assets and financial networks. Foreign companies and banks dealing with sanctioned Iranian entities face the enormous leverage of America’s dollar-based financial system. The strategic objective is clear: deprive Tehran of revenue, foreign currency and international commercial access until economic pressure forces political concessions

MILITARY strikes, economic strangulation and an open-ended American deployment risk turning pressure on Tehran into collective punishment of ordinary Iranians—and dragging the entire Middle East deeper into war. The United States and Israel appear to be constructing two arms of the same pressure campaign against Iran. Israel threatens overwhelming military destruction if Tehran again attacks it, while Washington is tightening Iran’s economic isolation and maintaining a formidable military presence across the Middle East. One attacks the state’s physical capacity; the other squeezes its financial oxygen. Between them stand nearly 90 million Iranian citizens who will ultimately bear much of the cost. Washington describes its strategy differently. The Trump administration argues that sanctions, blockade and selective military pressure are intended to force Tehran to change its behavior and return to negotiations. Yet the scale and duration of the campaign increasingly raise a disturbing question: at what point does pressure on a government become collective punishment of a population? Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has used unusually uncompromising language about America’s economic objective. Washington has launched an intensified campaign against Iran’s international financial and commercial lifelines, targeting shipping, aviation, technology, gold, digital assets and financial networks. Foreign companies and banks dealing with sanctioned Iranian entities face the enormous leverage of America’s dollar-based financial system. The strategic objective is clear: deprive Tehran of revenue, foreign currency and international commercial access until economic pressure forces political concessions. But economies are not governments. When oil revenue collapses, ordinary citizens lose purchasing power. When a currency depreciates, food, medicine and imported necessities become more expensive. When companies cannot trade, workers lose jobs. When banking channels close, families and legitimate businesses suffer alongside the institutions Washington actually intends to punish. Economic warfare may produce fewer dramatic television images than missiles, but its human consequences can penetrate every household. That is why the language of economic strangulation is so troubling. Iran’s leadership may be the declared target, but Iranian families inevitably become part of the battlefield. A pensioner purchasing medicine, a mother buying groceries or a worker trying to support his family cannot isolate himself from inflation, shortages and economic contraction merely because sanctions were designed to influence his government. Meanwhile, military pressure is not disappearing. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has extended major American deployments in the Middle East into 2027. Approximately 50,000 U.S. military personnel and 19 war-

ships remain positioned across the region, supported by fighter aircraft, air-defense systems and other forces. The deployment unmistakably demonstrates that America is preparing for a prolonged confrontation. That creates an extraordinary contradiction. President Donald Trump speaks about limiting military involvement and relying increasingly upon economic pressure, while the Pentagon maintains the infrastructure required for blockade enforcement, missile interception, protection of commercial shipping and renewed offensive operations. This is not disengagement. It is military readiness combined with economic warfare. Israel adds another dimension. Israeli leaders have again threatened devastating attacks against Iranian military and other strategic infrastructure. After months of conflict, the danger is that the distinction between military pressure and destruction of the economic foundations sustaining civilian life becomes progressively blurred. Recent American strikes demonstrate how quickly civilians can become victims even when governments insist that they are attacking military targets. Iranian authorities reported civilian deaths and injuries following the latest U.S. operations, including casualties associated with a reported strike near a wedding gathering. Washington says it does not intentionally target civilians and is investigating that incident. But for the dead and wounded, intention does not reverse the consequences. The greater danger is what happens if economic strangulation and repeated military destruction continue simultaneously. Iran possesses one of the Middle East’s largest populations. It also occupies perhaps its most strategically consequential geography. The Strait of Hormuz sits beside its coastline, while American bases, Gulf oil installations, shipping routes and some of the world’s largest energy facilities lie within the broader theater. Iran cannot match the United States conventionally. It cannot match Israel’s combination of advanced aircraft, intelligence capabilities and sophisticated missile defenses. But it can retaliate asymmetrically. That retaliation would not fall primarily upon the American homeland thousands of miles away. It would fall upon the Middle East. This is the strategic nightmare now developing. If American and Israeli pressure devastates Iran, Tehran may respond by expanding attacks against military facilities, shipping and infrastructure throughout the Gulf. Iran could be destroyed while simultaneously inflicting enormous damage upon neighboring economies. Everybody loses. The assumption that sufficient suffering will automatically produce a government favorable to Washington is equally dangerous. Iranian history should discourage such confidence. Foreign intervention helped overthrow democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953. A quarter-century later, the Shah—

Washington’s principal regional ally—was swept away by a revolution that produced a government dramatically more hostile to the United States. Destroying today’s Iranian state would offer no guarantee that tomorrow’s Iran would be moderate. The opposite could occur. If central authority fractures, organized government and conventional armed forces could give way to militias, underground networks and radical organizations. A centralized adversary can negotiate, sign agreements and enforce them. A fragmented landscape of armed groups may produce decades of asymmetric warfare. Iraq, Libya, Syria and Afghanistan should have taught the world that destroying institutions is much easier than constructing stable replacements. There is also a moral question America cannot escape. For generations, the United States presented human rights, civilian protection and international law as essential elements of its global leadership. American influence came not only from aircraft carriers and dollars but from universities, technology, culture, diplomacy, alliances and the belief—sometimes justified, sometimes contested—that American power represented certain universal principles. That soft power is an enormous strategic asset. Every civilian casualty, every image of devastated infrastructure and every Iranian family pushed toward desperation risks consuming another portion of it. The Muslim world therefore cannot remain a spectator. Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Pakistan, Qatar, Oman, the UAE and other influential states should urgently seek an emergency session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. The purpose should not be rhetorical condemnation. It should be the construction of a serious diplomatic initiative demanding both Israel and USA to stop this unfortunate war of choice otherwise face kinetic, economic, investment, trade and diplomatic offensive from all the Muslim states whether small or big. The Middle East is approaching an escalation trap in which every strike supposedly justifies another strike, every sanction invites countermeasures and every temporary pause becomes an opportunity to replenish weapons and identify new targets. Sooner or later, somebody must interrupt that cycle. If diplomacy fails and military destruction combined with economic suffocation, history may judge that Iran was not the only casualty. The victims could include regional stability, the global economy, America’s soft power and the possibility of a generation of peace in the Middle East. The time to prevent that outcome is now—before pressure intended to change Iran ends up destroying far more than Iran.

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

When the Mountains Weep

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The disaster occurred in the Himalayan region, where towering glaciers and glacial lakes form one of the largest reserves of freshwater outside the polar regions. Nepal is home to more than three thousand glaciers and thousands of glacial lakes, many of which have expanded significantly due to rising global temperatures

HOLLYWOOD is second to none in producing films of action, suspense and catastrophe. Through the marvels of modern technology, filmmakers portray storms, earthquakes, floods and destruction with such astonishing realism that the human mind is often left bewildered. The scenes appear so extraordinary that one is inclined to believe that they belong only to the realm of imagination. Yet there are moments in history when reality surpasses fiction, and nature unveils a spectacle of devastation that no camera, no scriptwriter and no artificial intelligence can fully imitate. The recent disaster in Nepal was one such event. When images and videos of the calamity spread across social media, many viewers around the world initially regarded them as scenes from a motion picture or perhaps the product of digital manipulation. Torrents of muddy water rushing down mountain valleys, giant rocks tumbling with unimaginable force, and settlements disappearing beneath waves of destruction resembled a cinematic sequence. But this was no illusion; it was a painful reality that descended upon the people of Nepal with the suddenness of a divine warning. The disaster occurred in the Himalayan region, where towering glaciers and glacial lakes form one of the largest reserves of freshwater outside the polar regions. Nepal is home to more than three thousand glaciers and thousands of glacial lakes, many of which have expanded significantly due to rising global temperatures. Scientific studies have repeatedly warned that climate change is accelerating the melting of Himalayan ice. As glaciers retreat, enormous lakes are formed behind unstable walls of ice and loose rock. These lakes may remain calm for years, but when their natural barriers collapse because of heavy rainfall, avalanches, earthquakes or rising temperatures, the resulting floods can unleash catastrophic destruction. In the recent incident, reports indicated that a glacial lake burst in the high mountain region, releasing an immense volume of water that surged down narrow valleys with extraordinary force. The floodwaters carried with

them ice, rocks, trees and debris, multiplying the scale of devastation. Roads, bridges and settlements lying in the path of this torrent suffered extensive damage. Families who had retired to their homes in peace and security found themselves suddenly confronted with a calamity that transformed their lives within moments. Such events compel mankind to reflect upon the fragile nature of worldly existence. Before this catastrophe, life in those valleys moved in its usual rhythm. Yet in a single hour, everything changed. The Holy Qur’an repeatedly reminds humanity that the final Hour will arrive unexpectedly and that its signs and terrors are beyond human imagination. While the exact nature of the Day of Judgment remains known only to Allah Almighty, natural calamities serve as reminders of man’s vulnerability and the temporary character of earthly life. Indeed, all religions of the world may differ on various theological matters, but they are united in acknowledging one universal truth: death is inevitable, and human beings are accountable for their actions. Catastrophes such as the one witnessed in Nepal awaken the conscience of mankind and remind us that despite all scientific advancement, man remains dependent upon the forces of nature and, ultimately, upon the will of the Creator. Though this catastrophe was, in outward seeming, a work of Nature wherein the hand of man appeared but little, yet the shortcomings of humankind cannot be lightly dismissed. We have long played a perilous game with the delicate balance of the environment that sustains us. The tragedy of Nepal, therefore, is not merely a local disaster; it is a warning for the entire region. Pakistan, too, possesses some of the world’s largest glaciers outside the polar regions, particularly in the Karakoram and Himalayan ranges. Changes in climate, irregular monsoon patterns and the management of transboundary rivers are matters of profound national concern. The desolation that accompanied this natural affliction in Nepal mirrors the manner in which India hath, for many a season, conducted itself during the mon-

soon rains. Upon the rivers that flow toward Pakistan it hath erected dams; and when our rightful portion of the waters is impounded therein until the reservoirs brim to overflowing, then are the floodgates opened, and a deluge is loosed upon the plains of Pakistan, bringing harm and hardship to her people. This practice of water terrorism hath India pursued for a considerable span of years, whilst the nations of the world look on in silence, and none stretch forth a hand to restrain it. Should this course continue unchecked, then—God forbid—a calamity akin to that which has stricken Nepal may one day arise in Pakistan also. We must therefore amend our ways and fortify our position ere such an hour arrives; otherwise, our destiny shall differ little from that of the afflicted land of Nepal. If the world remain a mute spectator to this injustice, then it falls upon us to take measures ourselves for our own preservation and the safeguarding of the generations yet to come. The lessons of Nepal should not be ignored. Nations must invest in environmental protection, early warning systems, flood management and regional cooperation. Scientific knowledge must be combined with responsible policies, while societies must cultivate respect for nature and gratitude to the Almighty. Neglecting these responsibilities could expose millions to avoidable suffering. History bears witness that civilizations rise when they act with wisdom and foresight, and decline when they disregard the signs placed before them. The disaster in Nepal is one such sign. It calls upon humanity to reflect, to reform and to prepare. If mankind continues to exploit nature without restraint, and if nations fail to resolve critical issues such as climate change and water management, then tragedies of greater magnitude may await future generations. May Allah Almighty protect humanity from calamities, guide nations towards justice and cooperation, and grant us the wisdom to learn from the warnings that nature places before us.

Briefs

Pak economy
put on right
track: PM

FROM PAGE 01
Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway corridor from Karachi to Peshawar—a vital national infrastructure priority. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif underscored that upgrading ML-1 is essential for modernizing freight logistics, strengthening regional trade connectivity, and supporting major industrial initiatives. The meeting discussed the need for early ground breaking of MLL, being vital for infrastructure development and modernizing the connectivity. Expanding co-operation in various sectors, the meeting explored collaborative avenues in support for private sector, energy security, food security, enhancing support in export competitiveness, Artificial Intelligence and Information Technology. The meeting concluded with a mutual pledge to translate the strategic priorities of the CPS 2026–2030 into concrete, high-impact results that drive sustainable growth and visibly enhance the standard of living for the people of Pakistan.

Planning
minister
proposes
creation...

FROM PAGE 01
But you will need to do an equitable distribution so for example if Punjab is divided into three provinces its share will increase in the Senate. If you want to create new provinces it has to be based on some equitable formula that does not change the representation too drastically in one direction." But other officials say there is no formal federal process underway yet. Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, coordinator to the prime minister, told The News that no decision had been taken on creating new provinces or administrative units. "No such committee has been made at the federal level. There is no such talk on any forum officially," he said. He added that even if new provinces were to be created, they would be created for the next election cycle. Pakistan currently has four provinces, two autonomous territories and one federal capital territory. For decades, political parties and regional groups have periodically called for the creation of additional provinces. The latest debate began on July 30, when Naqvi argued that Pakistan's existing governance structure was no longer working. During a televised address in Islamabad, Naqvi said: "The [governance] system in the country has collapsed. We have been dragging [this system] for over 70 years." He proposed creating new administrative units, or provinces, as a way to address the country's governance problems. A day later, the ISPR DG also called for a serious debate on the proposal. "If the population has increased by fourfold and you still have four provinces then we have to see if this is serving good governance," the ISPR chief said while speaking to reporters. The remarks quickly drew reaction, particularly in Sindh, where nationalist parties have long opposed any attempt to divide the province. Since August 12, nationalist parties have held near-daily demonstrations and launched a campaign against any attempt to split Sindh. "No child would want their mother to be divided into two... We want one Sindh," Ayaz Latif Palijo, president of the Sindh-based Qaumi Awami Tehreek, told The News. The opposition has not been limited to nationalist parties. Azma Bokhari, Punjab's information minister, called Naqvi's remarks "unserious about a serious issue". This week, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Nisar Khuhro thundered in the Sindh Assembly: "Sindh is my body and my soul. Show me, who are these people who want to cut their mother into pieces?" The argument for creating new provinces is not new. Proposals to carve South Punjab out of Punjab and create a Hazara province from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have existed for decades.

Ex-Pakistan coach Gillespie
tells Javed 'look in the
mirror' over sackings

"It's pretty clear they [PCB] don't have a selection strategy at all, particularly under Aaqib Javed," says former coach Gillespie

FORMER Pakistan coach Jason Gillespie said on Friday chairman of selectors Aaqib Javed needs to "look at himself in the mirror" with the national team "playing with fear". In a shock move, Pakistan this week replaced head coach Sarfraz Ahmed and pace-bowling chief Umar Gul, and sent seven players home from England, in a dramatic response to successive Test thrashings. Australia's Gillespie, who led the side for eight months in 2024, including a 2-1 Test series win against England, said it was sad to see. "I feel for the players, this is these guys' livelihoods," he told The Australian newspaper. "From the outside, it looks like they are playing with fear." "Salman Ali Agha goes from captaining the team in the first Test against England to out of the team for the second Test and on the plane home before the third Test. "How does that work?" He laid the blame firmly at the door of Javed. "It's pretty clear they don't have a



selection strategy at all, particularly under Aaqib Javed. They change their mind like they change their pants — daily," he said. "Aaqib Javed came out recently and blamed

(former Pakistan white-ball coach) Gary Kirsten and myself for everything that is going on. "Aaqib has been chairman of selectors for the past two years. We haven't

even been there." "Somehow he claims it is our fault. Make sense out of that. I think Javed needs to look at himself in the mirror." The tourists suffered an innings and 103-run loss in the series opener at Headingley before going down by 194 runs at Lord's. The third and final Test starts at Edgbaston on September 9. "There is definitely no communication between Aaqib Javed, who is meant to be chairman of selectors, and the players," added Gillespie. "The players who were sacked heard it through family and friends and the media they had been sacked. "How disrespectful is that?" Several other ex-Pakistan coaches and players have been left similarly bewildered, including former captains Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Malik. Ex-coach Mickey Arthur called it "an absolutely ridiculous situation". New Zealander Mike Hesson, who was already Pakistan's white-ball chief, and Australian Ashley Noffke, have taken charge for the rest of the tour. — APP

GDA begins Preparation of PC-I for
Jetty Rehabilitation and Dredging

GWADAR: The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has initiated the preparation of a comprehensive and updated PC-I, incorporating all technical and financial aspects related to the permanent rehabilitation and dredging of the jetty, as of September 3. Once finalized, the PC-I will be submitted to the provincial government

for approval and allocation of the necessary funds. This will enable the project to be undertaken on a permanent basis and ensure the jetty remains fully operational in the future, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. In this regard, Director General of the GDA, Moin ur Rehman Khan, visited the Pishukan Fish Landing Jetty and

conducted a detailed review of the ongoing rehabilitation work. Chief Engineer Haji Syed Muhammad, Director of Town Planning and Project Director for the Fish Landing Jetty Shahid Ali, Executive Engineer Muhammad Akbar, and renowned contractor Haji Sharif Zamil were also present on the occasion. The meeting also included detailed discussions on the permanent rehabilitation of the Pishukan Fish Landing Jetty and a future plan for regular dredging. The Director General directed that, alongside dredging, a comprehensive assessment be carried out regarding the jetty's design, engineering, technical requirements, operational aspects, and long-term needs to ensure its continued effectiveness and functionality. Later, the Director General also visited the under-construction causeway at Plari Kor on Marine Drive and reviewed the ongoing work. He was briefed that, following a temporary suspension of approximately one month, construction on the causeway would resume next week, after which measures would be taken to expedite its completion. — APP

White House website
debuts 5 retro arcade
video games

WASHINGTON: The White House website on Thursday unveiled Arcade, a collection of five low-resolution video games that promote different aspects of President Donald Trump's agenda. "Build the Wall" is a "Tetris" knockoff that transforms the classic game into an effort to "Protect the border from the coming horde." In "Rio Run," which resembles the mobile favorite "Snake," an icon resembling Trump runs around gathering potential border crossers. In "Supply Line," which looks like a condensed version of the arcade game "Tapper," food moves along an assembly line and you must reject items that don't meet "Make America Healthy Again" standards. Two of the games take place over the skies of the nation's capital. In "Flappy Bill," an eagle carries a bill across the National Mall. In "Trump Savings Tycoon," your goal is to collect money flying through the air to "Fill your kids' Trump Accounts," the administration savings plan that offers \$1,000 to every child born during Trump's term. The White House announced Arcade on social media with a series of animations parodying Xbox, PlayStation and Nintendo loading screens. In one such post, the Sega logo turns into "MAGA," as in Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan. — APP

Elon Musk launches steering-
wheel-free taxi service

NEW YORK: Elon Musk sent dozens of self-driving Cybercabs without steering wheels or brake pedals onto the streets of Austin, Texas, on Thursday, betting that Americans will overcome their fears of rides with "no control" and hop inside. The rollout of the gold-colored Teslas, which give passengers no way to take control in an emergency, comes as the company prepares to launch the service in other cities. Tesla shares have suffered amid a slump in vehicle sales, but they rose more than 5% Thursday on hopes that the futuristic-looking taxis will catch on quickly. "No steering wheel, no pedals," Tesla teased on X before the launch. Musk followed with a post showing a giant Cybercab floating above the Austin skyline and later wrote, "A Storm of Cybercabs." An invitation-only launch event was expected to be held later Thursday. It is unclear how soon Musk intends to roll out the Cybercab service, but he needs to move quickly. Tesla trails self-driving taxi leader Waymo in the number of cabs deployed and trips completed. To catch up, it must demonstrate that its camera-only system can safely navigate streets and avoid pedestrians. By contrast, Waymo and another rival, Amazon's Zoox, supplement cameras with radar and a laser-based technology called lidar.

Even if the technology works well, Americans still need to be convinced. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in February found that seven in 10 U.S. adults were "not too" or "not at all" comfortable riding in a driverless car. Tesla stock was battered last year after Musk took over President Donald Trump's government cost-cutting campaign, dubbed DOGE, and embraced extreme-right political candidates, sparking protests at Tesla showrooms and boycotts by car buyers in several countries. Tesla posted a second consecutive annual decline in vehicle sales last year. Its profits plunged, and it lost its crown as the world's bestselling electric vehicle maker to China's BYD. Austin has had a self-driving Tesla "robotaxi" service since June last year, but those cars are equipped with steering wheels and brake pedals. The service, which has since expanded to five other cities in Texas and Florida, initially carried passengers with safety drivers aboard to take over in case of problems. Tesla has more than 200 "unsupervised" robotaxis in those cities, meaning they operate without safety drivers aboard, according to the monitoring site RobotaxiTracker. Waymo has more than 4,000 such vehicles in 14 cities. — APP

Kiwifruit Training Workshop in China
explores Pragmatic Assistance to Pakistan

DNA

BEIJING: The International Training Workshop on Kiwifruit Production concluded in Chengdu this week, with 14 agricultural experts from Pakistan, Egypt, Nepal and Palestine participating. The 15-day program was held in Chengdu and Deyang in Sichuan Province and Guilin in Guangxi. Jointly organized by Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resource Sciences and Guangxi

Institute of Botany, it covered kiwifruit breeding, cultivation, orchard management, post-harvest handling and marketing. China Economic Net (CEN) reported The program combined lectures, field visits, practical training and academic exchanges, with experts from China and abroad, including the New Zealand Institute for Plant & Food Research and the Wuhan Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Pakistani participant Dr. Mushtaq Hussain Soomro, a consultant at

the Women in Agriculture Development Organization of Pakistan said kiwifruit production has been tested in Pakistan's Hazara Division and other upland areas, including Mansehra, Abbottabad, Battagram, Swat and Murree. Trials conducted by the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and the National Tea and High Value Crops Research Institute (NTHRI) since 2014 recorded about 90% plant survival. However, further expansion of kiwifruit production in Pakistan

is constrained by phytosanitary requirements for importing live germplasm. Under Pakistan's plant quarantine regulations, such imports require an import permit, pest risk analysis, a phytosanitary certificate and post-entry quarantine, according to Dr. Soomro. "Within these constraints, Chinese-led support to Pakistan is practically feasible in non-germplasm areas, including trellis, pruning and pollination know-how; in-country tissue-culture

support for Hayward rootstocks; laboratory capacity for Psa pathogen detection and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) compliance; cold-chain and packhouse infrastructure; Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to meet export Sanitary and SPS requirements; and training via the CPEC Joint Working Group on Agriculture," Dr. Mushtaq Hussain Soomro told CEN. It's learned that the workshop marked its third edition, with Pakistani experts also participating in the 2025 program.

PM's
meeting with
Ambassador
Olara Otunnu

FROM PAGE 01
multilateralism and the role of the United Nations in global affairs. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the next Secretary-General of the United Nations would continue to focus on the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development, and human rights — in an interconnected and balanced manner. Ambassador Otunnu expressed his profound gratitude for Pakistan's enduring contributions to multilateralism as well as towards all three pillars of the United Nations, and appreciated Pakistan's leadership for playing a key role in the ongoing efforts for international peace and security.

Pak rejects
India's
politically...

FROM PAGE 01
In May this year, Indian authorities imposed a ban on the slaughter of cows, calves and camels ahead of Eid ul Adha. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also ordered that Eid prayer be offered only at traditional locations and said no permission should be granted for namaz on roads under any circumstances.

48 India-
backed
terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01
violent incidents, with 151 cases, representing 57% of the nationwide total. Balochistan followed with 94 incidents, or 35%, underscoring the concentration of militant activity in the two provinces.

Close contest
expected...

FROM PAGE 01
Raja Shahbaz Khan said that security, deployment of polling staff and other arrangements had been completed for the by-election GBA-09 (Skardu-III). He expressed his determination to conduct "transparent, impartial and peaceful" elections and provide voters with the facilities to cast their vote without fear. Khan also directed the institutions and officials concerned to fulfil their duties responsibly and effectively during the electoral process. "No kind of obstruction in the polling process will be tolerated," he warned. Analysts said a close contest between PPP's Abbas and the independent candidate is expected. They said that the PPP candidate retains his father's vote bank and could have the public's sympathy after GB's top court disqualified Nashad.

Trump says
will ask...

FROM PAGE 01
Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform on Thursday. The American president did not specify which countries he believed should pay. In his post, Trump also rejected reports that the US military was running low on munitions in its war against Iran. "We have virtually unlimited amounts of Mid to High Grade Ammunition," he wrote, adding that munitions are being produced at "levels never seen before." Trump said that Washington was building up stockpiles and preparing for contingencies, and had temporarily suspended overseas arms sales. "We are taking (munitions) for ourselves, the U.S.A., rather than selling them to others, but the sales to Allies will soon again, begin," he added.

US strategic
petroleum...

FROM PAGE 01
"Financial institutions continue to find out the hard way that we are serious about Operation Economic Outcast," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent says in a statement. "While we hope no more banks will need to be sanctioned, that ultimately depends on how quickly the international community comes to its senses and ceases support of the murderous Iranian regime."

Briefs

PSX stays bullish, gains over 399 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish momentum on Friday, gaining 399.13 points, a positive change of 0.23 percent, to close at 175,328.82 points against 174,929.69 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed an increase in trading volume to 874.323 million shares, compared to 627.447 million shares traded in the previous session. Similarly, the overall traded value increased to Rs 32.417 billion from Rs 25.186 billion. Market capitalization edged upwards to Rs 19.629 trillion, recovering from Rs 19.587 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 496 companies that traded in the ready market, 235 posted gains, 218 suffered losses, while 43 remained unchanged, reflecting a broad-based stabilization in market sentiment. Cnergyco PK led the volume chart with 149.299 million shares, followed by Tasdeeq Information with 132.413 million shares and WorldCall Telecom with 78.718 million shares. Among the top gainers in the ready market, Buxly Paints Limited surged by Rs 71.63 to close at Rs 989.14, while Premium Textile Mills Limited advanced by Rs 28.47 to settle at Rs 529.68. On the losing side, The Thal Industries Corporation Limited suffered a sharp decline, shedding Rs 113.90 to close at Rs 1,025.10, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited fell by Rs 91.75 to Rs 25,557.25. In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 216.619 million shares with a traded value of Rs 11.053 billion, up from 120.280 million shares worth Rs 7.448 billion in the previous session. Of the 299 companies traded in the DFC market, 163 advanced, 126 declined, and 10 remained unchanged.—APP

Indonesia steps up wildfire fight

JAKARTA: Haze from wildfires has sent air quality to hazardous levels in parts of Borneo, Indonesian authorities said on Friday, as thousands were deployed to tackle the blazes. The vast Southeast Asian archipelago has been battling for weeks to contain wildfires and thick smog, which has been drifting to Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. In West Kalimantan province, one of the hardest-hit regions, haze from the blazes plunged air quality to “hazardous” levels, with visibility below one kilometre on Thursday, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Berton Suar Pelita Panjaitan said. More than 14,000 firefighters were deployed in the province and managed to put out fires across nearly 430 hectares on Thursday, he added. “Our attention to West Kalimantan is significant due to burned peatlands, which require longer handling and monitoring, including cooling down, to ensure fire does not reappear.” In Central Kalimantan province, authorities put out fires in a 197-hectare area across the province, Berton said, adding a thermal drone was deployed to identify underground fire spots. The province recorded an “unhealthy” air quality level, with visibility below 2.5 kilometres, Berton said. Schools across the two provinces have been shuttered, and classes were held online, he said. Indonesia has large swathes of tropical peatlands, an ecosystem with layers of partially decomposed organic materials. They are an important carbon store when wet, but become highly flammable when dry, and fires can smoulder underground and reignite quickly. In Malaysia, soaring air pollution levels prompted the government to declare an emergency in a region of the Sarawak state on Borneo, the prime minister’s office said. The declaration covers the Serian division in Malaysian Borneo and will see 647 schools closed from Monday until at least the end of next week. It comes after the Sarawak disaster management committee formally requested the declaration.—Agencies

PPPs, privatization critical to Pak’s future eco growth

This increases the requirement in the urban infrastructure by roughly 100 percent,” he said, adding that Pakistan would need to develop more hospitals, schools, energy and water infrastructure, railways, airports and ports

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatization and Chairman, Privatization Commission Muhammad Ali on Friday said that the public-private partnerships (PPPs) and privatization were critical instruments for the future economic growth of the country. Addressing Mobilizing Private Capital: National Strategic Dialogue on PPPs and Privatization, which was organized by the Asian Development Bank, the Adviser stressed the need for massive investment, management discipline, skilled human resources and innovation. The country needed massive investments in infrastructure and basic human needs, skilled human resources, management discipline and innovation to remain relevant in the future global economy, he said adding that local infrastructure requirements would increase significantly as the population was projected to rise from around 230 million currently to approximately 390 million by 2050, with around 190 million people expected to live in urban centers. “This increases the requirement in the urban infrastructure by roughly 100 percent,” he said, adding that Pakistan would need to de-

velop more hospitals, schools, energy and water infrastructure, railways, airports and ports. The Adviser said the government alone could not finance the country’s growing infrastructure requirements, particularly given Pakistan’s relatively low savings rate of around 14 percent compared with 32 percent in Vietnam and 40 percent in China. Muhammad Ali said privatization was equally important from the perspective of management, as companies established to earn should not continue consuming public money and should be managed by the private sector. He added that the private sector could bring capital, management capabilities, innovation and better services while introducing systems to reduce revenue leakage and improve operational performance. Referring to the Pakistan Public-Private Partnership Monitor, he said around 154 PPP projects worth approximately \$36 billion had reached financial close since 1990, demonstrating Pakistan’s capacity to deliver such projects. He said the country’s PPP portfolio was ranked among

the top 14 in the developing world by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and among the top 10 when measured against the size of Pakistan’s economy. Muhammad Ali said Pakistan already had the necessary legal and regulatory framework, with the Federal PPP Authority Act enacted in 2017 and all four provinces having their own PPP laws and institutions. He said the Federal PPP Authority, branded as P3A, was being consolidated under the Privatization Division to bring PPPs, asset monetization and privatization under one roof, which would simplify procedures, improve investor coordination and enhance efficiency. He said the current PPP pipeline comprised 38 projects worth around \$6.5 billion across roads, railways, hospitals, hospitality, aviation and industrial estates, but stressed that the pipeline needed to be expanded significantly. On privatization, he said the government was currently working on 27 transactions involving power distribution companies, airports, insurance companies and banks. He cited the

privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) as evidence of the government’s ability and commitment to undertake complex transactions. He informed that around Rs600 billion in legacy debt had been transferred to the holding company while a significant portion of the proceeds, around \$450 million, went into the entity for its revival. Regarding the power sector, Muhammad Ali said the government was working on the sale of nine power distribution assets, with the objective not only to privatize the assets but also to reform the power sector, introduce a competitive supply regime and develop the sector on modern lines. He also highlighted the need for greater diversity in PPP sectors and transactions as well as standardization of legal and other documents among the five PPP authorities to accelerate project completion. He called for stronger investor trust and coordinated efforts among ministries and government institutions to achieve the country’s infrastructure and economic growth objectives. “All government institutions and ministries have to come together towards this one common objective,” he added.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani talking to Chairman National Insurance Company Limited Ali Syed at Aiwan-e-Sadr

China culture tourism expo opens

BEIJING: The 2026 China Culture and Tourism Industries Expo opened Thursday in north China’s Tianjin Municipality, attracting more than 2,500 culture and tourism enterprises from 20 countries and regions. The four-day event, hosted by China’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism has also drawn 10 international organizations and national-level industry associations. Under the theme “Deepening Culture and Tourism Integration, Creating a Better Smart Life,” the expo features 10 exhibition zones covering culture-tourism integration, emerging digital businesses, tourism equipment, international cooperation, local attractions and consumer products. Eighteen professional events are being held, focusing on regional cooperation, industrial innovation, technology applications and culture-tourism consumption. China’s domestic tourism market continued to grow in the first half of 2026, with residents making more than 3.46 billion domestic trips, up 5.4 percent year on year, according to the ministry. Domestic tourism spending climbed 2 percent to 3.21 trillion yuan (about 473.4 billion U.S. dollars) during the six-month period. The expo, covering 100,000 square meters, also includes an international cooperation zone, with global tourism institutions, international tourism organizations, nearly 100 overseas travel operators and other industry professionals taking part. Pansy Ho Chiu-king, vice chair and secretary-general of the Global Tourism Economy Forum, said she hoped the event would promote more cross-border industry cooperation, help Chinese culture and tourism products reach overseas markets, and bring more international investment and expertise to China. This year’s expo is the third edition and the second to be held in Tianjin.—DNA

IsDB, Bangladesh sign \$1b financing deal

DHAKA: Bangladesh is set to expand its sole crude oil refinery with a \$1 billion financing loan from the Islamic Development Bank, a project expected to help reduce the country’s dependence on imported fuels. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and IsDB Group Chairman, Dr. Muhammad Al-Jasser, witnessed on Thursday the signing of the financing agreement for the Modernization and Expansion of the Eastern Refinery Project in Dhaka. The project, scheduled for completion in November 2030, is expected to

add 3 million metric tons to the refinery’s annual capacity, which will bring its yearly total to 4.5 million metric tons. Financing for the facility’s expansion will be a combination of IsDB’s \$1 billion loan and another \$1.5 billion from the Bangladeshi government. “By expanding domestic refining capacity, the Eastern Refinery project will strengthen energy security, reduce dependence on imported refined petroleum products, and support cleaner fuel standards,” Al-Jasser said, referring to the new financing deal as a “major milestone” in IsDB’s partnership with Bangladesh. Bangladesh, a major energy importer, has been struggling with fuel-price volatility and supply disruptions triggered by the instability in the Middle East following US-Israeli attacks on Iran in late February, raising concerns over energy security in the country of 175 million people. The state-owned Eastern Refinery currently has a refining capacity of 1.5 million metric tons, while the South Asian nation, which imports most of its fuel, requires about 6.5 million metric tons of crude oil annually. “The Eastern Refinery Modernization and Expansion Project is not just an energy investment.—APP

UN warns of escalating tensions on Lebanon-Israel

“There is extensive Israeli military presence north of the Blue Line, which constitutes a violation of Security Council resolution 1701 and of Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Dujarric said. He reiterated the UN’s call “for the Israel Defense Forces to withdraw from all positions north of the Blue Line, and that will be in full accordance and respect with resolution 1701

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations peacekeepers in Lebanon have reported a marked deterioration in the security situation along the Blue Line of separation, with Israeli forces intensifying their military attacks in violation of a landmark Security Council resolution, UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said Thursday. Meanwhile, in war-devastated Gaza, humanitarian teams collected hundreds of pallets of aid – including infant food and school bags – as the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that more than 13,000 patients have now been evacuated from the besieged enclave for urgent medical care. Violence rose sharply in August, with the mission recording 56 projectiles from the Israeli military on 1 September alone, a figure that climbed to 84 the following day. No projectile launches by Hezbollah fighters – who have continued to clash with Israeli forces in southern Lebanon despite a US-brokered ceasefire – have been detected since 21 June, Dujarric said. Peacekeepers continue to record daily Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace, along with airstrikes, ground activ-

ity and naval operations. Of particular concern, Dujarric said, is the “continued consolidation and fortification of Israeli positions” north of the Blue Line, including new infrastructure and engineering works. Peacekeepers have also observed individuals who appear to be Israeli civilian personnel carrying out demolition work in support of military operations. “There is extensive Israeli military presence north of the Blue Line, which constitutes a violation of Security Council resolution 1701 and of Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Dujarric said. He reiterated the UN’s call “for the Israel Defense Forces to withdraw from all positions north of the Blue Line, and that will be in full accordance and respect with resolution 1701.” Despite the tensions, UNIFIL continues its humanitarian coordination work, facilitating 20 humanitarian missions between Monday and Wednesday, 16 of them in the Mission’s western sector. In Gaza, UN teams on Wednesday collected hundreds of pallets of supplies from the Kerem Shalom-Karem Abu Salem crossing, Dujarric said, including adult diapers, school

bags and food for infants and young children. Separately, WHO reported that it and its partners have supported the medical evacuation of more than 13,000 patients from Gaza since October 2023, including over 6,000 children WHO stressed, however, that thousands more still urgently need specialized treatment unavailable in the enclave, and called for the reopening of the West Bank referral pathway, including to hospitals in East Jerusalem. The UN’s Special Coordinator and humanitarian chief in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov, concluded a three-day visit to Gaza on Thursday, including a visit to the Emirati Field Hospital in Rafah. Throughout his visit, Alakbarov stressed that preparing for the rainy season and winter remains a top priority, requiring urgent donor support and the lifting of Israeli restrictions on equipment such as engine oil needed to run facilities including sewage treatment plants. Ambulances and medical equipment remain among the items currently restricted from entering Gaza, Dujarric said, adding that these “must be urgently allowed in.”—Agencies

inDrive stresses untapped mobility potential

ISLAMABAD: Country Manager for inDrive Pakistan Awais Saeed has underscored the country’s vast untapped market potential, environmental sustainability through ride-pooling, and incoming payment innovations during a panel discussion in the federal capital. Speaking at a panel discussion here, Awais Saeed noted that Pakistan remains one of the most promising growth frontiers for digital mobility platforms, contrasting domestic metrics with global trends. “Only 5% of Pakistani users go for ride-hailing, compared to approximately 20% globally,” he stated, pointing to substantial room for sector expansion. Addressing urban congestion and environmental pressures, Awais Saeed outlined a strategic shift toward communal transit models. “Keeping in mind the environment, I think ride-hailing is moving towards ride-pooling,” he said, emphasizing that higher vehicle occupancy will prove vital for curbing emissions and easing traffic density in major cities. Beyond passenger transit, he highlighted the broader macroeconomic multiplier effect generated by digital ride-hailing platforms. He explained that platform activities create consistent commercial spillovers for local mechanics, spare parts suppliers, and vehicle maintenance facilities. “From auto manufacturers to oil change services and every auto-related industry, there is a spillover effect thanks to inDrive,” he added. “We monitor the ride and message both parties in case of suspicious activity,” Awais Saeed said, noting that platform safeguards also feature in-app audio recording alongside comprehensive health and accident insurance for active trips. Looking ahead at digital financial inclusion, he revealed that the platform is currently engaging with national financial regulators to broaden transaction avenues. “Estamos exploring multiple possibilities with the State Bank of Pakistan,” he said, aiming to streamline digital payments and reduce cash reliance for both drivers and passengers nationwide.—APP

Clashes in S Sudan leave at least 21 dead

CAIRO: Clashes in southern Sudan have killed at least 21 people, including women and children, a doctors’ group said Friday. Sudan Doctors Network, which tracks violence throughout the war in Sudan, said that the rebel group Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North, or SPLM-N, launched an attack on Thursday in the areas of Debi and Luwari in the town of Kauda in South Kordofan. Rebel leader Abdel Aziz al-Hilu has aligned his fighters with the Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which has been battling the Sudanese military since 2023. The war killed at least 59,000 people, displaced some 13 million and pushed parts of the country into famine. Al-Hilu’s group has been active in South Kordofan and joined a local government set up by the RSF. The group is a breakaway faction of the SPLM, the ruling party of neighboring South Sudan. Thursday’s attack was part of clashes that erupted between SPLM-N and the Otoro tribe, a minority group in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan. The fighting came despite a ceasefire initiative backed by the RSF last month. The medical group said the attacks by al-Hilu’s forces “constitute a clear violation of the agreement, a resumption of hostilities, and the targeting of civilians on an ethnic basis.” Al-Hilu didn’t commit to the ceasefire agreement.—APP

Jordan, Bahrain discuss regional situation

LONDON: King Abdullah of Jordan and King Hamad of Bahrain on Thursday discussed the latest developments in the Middle East, as both countries face renewed threats related to hostilities between Iran and the US, which resumed this week. During their telephone conversation the rulers emphasized the need to prevent further escalation in the region and discussed ways in which cooperation might be enhanced to achieve stability, the Jordan News Agency reported. They also discussed efforts by the UN Security Council to ensure deescalation in the region and beyond, Bahrain News Agency reported. Iran attacked Bahrain and Jordan this week following the resumption of its conflict with the US and Israel. Since the war began on Feb. 28, Iran has also targeted Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE. None of the targeted nations are direct parties to the conflict. Hostilities have paused for short periods over the past six months to allow for negotiations over Tehran’s nuclear program, which stalled, as well as the flow of oil and other trade shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, which has largely remained blocked to international shipping during the conflict. The latest lull ended when the US military resumed strikes against Iranian military targets this week, including air-defense sites, radar systems and maritime assets.—Agencies

UK, France agree to coop on migrant crossings

BIRMINGHAM: British hard-right leader Nigel Farage and France’s Jordan Bardella signed Friday a “memorandum of understanding” at Reform’s annual conference to end small boat migrant crossings if their anti-immigration parties were to enter government. “We today are going to begin a genuine new Entente Cordiale between our parties and our countries,” Farage said, addressing his party’s meeting in the English city of Birmingham alongside Bardella, president of France’s far-right National Rally (RN) party. Reform UK led national polls in the UK for over a year until July but the party’s standing has slumped in recent weeks amid multiple scandals involving allegations of irregular political funding. Bardella is hoping to become France’s prime minister if his party wins in national elections next year. Britain’s next general election is not due until 2029. Addressing the Birmingham conference in English, Bardella hailed the shared “culture and civilisation” between the countries, vowing to end irregular migrant crossings through the Channel. “In recent years, Emmanuel Macron has failed to protect our country,” Bardella said. “Our government will do everything in its power to ensure that France is no longer the getaway for illegal migration into the United Kingdom,” Bardella said to applause.—Agencies

Pak advocates women’s leadership in global peace

UNITED NATIONS :At a High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, Pakistan has called for an expanded role for women in peace and security, emphasizing the theme of women’s leadership. “Let’s invest in women leadership, let’s invest in peace, let’s invest in future,” Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the forum held on Wednesday to commemorate the adoption of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 1999. He also lauded Bangladesh for sponsoring the annual follow-up resolution adopted by the 80th session of the 193-member Assembly. “This landmark document affirmed that peace does not merely lie in the silence of guns but, in fact, flows from the protection of human rights, celebration of plurality, and promotion of the rule of law,” the Pakistani envoy said.—APP

Briefs

US to crack down on university boycotts

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives passed legislation on Thursday to block federal aid for universities that boycott Israel, the latest Republican-backed pro-Israel measure amid growing Democratic criticism of the Israeli government over the war in Gaza. The Republican-majority chamber voted 237-169 in favour of the "Protect Economic and Academic Freedom Act," which would have to pass the Senate in order to become law. The war in Gaza has devastated much of the Palestinian enclave. Israeli attacks have killed more than 73,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry. The conflict sparked protests and calls for boycotts at many US campuses. In response, Republican President Donald Trump targeted colleges and universities with probes and federal funding suspension threats. The administration and many Republicans in Congress allege that the protesters were antisemitic and supported extremism. Protesters deny this, saying advocacy for Palestinian rights and objections to the devastation in Gaza should not be equated with antisemitism or support for extremism. Thursday's House vote was mostly along party lines, with just two Republicans voting nay and 33 Democrats voting in favour.

Russian bombards Kyiv during day time

KYIV: For much of the war, Russian drone and missile attacks in Kyiv followed a particular rhythm. They almost always came at night. The warnings would begin on monitoring channels on Telegram in the late evening. They announced drones moving south, missiles being launched, air defenses working. Ukrainian civilians judged whether it was prudent to stay indoors or make for shelter in the metro based on the severity of the threat. Now, Russia has changed tactics with the use of fast-flying, jet-powered drones, and the expectation that daylight brings a return to normal life has been shattered. Since last week, attacks have come day and night, compounding the terror of overnight strikes with the exhaustion of constant daytime disruption. In Kyiv, the recurring wail of air-raid sirens has become part of daily life. It has interrupted commutes, shopping trips and children's school, intruded on life's biggest moments, from weddings to funerals, and, as these attacks always have, taken lives. - APP

Afghan drug trafficking networks busted: ANF

Considering the urgency of the matter, ANF shared the actionable intelligence with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to ensure timely coordinated action and prevent the international trafficking of the narcotics

DNA

BOGOTA: The Anti Narcotics Force has achieved a significant breakthrough in its ongoing efforts against international drug trafficking by successfully exposing and disrupting a transnational narcotics trafficking network involved in smuggling Afghan-origin drugs through Pakistan to international markets. Based on actionable intelligence developed by the Anti Narcotics Force, a successful operation was conducted against a transnational drug trafficking organization, which resulted in recovery of 200 kg of Methamphetamine (Ice) from a contain-

er at Karachi Port along with the Afghan mastermind namely Ehsan Ullah. Local handlers were also arrested. After thorough Investigations from the Afghan Kingpin, ANF Pakistan shared critical information to Sri Lankan authorities and DEA. This timely information resulted in recovery of 471 kg Methamphetamine (Ice) had been skillfully concealed. Considering the urgency of the matter, ANF shared the actionable intelligence with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to ensure timely coordinated action and prevent the international trafficking of the narcotics. As a result of the information provided by ANF,

the DEA coordinated with relevant Sri Lankan authorities, leading to a successful joint operation at Colombo Port, Sri Lanka, resulted in the recovery of 471 kg Methamphetamine (Ice) concealed in towels. During this international joint operation against narcotics trafficking, a total of 671 kg Methamphetamine (Ice) linked to the Afghanistan-based drug trafficking network was seized from Karachi and Colombo ports. Pakistan remains a victim state for Afghan-origin drugs. In fulfilment of its international obligations, ANF closely cooperates with allied and partner agencies to conduct coordinated counter-narcotics operations. Anti Narcotics Force played a

pivotal role throughout the operation by utilizing advanced intelligence-based strategies to identify the drug trafficking network. This successful operation reflects ANF's professional capabilities, commitment to combating narcotics trafficking, and its effective cooperation with international law enforcement agencies. ANF's efforts in dismantling international DTOs and apprehending Afghan drug traffickers and their local facilitators have been formally acknowledged by Sri Lankan authorities and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), underscoring ANF's effective role in international counter-narcotics cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Candidate for the position of Secretary General of the United Nations H.E. Ambassador Olara Otunnu called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 4 September 2026. - DNA

Sri Lanka arrests ex-president's son over Airbus deal

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's main anti-graft body arrested lawmaker Namal Rajapaksa, the son of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, on Friday in connection with a corruption probe into a 2013 Airbus aircraft purchase. The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) said the 40-year-old scion of the once-powerful Rajapaksa family "was summoned for questioning over the Airbus transaction". "The MP was arrested afterwards and will be taken before a magistrate," a commission official said. It was not immediately clear what charges Rajapaksa faces. His lawyer, Nishantha Dayananda, confirmed the arrest over the controversial \$2.3-billion deal, which was eventually cancelled by a new government in 2016. CIABOC had questioned the former president himself in May over allegations that he had received kickbacks from the aircraft purchase. The anti-graft probe centres on claims that the European manufacturer channelled part of the money from the purchase to senior Sri Lankan officials and politicians. The Rajapaksa family has denied allegations that they received bribes and dismissed corruption claims against them as politically motivated. Former Sri Lankan Airlines chief executive Kapila Chandrasena told investigators in March that he had handed nearly half a million dollars in kickbacks to Rajapaksa. - APP

87 vessels redirected so far: US

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on Thursday that, as of the day, its ongoing maritime blockade against Iran had redirected 87 commercial vessels, and US forces had disabled three vessels and boarded two to ensure "total compliance". US President Donald Trump announced on April 13 that the US Navy would begin blocking ships trying to enter or leave the Strait of Hormuz, after peace talks with Iran failed to produce a deal. The US forces lifted the blockade on all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports and coastal areas on June 18. The move came one day after the US signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran. On July 14, the US military announced the resumption of the blockade in the Strait of Hormuz.

Court acquits Karsaz accident driver

KARACHI: A judicial magistrate in Karachi's District East on Friday acquitted a female driver in a narcotics case registered after the deadly Karsaz road accident, citing lack of evidence. The prosecution failed to prove the charges against the accused during the hearing. The defence counsel argued that neither the chemical analysis nor the blood test detected methamphetamine, commonly known as crystal meth or ice, in the samples. The lawyer further alleged that samples collected from the accused by police had been tampered with and claimed that the investigating officer had concealed the blood test report during the investigation. - APP

Two trapped tunnel workers rescued in Nepal 'miracle'

DNA

KATHMANDU: Two hydropower workers were pulled alive from a tunnel buried by debris in Nepal on Friday, a rare ray of hope on the tenth day of rescue efforts after catastrophic Himalayan flooding. Rescuers cheered as one man emerged through a muddy opening, a video released by the energy ministry showed. He was helped to his feet by rescuers, and later carried on the backs of the emergency workers, raising his hand as they took him towards a helicopter. A photograph showed the second man caked in mud, his hands pressed together in prayer, as rescuers brought him away on a stretcher. Rescuers called it a "miracle" after the disaster last Wednesday that has killed at least 1,200 people and left more than 5,000 missing in China and Nepal. The men were identified as Sanjay Shah, 30, a mechanical foreman, as well as Maharjan, a mechanical supervisor, by Home Minister Sudan Gurung. The Nepal Army said the two men were receiving medical treatment and that "search and rescue operations are ongoing." The two are among hundreds of hydropower workers missing since a wall of mud and debris swept

through the region on August 26 after a vast glacial and rock collapse on a mountain on the China-Nepal border. Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha confirmed that rescue at the Trishuli 3A tunnel. Searches were continuing at that tunnel and other sites, with at least 12 hydropower projects smashed by the floods. The government had initially said it believed more than 100 workers could be alive inside multiple tunnels. Nepali rescuers, aided by experts from India, China and South Korea, have continued searching for survivors feared trapped inside hydropower tunnels, but teams had repeatedly hit walls of hard-packed debris. Until Friday, none of the tunnel workers had been confirmed alive. Australian rescue expert Arnold Dix, who has been supporting the operation remotely, told AFP that the rescue efforts were "back in miracle country" after a "week of 24/7 heartache". Earlier Friday, Dix said teams at the Trishuli 3A hydropower project believed they had heard a faint response from inside the tunnel. "They believe they received a faint response from inside saying, 'hunchha', yes or OK," Dix, president of the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association, told AFP, adding that he was en route to Nepal to join the rescue effort.

Vance says US-Iran conflict is not a war despite renewed fighting

WASHINGTON: US Vice President JD Vance on Thursday ruled out calling the conflict with Iran a war, despite renewed attacks and a growing military presence in the Middle East, stressing the challenge the Trump administration faces as the hostilities enter their seventh month and midterm elections loom. His comments come as Washington and Tehran exchanged back-and-forth attacks this week after a period of relative calm, with no diplomatic talks with the Iranians underway to end the conflict. The war has dragged down President Donald Trump's approval ratings and driven up gas prices, raising the stakes for Republican candidates fighting to preserve their party's narrow congressional majorities in November. In a briefing at the White House, Vance touted US efforts to facilitate oil shipping through the Strait of Hormuz,

where Iranians have disrupted maritime traffic since the war started, crediting Washington's actions with helping to avert a broader global energy crisis. He pushed back on describing the conflict as a "war," saying the US has ended major combat operations with Iran, despite renewed fighting this week. He said Washington's focus now was to ensure Tehran cannot keep disrupting commercial oil shipping. "I wouldn't call it a war," Vance said. "Right now there's no active shooting. I recognise there's been places where this has flared up." The US maintains more than 50,000 troops in the Middle East. The Trump administration has surged assets into the region, including nearly 20 warships focused on a blockade. In some instances, troops have been deployed for longer than expected and have been pulled from Europe and the Indo-Pacific. - APP

Govt committed to enhance private sector partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government reaffirmed its commitment to increasing private sector participation in Pakistan's economy through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and privatisation, pursuing both as key instruments of economic growth and transformation. The commitment was reiterated at the National Strategic Dialogue on PPPs and Privatisation and Launch of the Pakistan PPP Monitor, held in Islamabad with the participation of Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation Muhammad Ali, ADB Vice President Yingming Yang, senior federal and provincial officials, development partners, financial institutions and representatives of the private sector and investment community. The Government also expressed its appreciation to the Asian Development Bank for its longstanding partnership with Pakistan and for its continued support in strengthening the country's PPP framework. The launch of the Pakistan PPP Monitor was welcomed as an important contribution to improving visibility of Pakistan's PPP track record and pipeline for investors and other stakeholders. Speaking at the event, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb highlighted the Government's focus on creating an environment that supports private investment, encourages business activity and enables greater private sector participation in economic development. "The private sector must lead Pakistan's next phase of growth. PPPs and privatisation can help bring in investment, improve efficiency and create greater space for private sector participation. Our focus is on building a strong pipeline of investable opportunities and turning these opportunities into real investment and growth," the Finance Minister said.

In his address, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation Muhammad Ali said that Pakistan's future infrastructure and development needs cannot be met by public spending alone and that the private sector must play a much larger role in financing, building and managing infrastructure and economic assets. He stressed that PPPs and privatisation are complementary, not competing, approaches. PPPs can bring private capital and expertise into infrastructure and public services, while privatisation can bring private ownership or management into commercial enterprises where it can improve efficiency, investment and service delivery. The Adviser also noted that PPPs, privatisation and asset monetisation can be used as different tools to bring private capital, management, technology and accountability into areas where the public sector cannot do everything itself. "We have already started to give the reins of economic growth to the private sector. We need to continue on this path, complete our privatisation agenda, significantly expand our PPP pipeline, and start completing projects to demonstrate that the Government means business," the Adviser said. ADB Vice President for South, Central and West Asia, Yingming Yang welcomed Pakistan's efforts to strengthen private sector participation and expressed ADB's commitment to continue the longstanding cooperation in promoting large scale participation of private sector. "Mobilizing private capital and expertise is essential. Well-structured PPPs can complement constrained public resources, bring private sector efficiency, support lifecycle maintenance, and improve services for citizens," said ADB's Vice President. In his address he also highlighted the importance of the Pakistan PPP Monitor in providing greater visibility of Pakistan's PPP track record and pipeline. The Monitor brings together information on projects and investment activity, giving investors and other stakeholders a clearer picture of opportunities in Pakistan.





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