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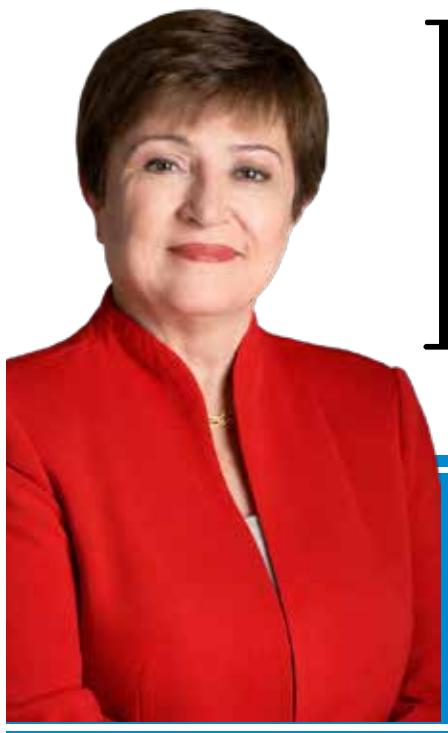

Developing states hit hard by Hormuz closure: IMF chief

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Mohsin Naqvi says cricket tin Pak not finished

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Ahsan Iqbal meets leaders of JI in Khi

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Briefs

Govt, JI agree to form committee

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The federal government and Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan (JI) on Thursday agreed to constitute committees to recommend measures for reducing the petroleum levy and providing relief to the public. JI Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Prime Minister's Adviser Rana Sanaullah announced the decision at a press conference in Lahore. Addressing the press conference, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said a government delegation had met the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) leadership in Lahore.

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He said the government would constitute an expert committee and had asked the JI to form a similar committee to jointly discuss measures for reducing the petroleum levy. The government levies Rs114 per litre in taxes and duties on petrol and Rs100 per litre on diesel. "The government will happily act upon recommendations put forward by these committees," Iqbal said, adding that both the government and JI agreed that relief should be provided to the public.

Turkey detains 9 tanker crew

NEW DESK

ISTANBUL: Turkish authorities have detained nine of the 10 crew of an oil tanker after it collided with a cargo ship that sank off Istanbul, state media reported Thursday. The ALSU, an empty oil tanker, collided early on Wednesday with the Tugberk Imamoglu, a cargo vessel carrying rolled steel, 18 nautical miles off Silivri district on the western edge of Istanbul province. Officials said the damaged cargo ship sank "very quickly" in about 900 meters of sea, with Turkish authorities continuing their search on Thursday for the missing 10 crew members. The ALSU was not damaged in the collision, the cause of which was not immediately clear. Anadolu news agency said nine crew members on the ALSU, excluding the cook, had been detained and had given statements to the police. Search and rescue operations continued with 18 vessels, five helicopters, two unmanned aerial vehicles and an aircraft involved alongside a navy vessel conducting underwater searches.

Abhinandan retires from Indian air force

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot Abhinandan Varthaman, who was held captive for three days after Pakistan shot down his MiG-21 fighter during Operation Swift Retort in February 2019, has retired from the force and joined a private airline as a commercial pilot, Indian broadcaster NDTV reported. According to the broadcaster, Abhinandan joined a Goa-based regional carrier FLY91, which began operations in March 2024 and currently operates a fleet of six ATR 72-600 aircraft. "The former group captain and Vir Chakra awardee, who served in the Air Force for 22 years, has joined Goa-based regional airline FLY91 as a pilot," NDTV reports citing The Press Trust of India, which quoted sources.

Hormuz closure

Developing states hit very hard

Speaking to media on the sidelines of a G20 finance leaders' meeting in North Carolina, IMF chief said higher global debt levels, persistent inflation pressures linked to the closure of the strategically vital waterway and increased competition for capital from artificial intelligence-related borrowing were contributing to rising bond yields

DNA

WASHINGTON/ASHEVILLE: The continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz is pushing up borrowing costs globally and threatening hard-won progress made by developing and low-income countries in managing their debt, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has warned. Speaking to media on the sidelines of a G20 finance leaders' meeting in North Carolina, Georgieva said higher global debt levels, persistent inflation pressures linked to the closure of the strategically vital waterway and increased competition for capital from artificial intelligence-related borrowing were contributing to rising bond yields.

"This is not just a low-income developing countries problem," Georgieva said, warning that high debt levels in advanced economies combined with stubborn inflation could push up debt-servicing costs for emerging markets and developing economies as well. She noted that several low-income countries had made progress in reducing debt vulnerabilities since 2022, when the IMF estimated that around 60 per cent of low-income countries were either in debt distress or at high risk of distress. Georgieva attributed the improvement partly to fiscal reforms undertaken by governments with support from international institutions and official creditors.

However, she cautioned that the gains could now be reversed as higher global yields increase financing costs. Emerging-market economies that had worked to improve market credibility and narrow borrowing spreads could see those achievements undermined by rising debt-servicing expenses, she said. The economic concerns come as shipping activity through the Strait of Hormuz remains sharply below normal levels. Preliminary data from maritime intelligence firm Kpler showed that only six commodity vessels transited the waterway on Wednesday, compared with 11 a day earlier and a 10-day average of around 13 vessels.

The vessels included two very large gas carriers, two long-range tankers, one Supramax tanker and one Panamax tanker. Analysts cautioned that the figures could change because some vessels switch off their transponders during voyages. The Strait of Hormuz is a crucial global energy corridor, and prolonged disruption has raised concerns about energy supplies, inflation and transportation costs. Reduced maritime traffic has also added pressure to financial

Continued on Page 06

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the Embassy of Nepal in Islamabad and meets H.E. Ambassador Rita Dithal to offer condolences over the loss of precious lives in the devastating floods that recently struck Nepal. – DNA

Iran attacks US targets despite threats

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran attacked US military bases in Kuwait on Thursday, despite US President Donald Trump threatening further strikes in a fresh flare-up six months into the war. The new clashes, which began with US raids on Sunday, deepen the ongoing impasse in the war, as Iran maintains a stranglehold on the strategic Strait of Hormuz and the United States presses its counter-blockade of Iranian ports. Trump said his military was prepared to attack Iran "any time we want" after extensive US bombardment of sites across the country left at least 19 Iranians dead between Tuesday and Wednesday. Tehran has once again retaliated with strikes across the Middle East this week, saying it targeted US bases and forces in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan and Iraq's Kurdistan region.

Continued on Page 06

Visits Nepal Embassy

Pakistan shares grief of Nepali people, says PM

Amb. Dhital thanked the Prime Minister for his kind and reassuring words of support and stated that this gesture would be long remembered by the people of Nepal. She also briefed the Prime Minister on the current state of bilateral cooperation

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visited the Embassy of Nepal in Islamabad and signed the condolence book opened in memory of those who lost their lives in the recent devastating flash floods and landslides in Nepal.

The Prime Minister was received by H.E. Ms. Rita Dhital, Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan. He was accompanied by Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi, Foreign Secretary Amb. Amna Baloch and other senior officials.

In his message, the Prime Minister conveyed Pakistan's deepest sympathies to the Government and people of Nepal, and to the bereaved families who lost their loved ones in the tragedy. The Prime Minister reiterated the sentiments he had earlier conveyed to Nepali Prime Minister Balendra Shah in a telephone call, reaffirming Pakistan's complete solidarity with Nepal in this hour of grief. He also shared with the Ambassador that Pakistan would be dispatching emergency relief assistance to Nepal, later this week, to support ongoing rescue and relief operations.He offered continued support to Nepal and hoped that the resilient people of Nepal would emerge stronger from this tragedy. The Prime Minister underscored the close and long-standing fraternal ties between Pakistan and Nepal, and expressed confidence that the two countries would continue to stand by each other in times of need.

Continued on Page 06

Fitna al Hindustan

15 India-sponsored terrorists killed

Incident highlights Taliban regime's failure to prevent cross-border terrorism from Afghan soil, says military's media wing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have killed 15 India-sponsored terrorists while foiling an infiltration attempt along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border opposite North Waziristan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday. The movement of a group of Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists attempting to infiltrate Pakistan was detected on the night of August 31 and September 1, the military's media wing said. Security forces responded professionally and with patience before successfully engaging the militants, the ISPR said. The precise engagement continued for 36 hours, resulting in the killing of 15 terrorists. During a follow-up sanitisation operation, security forces recovered a significant quantity of weapons and ammunition from the slain terrorists, according to the ISPR.

It added that the recovery further exposed the "nefarious designs" of the terrorists and their facilitators seeking to disrupt peace and stability in Pakistan. The ISPR said the incident along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border once again vindicated Pakistan's stance regarding the Afghan Taliban regime's failure to prevent the use of its territory for cross-border terrorism.

It said the Afghan Taliban regime had also consistently failed to ensure effective border management and fulfil its international obligations. Security forces remain "resolute and unwavering" in their commitment to defend the country's frontiers, the ISPR said. A sanitisation operation is

Continued on Page 06

EU summons Russia envoys, eyes sanctions

Kallas said that EU foreign ministers agreed to keep working on a proposal to impose sanctions on 1,600 individuals and entities linked to Russia's military industry in the hope of adopting them next month

DNA

LEIPZIG: EU countries on Wednesday summoned Russia's envoys and discussed fresh sanctions after a drone incident in Germany that the bloc's foreign policy chief said bore the marks of "state-sponsored terrorism".

The incident involving an explosive-laden drone at Leipzig airport has heightened fears over a sabotage campaign that the EU and NATO say is a Russian attempt to destabilise Ukraine's backers. "It is clear that it has all the hallmarks of state-sponsored terrorism," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said at a meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers in Ireland. "The question is, what do we do about this?" Kallas said the EU had summoned the Russian envoy, and member states were doing the same. "We will not let an act of such gravity go unpunished," French Foreign Minister

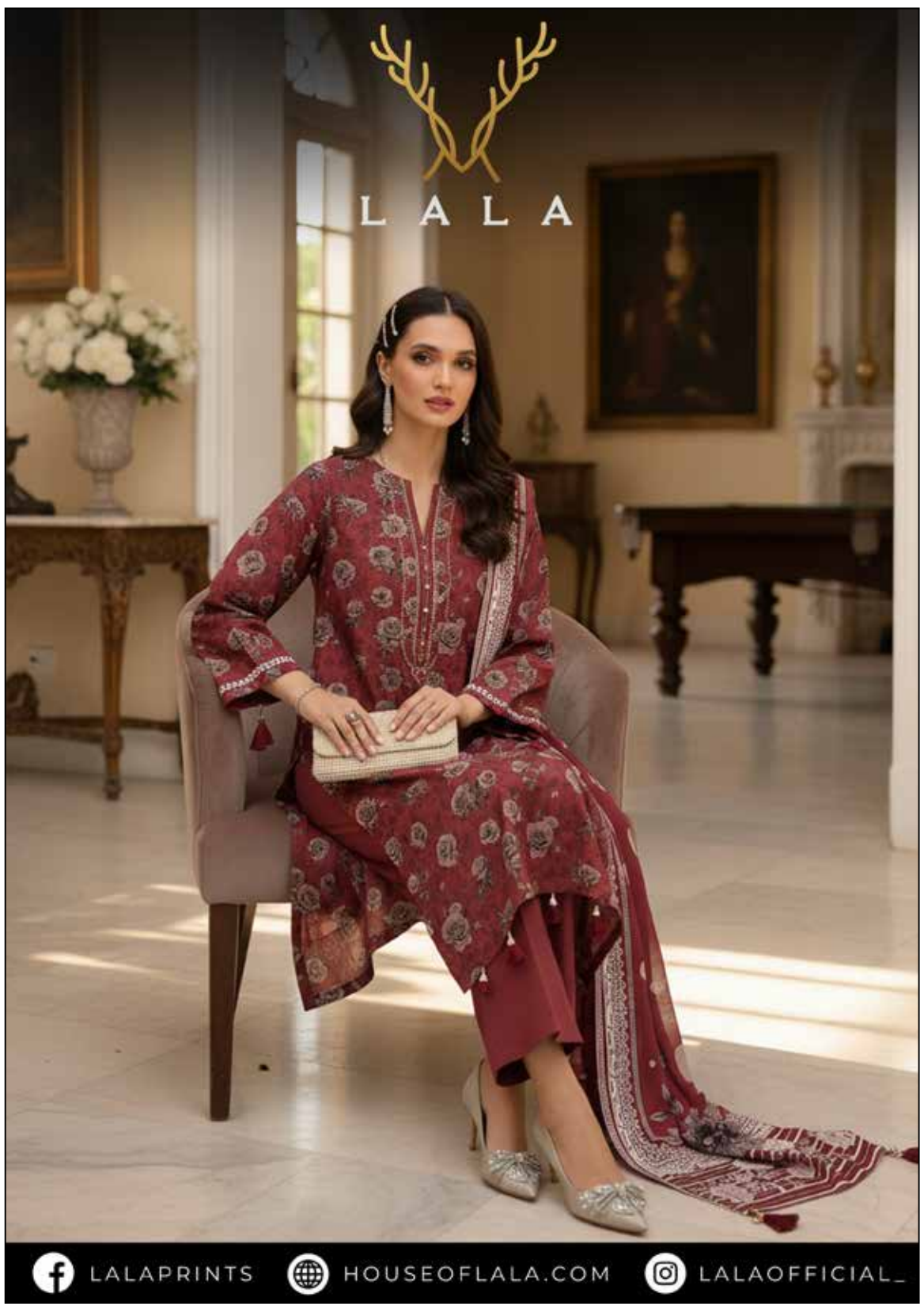
Continued on Page 06

Putin denies plan for new Russia military call up

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia has no present need to mobilise more men for its Ukraine offensive, President Vladimir Putin said Thursday, describing speculation about another military call-up as Ukrainian "disinformation". Putin last ordered a "partial mobilisation" of reservists in 2022, following a string of military setbacks on the battlefield in Ukraine. That order, which the Kremlin said applied to 300,000 people only out of population of

Continued on Page 06



Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Friday, September 04, 2026

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

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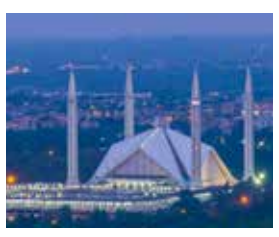
Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

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

Departments

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



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Istanbul moot opens new avenues for Pak-Turkiye trade

Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that ICCI highly valued the Embassy's proactive cooperation in facilitating the delegation and connecting Pakistani businessmen with relevant Turkish business circles. He said the successful Business Opportunity Conference provided an effective platform for B2B interaction, investment discussions and exploration of new avenues of cooperation, while the Excellence Award Ceremony further strengthened the spirit of friendship and partnership between the two countries

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), headed by President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, visited the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Islamabad on Thursday. The delegation expressed gratitude to Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu and Commercial Counsellor Enes Malik for their valuable support and facilitation in making ICCI's recent Türkiye visit, Business Opportunity Conference (BoC) and Excellence Award Ceremony in Istanbul a success. The ICCI leadership particularly appreciated the Embassy's assistance in facilitating visas for the entire delegation, which helped ensure smooth participation of the Pakistani business community in the Istanbul engagements. Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu appreciated ICCI's initiative to take a business delegation to Türkiye and organize the Business Opportunity Conference in Istanbul, saying that such private-sector-led engagements were important for creating direct linkages between the business communities of the two countries. He assured that the Embassy of Türkiye would continue to extend possible facilitation and cooperation to ICCI for promoting stronger trade, investment and business relations between Pakistan and Türkiye. Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that ICCI highly valued the Embassy's proactive cooperation in facilitating the delegation and connecting Pakistani businessmen with relevant Turkish business circles. He said the successful Business Opportunity Conference provided an effective platform for B2B interaction, investment discussions and exploration of new avenues of cooperation, while the Excellence Award Ceremony further strengthened the spirit of friendship and partnership between the two countries. He said ICCI would continue its efforts to translate the strong political and fraternal relations between Pakistan and Türkiye into concrete economic partnerships. The ICCI President and the Turkish Ambassador also agreed that continuity in institutional engagement was essential for converting the momentum of the Istanbul conference into tangible business outcomes. It was decided that Sardar Tahir Mehmood would personally remain in close contact with Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu to pursue the core objective of expanding bilateral business relations and ensuring that the private sectors of both countries derive maximum benefit from the growing economic partnership. Both sides expressed complete satisfaction over the outcome of the Istanbul visit and agreed to maintain close institutional contact for further promoting bilateral trade and investment. They emphasized the need for more business delegations, B2B meetings, joint ventures and sector-specific engagements, particularly to help Pakistan.—**DNA**

MoU to strengthen competition law enforcement

ISLAMABAD:The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) and the National Forensics Agency (NFA) here on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen institutional cooperation and integrate advanced forensic capabilities into competition law enforcement.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Chairman CCP, Farid Ahmad Tarar and Director General NFA, Jawad Ahmad Dogar while CCP Member Bushra Naz Malik and senior officials of both institutions attended the signing ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman CCP, Farid Ahmad Tarar termed the signing of the MoU an important step towards stronger institutional cooperation. "Effective enforcement increasingly depends on reliable evidence, scientific analysis, and specialised technical expertise, alongside a strong legal framework and effective enforcement tools and techniques. This partnership will strengthen our investigative capabilities and enable the Commission to benefit from NFA's forensic expertise," he said.—**APP**

AIOU promotes love for Prophet (PBUH) thru Mushaira

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) organized a soul-stirring Naatia Mushaira to promote love and devotion for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), appreciation of Seerat-e-Tayyaba, noble character and the Prophetic way of life. The event aimed to foster among students a profound love for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) while promoting Islamic values, traditions, cultural awareness and high moral and social standards. The Naatia Mushaira was organized jointly by the Department of Urdu and AIOU FM Radio91.6. Renowned writer and poet Muhammad Izhar-ul-Haq presided over the Mushaira while Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr Syed Muhammad Amir Shah and renowned poet Akhtar Usman participated as chief guests. Prof. Dr Abdul Aziz Sahir and Arsh Hashmi were the guests of honour. Renowned poets including Qayyum Tahir, Dr Kashif Irfan, Dr Qasim Yaqoob, Dr Abid Sial, Dr Shaza Akbar, Dr Asad Munir, Dr Junaid Azar, Riffaqat Razi, Farzand Ali Hashmi and Dr Arshad Mahmood Nashad along with other poets, presented beautiful Naatia poetry in praise and devotion to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Their heartfelt and devotional verses created a deeply spiritual atmosphere while the audience warmly appreciated and applauded the Naatia poetry. Dr Mehnaz Anjum performed the duties of stage secretary. On the occasion, Chairperson, Department of Urdu Dr Arshad Mahmood Nashad delivered the welcome remarks and highlighted the objectives of the Mushaira. He said that such blessed and spiritually uplifting gatherings are not only a beautiful means of expressing love for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) but also play an important role in acquainting the younger generation with Seerat-e-Tayyaba and the universal messages of morality, tolerance, love, patience and humanity. Addressing the gathering, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr Syed Muhammad Amir Shah said that with the blessed advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), light spread throughout humanity, the darkness of ignorance was dispelled and society moved from oppression and injustice towards justice, brotherhood and humanity. He said that the Seerat-e-Tayyaba of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the best example for all humanity and that by following his teachings, it is possible to build a peaceful, tolerant and morally upright society. Dr Amir Shah further said that alongside academic activities, the organization of literary, religious and cultural gatherings at universities is of great importance for the intellectual, moral and spiritual development of students.

The Naatia Mushaira is part of the continuing academic, literary, cultural and intellectual activities being carried out under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood. The university's activities of this nature are aimed at providing students with quality education while also familiarizing them with knowledge and literature, religious values, moral development, tolerance, love and positive social attitudes enabling them to become responsible, well-rounded, and constructive members of society and play their role in its development and progress.—**APP**

Exports only way out of existential crisis: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD:Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday termed export-led growth the only sustainable path for Pakistan's economic transformation, urging the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide technical assistance and global best practices for expanding and diversifying the country's exports. "Stabilization will only be true stabilization when it is not on the back of debt. Only exports can give us the legs to grow," the minister said, describing the shift towards export-driven growth as a matter of "life and death" for the country. He was talking to ADB Vice President for South, Central and West Asia Yingming Yang, who called on him in Islamabad to discuss the bank's ongoing support for Pakistan's development agenda under the URAAN Pakistan framework. Ahsan Iqbal called for ADB's support in developing a strategic roadmap for export expansion and diversification, drawing on the bank's technical assistance provided during the preparation of Vision 2010. He reiterated the government's ambition to transform Pakistan into a $1 trillion economy by 2035, saying Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was committed to removing structural bottlenecks, reforming key sectors and promoting economic diplomacy. The minister said reforms in industry, food security, commerce and foreign affairs were essential to achieving sustainable and export-led economic growth. Highlighting Pakistan's economic turnaround from 2022 to 2026 as a case study for developing economies, he also urged the ADB to maintain continuous coordination on development projects to ensure their alignment with national priorities. The meeting also discussed climate adaptation and water security, with Ahsan Iqbal highlighting the increasing frequency of severe and unseasonal rainfall events in the country. He urged the ADB to partner with Pakistan in developing localized water-management infrastructure, including small dams, reservoirs and retention ponds, particularly in areas where large volumes of rainwater were currently being drained away. "We need to seriously consider developing small dams, water reservoirs, and retention ponds to store rainwater," he said, adding that the stored water could help protect cities, support agriculture and strengthen overall water security He also highlighted the challenge posed by sudden transboundary water inflows. On environmental conservation, the minister sought ADB's technical expertise to develop a sustainable tourism management framework for Gilgit-Baltistan to protect its fragile ecosystems amid increasing visitor numbers.—**APP**

MD APP discuss media coop with Portuguese envoy

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues, visited the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Headquarters here on Thursday and discussed avenues for strengthening media cooperation between the two countries. Acting Managing Director APP Sabeen Usman Khattak received the Portuguese envoy along with senior APP officials. During the meeting, matters relating to media and news exchange were discussed in detail. Both sides expressed the hope that the national news agencies of Pakistan and Portugal would work toward signing a broader Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to expand networking and content sharing. Ambassador Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues appreciated APP's presence and coverage of embassy events and activities. He highlighted the important role of APP in projecting Pakistan's image at home and abroad and acknowledged the agency's support to the Portuguese Embassy in Islamabad. Acting MD APP Sabeen Usman Khattak assured the Ambassador of all possible support and cooperation in enhancing media linkages. She said APP was committed to promoting people-to-people contacts and bilateral narratives through credible and timely news coverage. —**APP**

Modernising national broadcasters govt priority: Danyal

ISLAMABAD: The 19th meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting was held at the headquarters of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) in Islamabad. The meeting was chaired by Palan Baloch. The meeting approved the proceedings of the 18th meeting of the Standing Committee and reviewed a comprehensive report regarding implementation of the recommendations made during the previous meeting. The committee also reviewed progress on the project for installation of a shortwave antenna in Landhi, Karachi. The committee was informed that the project had been approved under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for fiscal year 2006-07. During the meeting, the committee was also briefed on measures to modernise and upgrade the infrastructure of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation in Balochistan. On the occasion, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhary stressed during the meeting that bringing Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation in line with modern requirements is among the government's priorities.—**APP**

CDA accelerates work on Diplomatic Enclave upgradation

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is expediting work on the upgradation of the Diplomatic Enclave to improve its infrastructure, security arrangements, landscaping and overall facilities. The project aims to provide improved roads and footpaths, modern lighting, enhanced security infrastructure, landscaping, horticulture and better public spaces, contributing to the overall environment and functionality of the Diplomatic Enclave, said a press release issued here. Chairman CDA, Sohail Ashraf has directed the Special Projects Directorate to expedite work on the upgradation of the Diplomatic Enclave, construction of a new boundary wall and further strengthening of its security infrastructure. The ongoing works include upgradation of security gates and check posts, construction of designated waiting areas, improvement of roads and footpaths and other civil works The project also includes architectural cladding and construction works, strengthening of boundary and security infrastructure, installation of modern LED and security lights, fencing, grills, razor wire and other security measures. Special attention is also being given to landscaping, plantation, green belts and improvement of medians to further enhance the green character of the Diplomatic Enclave. The authority is also focusing on improving pedestrian facilities, lighting, roads and public spaces to make the area more organised, functional and aesthetically appealing. The project is aimed at providing a safe, secure, well-organised and dignified environment for diplomats, residents, local and foreign visitors, diplomatic delegations, investors and business representatives. The CDA said the upgradation of the Diplomatic Enclave was part of its broader vision for developing Islamabad as a safe, modern and well-planned federal capital. The diplomatic community has welcomed the initiative, terming the ongoing work an important step towards improving security, infrastructure, landscaping and overall facilities in the enclave. The project reflects the vision of Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and the CDA leadership to develop the Diplomatic Enclave in line with contemporary international standards while preserving the distinctive character of Islamabad .—**DNA**

Rising ROP threatens eyesight of thousands of preterm babies

Doctors said infants born in rural and underserved areas face the greatest risk because few hospitals offer ROP screening or treatment, increasing the likelihood that the narrow treatment window will be missed. They urged the government to make ROP screening mandatory in neonatal intensive care units, expand specialist services and allocate funding to prevent an ROP epidemic from leaving thousands of Pakistani children permanently blind.

RAWALPINDI: Doctors have warned that Pakistan is facing a growing epidemic of retinopathy of prematurity (ROP), urging the government to introduce mandatory nationwide screening of premature babies to prevent avoidable childhood blindness.

According to the Department of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Rawalpindi, improving neonatal survival rates are increasing the number of infants vulnerable to ROP, a potentially blinding eye disease that affects premature babies. Doctors said nearly one million babies are born prematurely in Pakistan every year, with an estimated around 300,000 developing varying degrees of ROP, while thousands require delicate sight-saving surgery. ROP develops because the blood vessels of the retina begin forming about three months after conception and normally complete their development at full-term birth. Premature delivery interrupts this process and may trigger abnormal blood vessel growth that damages the retina, potentially leading to irreversible blindness if left untreated. Infants weighing less than 1.5 kilograms at birth face the highest risk.

Dr. Amjad, a pediatric ophthalmologist and ROP specialist at Al-Shifa Trust, said Pakistan lacks a nationwide screening programme despite the rising number of premature births. He noted that neighboring India had significantly reduced ROP-related blindness after introducing mandatory eye examinations for premature infants before discharge from neonatal intensive care units. He said treatment requires highly trained pediatric ophthalmologists, specialized anesthesia teams and advanced surgical facilities. Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital is currently the only facility in Pakistan performing these highly delicate ROP surgeries. During the past year, the hospital carried out around 560 surgeries free of cost, although this represents only a small proportion of babies estimated to require treatment. Doctors said infants born in rural and underserved areas face the greatest risk because few hospitals offer ROP screening or treatment, increasing the likelihood that the narrow treatment window will be missed. They urged the government to make ROP screening mandatory in neonatal intensive care units, expand specialist services and allocate funding to prevent an ROP epidemic from leaving thousands of Pakistani children permanently blind.—**DNA**

Briefs

Govt plans horticulture promotion drive

ISLAMABAD: The government plans to promote and develop Pakistan's horticulture sector through dedicated initiatives under FoodAg 2027 in collaboration with the governments of Balochistan and Punjab. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, provincial government partnerships are planned for FoodAg 2027, with dedicated events and initiatives focusing on the promotion and development of the horticulture sector. The initiative is among a series of special measures being undertaken by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) to strengthen trade facilitation and export promotion services. According to the documents, help desks have been established in 12 major chambers of commerce across Pakistan.

In addition, a TDAP office and help desk has been established at the Lasbela Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) in Hub to strengthen trade facilitation and export promotion services in South Balochistan.

TDAP is also pursuing trade facilitation through digitalisation. The initiatives include online issuance of Certificates of Origin (COO), completion of Phase-I of the TDAP Trade Portal and the Preferential Trade Access Database (PTAD). Other measures listed in the documents include the GLOBE Summit for e-commerce and PIXS for IT startup promotion. The documents also state that memoranda of understanding with EXIM Bank and Pakistan Single Window (PSW) are being pursued for capacity building of exporters. Under its planned provincial partnerships, TDAP will collaborate with the governments of Balochistan and Punjab for FoodAg 2027.—**APP**

Over 332 faculty members trained on AI

ISLAMABAD: The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, has concluded a four-day faculty training programme titled, "AI Literacy for Educators: Building AI-Ready Institutions," for Lecturers and Assistant Professors serving in public sector higher education institutions (HEIs). Thirty-two faculty members representing public sector HEIs from Islamabad and Rawalpindi attended the training in person at HEC Smart Classroom alongside more than 300 faculty members participating in the programme through university-based Smart Classrooms and Video Conference Rooms. The programme, organised through the Smart Classroom, was designed to strengthen faculty's capacity to understand, critically evaluate, and integrate Artificial Intelligence into teaching, learning, research, assessment, and broader academic practices. The comprehensive professional development intervention combined conceptual understanding, practical hands-on learning, critical reflection, and the application of AI across diverse academic contexts, enabling participants to develop both foundational knowledge and practical skills. A distinctive feature of the programme was its technology-enabled delivery through HEC Smart Classroom network as majority of the faculty members joined the training programme online from their respective universities. This arrangement allowed participants to attend live sessions in real time and engage directly with the resource person, making the sessions interactive despite distance. Managing Director NAHE Dr. Noor Amna Malik attended the closing ceremony as chief guest. She highlighted the transformative impact of AI on higher education, noting that AI is rapidly reshaping the ways knowledge is created, taught, assessed, researched, and applied. She urged universities to prepare faculty members and students to effectively navigate an AI-enabled academic environment while ensuring that technological advancement remains firmly grounded in academic quality, ethical principles, human judgment.—APP

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the Uzbekistan Tourism Roadshow in Islamabad, Abdul Zahir Abbasi, CEO of A2Z Travel Solution, was honoured Excellence Award by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Tourism, alongside H.E. Alisher Tukhtaev, Ambassador of Uzbekistan, and Aftab Rana.

IRS, Khair Publications hold seminar on ideology of Pak, scholars' role

Sahibzada Muhammad Saeed, International Relations Analyst, argued that Pakistan's ideology cannot be fully understood without examining the historical contributions of the Ulema and Sufis. He presented the Two-Nation Theory, in part, as an extension of the intellectual legacy of Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani, which Allama Iqbal also recognized

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, in collaboration with Khair Publications, held a seminar titled "Ideology of Pakistan and the Role of Islamic Scholars" at IRS. The seminar examined the contributions of the Ulema and Sufis of the subcontinent, and their continuing relevance to Pakistan's founding ideology and efforts to counter religious extremism In his welcome remarks, Dr. Rizwan Naseer, Senior Research Fellow and Director of Centre for Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Studies (CCTVES) at the IRS, highlighted the role of Islamic scholars in developing a shared Muslim identity through education, sermons, and writings. He described the Lahore Resolution of March 23, 1940, as the founding charter of the Pakistan Movement and noted the contribution of religious scholars and grassroots organizations alongside the Muslim League's political leadership. He traced this legacy through the Objectives Resolution of 1949, its incorporation into the Constitution through Article 2A in 1985, and the 1973 Constitution's declaration of Islam as the state religion. He highlighted Paigham-e-Pakistan, endorsed by more than 1,800 scholars in 2018, and the National Action Plan as efforts to counter extremist misuse of religious discourse. Sahibzada Muhammad Saeed, International Relations Analyst, argued that Pakistan's ideology cannot be fully understood without examining the historical contributions of the Ulema and Sufis. He presented the Two-Nation Theory, in part, as an extension of the intellectual legacy of Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani, which Allama Iqbal also recognized. He stressed that regional identities are not weaknesses and called for a shared national purpose that strengthens rather than suppresses local identities. Mr. Sultan Nasir, scholar, poet, author, and civil servant, discussed the Sufis' contribution to the ideology of Pakistan and the Two-Nation Theory. He highlighted the relationship among Sufi traditions, pluralism, and adherence to Shariah, citing contributions to poetry, music, and calligraphy by figures such as Ameer Khusrau, while emphasizing the preservation of Islamic fundamentals. Dr. Syed Muhammad Abdul Rehman Shah, Islamic scholar and Certified SECP Islamic Finance Sharia Advisor, referenced Allama Iqbal's Allahabad Address and the importance of a clear conceptual and constitutional framework for state survival. He recalled the Sunni Conference in Banaras and urged younger generations to study the Maktubat of Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani. He discussed Sirhindi's opposition to Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi, religious syncretism under Akbar and Jahangir, and the transformation from Wahdat-ul-Wujud to Wahdat-ush-Shuhud, calling for a stronger connection between this legacy and contemporary Pakistan. Dr. Usman W. Chohan, Research Fellow at IRS, presented the concluding remarks, emphasizing the importance of critically engaging with Pakistan's intellectual and ideological heritage. He underscored the need to connect historical scholarship with contemporary national challenges and reaffirmed the importance of dialogue among scholars, researchers, and policymakers in strengthening Pakistan's intellectual discourse. Sahibzada Pir M. Masoom Bhorvi delivered the vote of thanks, calling for renewed recognition of the role of Islamic scholars in Pakistan's ideological development. The seminar concluded with a Q&A session, attended by scholars, researchers, media personnel, and students.

Restaurants allowed two-week temporary seating at F-10 Markaz

The participants agreed on the need for a policy that allows regulated commercial activity while safeguarding public spaces and citizens' access to them

ISLAMABAD: Restaurants around the public sit-out area at F-10 Markaz will be allowed to use their respective frontages for temporary seating for two weeks, subject to unobstructed pedestrian movement, public access and emergency routes, the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) said on Thursday. The decision was taken at a consultative meeting between the MCI and representatives of restaurant owners and their union association on the proposed Open Space Policy for 2026-27. The meeting was chaired by MCI Chief Officer Dr Anam Fatima. According to a statement issued after the meeting, any seating arrangement beyond the two-week period would require a licence under the prescribed open-space/seating procedure and would be subject to relevant rules. The MCI said public open spaces would remain accessible to citizens and that stalls, counters, displays or other structures obstructing pedestrian pathways, parking areas or public access would not be allowed. It also decided to protect existing green areas and street furniture. Commercial establishments found to have occupied or altered designated green or open spaces could be directed to restore them to their approved condition. The proposed policy is intended to regulate the use of public spaces by commercial establishments while ensuring pedestrian access, parking, traffic circulation and protection of public infrastructure, the statement said. During the meeting, Dr Anam Fatima directed the Directorate of Municipal Administration to continue shifting municipal services to a cashless and paperless system. Applications for licences, permissions and other relevant services will be submitted through the designated online NITB portal. The participants agreed on the need for a policy that allows regulated commercial activity while safeguarding public spaces and citizens' access to them._**APP**

Gilani commends security forces for foiling infiltration attempt

The Speaker said the national resolve and unity would remain intact until the complete elimination of terrorism from the country. He further said the sacrifices rendered by the security forces were a matter of pride for the entire nation

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday paid tribute to the security forces for foiling an infiltration attempt by the India-backed Fitna al-Khawarij along the Pak-Afghan border in North Waziristan. In a statement issued by the Presidency, the acting president lauded the professionalism and bravery of the security forces for killing 15 terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij during the operation. "India-backed terrorists will never be allowed to obstruct the country's peace, stability and journey towards prosperity," Yousuf Raza Gilani said. He said the efforts of the security forces and law-enforcement agencies would continue until the complete elimination of terrorism. Moreover, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday paid tribute to the security forces for eliminating 15 terrorists in North Waziristan, commending their professionalism, courage and operational capabilities. In a statement, the Speaker said the unwavering resolve of the security forces to eradicate terrorism was highly commendable. He said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in the fight against terrorism. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the nation saluted the courage and bravery of its valiant sons, adding that the steadfast determination of the nation and law-enforcement agencies to root out terrorism was appreciable. He said the timely and effective operations conducted by the security forces reflected the nation's firm resolve against terrorism. The successful actions against terrorists also sent a clear message to elements working against peace and stability, he added. The Speaker said the national resolve and unity would remain intact until the complete elimination of terrorism from the country. He further said the sacrifices rendered by the security forces were a matter of pride for the entire nation.—**APP**

Police welfare, model prisons in focus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Assistant Inspector General (AIG) Logistics Muhammad Usman Tariq Butt on Thursday held a meeting with senior officers to discuss police welfare, logistics and administrative matters related to Model Prisons Islamabad. An official told APP on Thursday that senior superintendent of Police (SSP) Model Prisons Islamabad Ali Akbar and SP Headquarters Pari Gul Tareen attended the meeting, said a press release here. During the meeting, the officers held detailed discussions on logistics matters and measures related to the welfare of police personnel. Administrative and departmental matters concerning Model Prisons Islamabad were also reviewed in detail. The meeting focused on improving coordination in logistics, welfare and administrative affairs to ensure smooth functioning of the concerned departments.

Police sweep five Islamabad areas

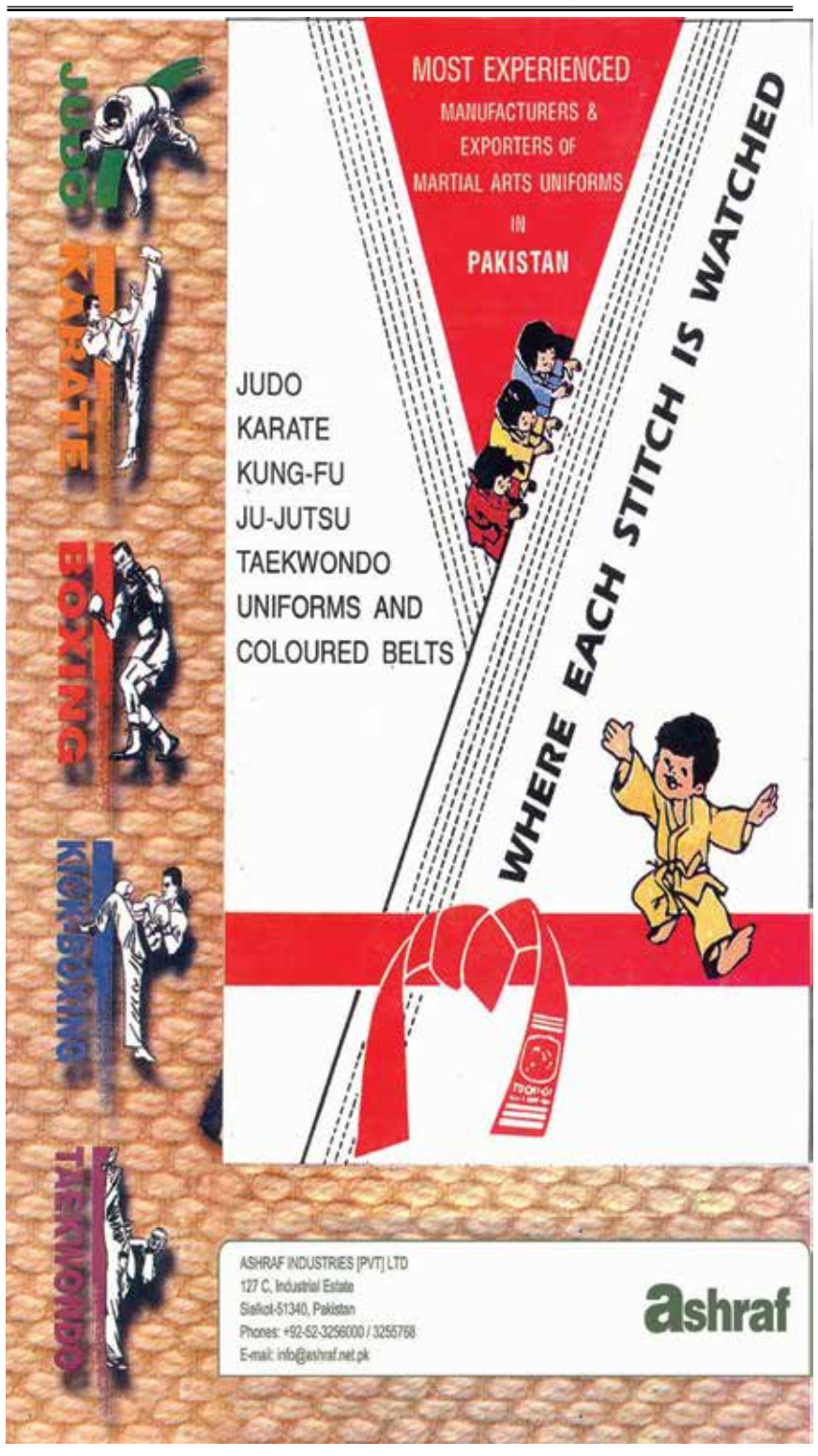
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police carried out grand combing and search operations in five areas of the federal capital, checking 101 people, 67 houses and dozens of vehicles as part of enhanced security measures.

An official told APP on Thursday that the operations were conducted on the directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad in the jurisdictions of Ramna, Koral, Nilore, Tarnol and Bani Gala police stations.

During the operations, police teams checked 101 people and 67 houses, besides inspecting seven shops. The teams also checked 75 motorcycles and 17 vehicles as part of the security exercise.

Of the motorcycles inspected, 12 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**



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Genocide does not end when the killing stops

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

NINE years have passed since Myanmar's military launched the campaign of violence that drove more than 700,000 Rohingya across the border into Bangladesh. The anniversary will understandably be marked by demands for justice. Yet there is another question that deserves greater attention. What happens when the political and demographic consequences created by mass atrocities are allowed to survive long after the violence itself has subsided? The answer should trouble us. The international system has developed mechanisms for identifying atrocities, assisting their victims and prosecuting their perpetrators. It is considerably less effective at reversing the realities that atrocities create. We concentrate on three objectives: prevention, protection and prosecution. There should be a fourth: reversal That distinction matters because ethnic cleansing does not require violence to continue indefinitely to achieve its objective. People need only be expelled and prevented from returning for long enough that their absence gradually becomes accepted as the new political reality. This is the danger confronting the Rohingya. In August 2017, Myanmar's military launched operations across northern Rakhine State that produced one of the fastest refugee movements of recent decades. More than 700,000 Rohingya fled into Bangladesh. Many had witnessed killings, sexual violence and the destruction of their villages. Nine years later, the temporary refuge created by that emergency has become something approaching permanence.

Bangladesh was hosting about 1.2 million Rohingya refugees by June this year, according to UN Refugee Agency figures, including more recent arrivals. More than 1.16 million were in Cox's Bazar alone. A child born during the 2017 exodus is now nine years old. For that child, Myanmar is not somewhere remembered from childhood. It is a homeland experienced through the memories of parents and grandparents. This is why time is not neutral after ethnic cleansing. Every year that passes without restoring an expelled population's ability to return makes the consequences of its expulsion harder to reverse. Property disappears. Land is occupied or repurposed. Villages cease to exist. Political institutions evolve without the displaced population. Children grow up elsewhere. New authorities emerge. The emergency gradually becomes the status quo. Refugees should not politically disappear simply because they have physically crossed an international border

Eventually, the international conversation changes. What began as a discussion about people violently expelled from Myanmar becomes a discussion about how Bangladesh should manage a large refugee population. That is a profound transformation. Humanitarian assistance is essential because people must be fed, housed and protected. Bangladesh has carried an enormous burden in hosting the Rohingya, while international agencies have helped sustain a population that remains heavily dependent on humanitarian support.

But there is a paradox at the heart of the international response. The better the world becomes at managing prolonged displacement without resolving its political causes, the easier it becomes for forced demographic change to endure. Refugee camps can save the victims of ethnic cleansing while inadvertently allowing the territorial consequences of ethnic cleansing to become permanent.

This is not an argument against humanitarian assistance. It is an argument against mistaking humanitarian survival for political resolution.

International law is rightly concerned with accountability. The perpetrators of mass atrocities must face justice. But imagine a future in which senior officials responsible for atrocities against the Rohingya are successfully prosecuted, yet the Rohingya themselves remain outside Myanmar. Would justice have succeeded? It would have punished individuals responsible for crimes while leaving intact one of the principal consequences of those crimes. That exposes a weakness in how the international community thinks about mass atrocities.

A new authority can say that it did not commit the original crime. A future democratic government could make the same argument. Yet if each successor inherits a territory transformed by forced displacement without accepting responsibility for reversing that exclusion, the outcome of ethnic cleansing survives regardless of who governs. This principle extends far beyond Myanmar. Mass displacement has transformed communities in Syria. Sudan's wars have uprooted millions and altered control over territory. Bosnia still demonstrates, three decades after its war, how the demographic consequences of ethnic violence can become embedded within political structures. The lesson is that atrocities create facts on the ground and facts on the ground acquire political power with time. This should change how the international community responds to forced displacement. When populations are deliberately expelled, maintaining their connection to their homeland should become part of atrocity prevention itself. Refugees should not politically disappear simply because they have physically crossed an international border.

Their property claims should survive. Their citizenship should survive. Their political voice should survive. And their right to determine whether they eventually return should survive. Otherwise, the passage of time becomes an ally of those responsible for removing them. Nine years after the Rohingya exodus, the international community still tends to measure the crisis through the condition of the refugees. Are they receiving enough food? Are the camps adequately funded? Can Bangladesh continue hosting them? These are urgent questions.

But another question is more fundamental. Are we allowing the political outcome created by their persecution to become permanent? More than a million Rohingya now live as refugees in Bangladesh. The longer their exclusion from Myanmar persists, the greater the danger that the world begins treating that exclusion not as the consequence of an atrocity that must be reversed but simply as reality. That would establish a terrible precedent. The ultimate measure of the international response to genocide cannot simply be whether the killing eventually stops or whether some perpetrators are prosecuted. It must also be whether those responsible are allowed to keep the world their violence created.

The Gulf Oil Threat

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer

The Persian Gulf remains central to global energy supplies. Any serious interruption in the movement of oil from the region would immediately affect prices, shipping, insurance and the economies of countries far beyond the Middle East. Iran therefore possesses an important instrument of pressure even when its own economy is under severe strain. But the threat also exposes Tehran's dilemma. Iran needs oil revenue precisely because its economy is under pressure. Cutting off the Gulf's oil exports would hurt the United States and its allies, but it would also damage Iran's remaining economic lifelines

THE confrontation between Iran and the United States has entered a dangerous new phase. What began as a struggle over military capabilities, sanctions and strategic influence is increasingly becoming a contest over economic survival. Washington is tightening the screws on Tehran, while Iranian officials are threatening to use the Persian Gulf and its oil routes as leverage against the United States and its regional partners. The latest warnings from Tehran came as the Iranian rial fell to a new low of around 2.02 million to the US dollar on August 24. Inflation has climbed sharply, purchasing power has weakened and businesses are facing increasingly difficult conditions.

Against this background, Mohsen Rezaei, Iran's Supreme National Security Council secretary and a former commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, issued an unusually direct warning. He said neighbouring countries should not participate in what Tehran considers America's economic war. If they do, Iran would regard them as enemies and could strike their interests. He went further, warning that if the economic pressure continued, not a single drop of oil would leave the Persian Gulf or pass through the Strait of Hormuz. This is not merely another exchange of hostile statements. The threat touches the most sensitive artery of the world economy.

The Persian Gulf remains central to global energy supplies. Any serious interruption in the movement of oil from the region would immediately affect prices, shipping, insurance and the economies of countries far beyond the Middle East. Iran therefore possesses an important instrument of pressure even when its own economy is under severe strain. But the threat also exposes Tehran's dilemma. Iran needs oil revenue precisely because its economy is under pressure. Cutting off the Gulf's oil exports would hurt the United States and its allies, but it would also damage Iran's remaining economic lifelines. The question is therefore whether Tehran is prepared to accept economic pain in order to impose a greater cost on its opponents.

The Trump administration has presented the new campaign as a decisive economic offensive. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has described the effort as an attempt to sever Iran's financial lifelines, while Washington has warned countries and companies dealing with Tehran that they could face consequences. The latest measures target Iranian-linked networks and sectors associated with trade, finance, shipping and other sources of revenue. President Donald Trump has also sought to portray Iran as economically and militarily weakened. The message from Washington is straightforward: military pressure has damaged Iran's capabilities and economic pressure will now be used to force Tehran towards a settlement.

There is, however, an important difference between weakening an economy and changing a government's political calculations. Iran has lived under American sanctions for decades. Its political system has developed mechanisms for surviving restrictions, including informal trade networks, alternative financial arrangements and economic links with countries unwilling to follow Washington's policy. China, Russia, Turkey and neighbouring states have all played varying roles in keeping channels open.

Yet the present circumstances are more difficult. The collapse of the rial is not simply a number on a financial screen. At 2.02 million rials to the dollar, it represents the declining purchasing power of ordinary Iranians and the growing difficulty of maintaining imports and domestic economic activity. Inflation, currency depreciation and shortages of foreign exchange create pressures that sanctions alone cannot fully measure. When a government feels that its economic options are disappearing, it may become more willing to use the strategic assets available to it. For Iran, the Strait of Hormuz is one such asset. Tehran does not need to destroy every tanker to create disruption. Even the perception that shipping is unsafe can increase insurance costs, delay deliveries and push energy prices higher.

That is why Rezaei's warning deserves attention even if it is partly intended as political signalling. The threat to prevent Gulf oil exports is aimed not only at Washington but also at Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other regional states. Tehran wants them to calculate the costs of joining an American campaign against Iran. This puts the Gulf monarchies in an uncomfortable position. They have strong security relationships with Washington, but their prosperity depends heavily on stable energy exports and open maritime routes. They have little interest in becoming direct participants in an expanding confrontation between Iran and the United States.

For Pakistan and other countries in the region, the consequences could be equally serious. A major disruption in Gulf oil supplies would raise import costs, increase inflation and place additional pressure on already vulnerable economies. Pakistan does not need another external shock to its energy bill. Any sustained rise in international oil prices would quickly affect transport, electricity, industry and household expenditure. There is also a political question within Iran. Washington increasingly appears to be betting that economic hardship will weaken public support for the government and create divisions within the security establishment. Bessent has explicitly appealed to Iranian soldiers over delayed or unpaid salaries, suggesting that economic hardship could eventually influence their willingness to support the authorities.

Economic hardship can weaken a government, but it can also strengthen nationalist sentiment. External pressure may allow Tehran to portray domestic economic problems as the result of foreign aggression. In such circumstances, calls for compromise can be presented as surrender, while resistance becomes a matter of national pride. This is where the present confrontation becomes particularly dangerous. Washington wants economic pressure to produce political concessions. Tehran wants to demonstrate that pressure has limits. Neither side can afford to appear weak. The falling rial therefore has a significance beyond Iran's currency markets. It is a measure of the pressure building inside the country. The threat to halt Gulf oil exports, meanwhile, represents Iran's attempt to transfer some of that pressure back to the international economy. The problem is that such a strategy can quickly escape political control. If oil routes are seriously disrupted, the resulting shock will not distinguish between American and Iranian interests. Asian importers, European economies, Gulf producers and developing countries will all feel the consequences. There is still room for diplomacy. Indeed, the economic costs facing Iran and the global risks associated with a Gulf confrontation should make diplomacy more urgent, not less. Maximum pressure may produce negotiations, but it can also produce maximum resistance. Similarly, threats from Tehran may demonstrate resolve, but they can also encourage neighbouring states to seek even closer security ties with Washington. The choice before both sides is therefore not simply between victory and defeat. It is between managed confrontation and uncontrolled escalation.

Iran's economic crisis is real. So is America's ability to impose further pressure. But neither fact guarantees political capitulation. The history of sanctions shows that economies can suffer enormously without governments necessarily changing course. When Rezaei warns that not a single drop of oil should leave the Gulf, and Washington responds with an economic campaign designed to cut Iran off from international finance and trade, both sides are gambling with an economic system much larger than their dispute. The falling rial may be Iran's immediate problem. The Gulf oil threat may be America's immediate concern. But the consequences of failure could belong to everyone.

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How the Middle East can become a global hub for fintech, AI

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

Fintech, which consists of areas such as digital payments, lending platforms, wealth management tools, neobanks, and blockchain applications, has become a major sector as well. Global fintech revenues reached roughly $500-650 billion last year, growing at about 22 percent year on year, substantially outpacing traditional financial services. It is estimated that sustained growth could push this sector toward $2 trillion by 2030. These industries are critical because they drive efficiency and productivity across sectors such as healthcare, energy...

WITHOUT doubt, financial technology and artificial intelligence are two of the most transformative industries reshaping economic structures, productivity, and global competitiveness. When it comes to AI, current projections indicate substantial expansion, with one widely cited trajectory suggesting the global AI market will climb to between $407 billion and $990 billion by 2027, rising toward $1.6-$3.6 trillion by the early to mid 2030s. What is intriguing is that the compound annual growth rates are frequently estimated in the 20-30 percent range depending on scope and methodology. Generative AI — a kind of artificial intelligence that creates content such as images, texts, videos, and computer codes — is forecast to increase from tens of billions to hundreds of billions over the same time period. This is why companies' adoption has accelerated, with surveys showing high percentages of organizations integrating AI into at least one business function.

Fintech, which consists of areas such as digital payments, lending platforms, wealth management tools, neobanks, and blockchain applications, has become a major sector as well. Global fintech revenues reached roughly $500-650 billion last year, growing at about 22 percent year on year, substantially outpacing traditional financial services. It is estimated that sustained growth could push this sector toward $2 trillion by 2030. These industries are critical because they drive efficiency and productivity across sectors such as healthcare, energy, logistics, public administration, and capital markets. However, what makes them especially powerful is their convergence. For example, AI enhances fraud detection and personalized advice, while fintech provides data feedback that improves and refines AI systems.

Nations and regions that establish leadership positions will most likely capture disproportionate shares of these benefits, value creation, talent, and influence in the emerging digital economy. The Middle East possesses structural advantages that position it to compete as a global center for both of these domains. First, the region has a large, youthful demographic; in many countries, roughly half the population is under 30, creating a sizable cohort of digitally native potential workers, entrepreneurs, and consumers.

The Saudi Data and AI Authority leads a national strategy targeting substantial AI investment.

This contrasts with aging populations in Europe and parts of East Asia, and offers a potential demographic benefit if skills development and job creation keep pace. The good news is that sovereign wealth funds across the Gulf Cooperation Council command assets measured in the trillions of dollars, providing capital for long-horizon infrastructure and technology investments. One pillar of the infrastructure is linked to energy resources that supply the abundant and relatively inexpensive power required for AI data centers and cooling systems.

Digital infrastructure has also advanced rapidly in leading markets, with expanding 5G networks, cloud capacity, and data center buildouts. The Middle East's strategic location between Europe, Asia, and Africa also facilitates connectivity, talent mobility, and market access.

Meanwhile, growing technological talent in the region, supported by expanding university programs as well as international partnerships, further reinforces these critical foundations and infrastructure.

Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have already taken decisive steps to build AI and fintech ecosystems. The Kingdom's Vision 2030 frames economic diversification around knowledge and technology. The Saudi Data and AI Authority leads a national strategy targeting substantial AI investment, hundreds of AI and data startups, and workforce development.

Data center capacity has expanded markedly — from low tens of megawatts earlier in the decade to several hundred megawatts by 2025-2026. The technology workforce has grown significantly, and 2026 has been designated the Year of AI. Sovereign-backed initiatives and partnerships with global technology firms are also showing commitment to Arabic-language models.

In addition, the UAE took early action such as appointing a minister for AI and launching a national strategy aiming for leadership by 2031. Institutions such as the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence, the technology group G42, and the investment platform MGX have been playing key roles as well. Both countries have attracted investment and have positioned themselves as testbeds for AI applications in sectors such as government services, energy, and logistics. In fintech, the same markets have developed healthy ecosystems. Islamic fintech represents a distinctive regional strength: The global market, heavily weighted toward GCC and other OIC countries, was estimated near $200 billion in transaction volume in the mid-2020s and is projected to grow at double-digit rates toward $340 billion by the end of the decade, with Saudi Arabia the largest single market. Other Middle Eastern countries can build on these precedents through concrete action, long-term vision, and realistic strategies. First, they need to articulate coherent national digital and AI strategies aligned with their broader economic plans.

Second, it is important to invest in foundational digital infrastructure. Third, expand human capital programs such as STEM education, specialized AI and data curricula, and incentives for female participation. Fourth, mobilize domestic and regional capital. Fifth, develop niche strengths, such as Islamic finance technology and Arabic natural-language processing, rather than attempting to replicate other global trends. Without doubt, there exist challenges, yet the convergence of several issues — the region's talent, demographic vitality, financial resources, energy advantages, and policy ambitions — is creating a rare window and opportunity for the Middle East.

– Dr. Majid Rafizadeh is a Harvard-educated Iranian-American political scientist.

Briefs

Developing states hit very hard

FROM PAGE 01

markets already facing uncertainty over interest rates and government borrowing. Despite the risks, Georgieva said debt markets were still functioning in an orderly manner and expressed optimism over G20 efforts to improve the Common Framework for debt restructuring. The IMF has also reached a staff-level agreement with Senegal for a $2.2 billion three-year loan package, conditional on the country seeking debt treatment under the framework. Georgieva said a successful and faster restructuring process for Senegal could encourage other debt-distressed countries to seek similar relief.

15 India-sponsored terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01

underway to eliminate any other India-sponsored Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists found in the area, it added. The military's media wing vowed that the counterterrorism campaign under the government's "Azm-e-Istehkam" vision would continue at full pace to eliminate the threat of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country. Pakistan witnessed a surge in terror activities, particularly in its KP 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 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.

EU summons Russia...

FROM PAGE 01

Jean-Noel Barrot said, adding he had called in Russia's envoy in Paris. Kallas said that EU foreign ministers agreed to keep working on a proposal to impose sanctions on 1,600 individuals and entities linked to Russia's military industry in the hope of adopting them next month. "Seeing these hybrid attacks across Europe, I think these are also wake-up calls for the countries who have not been so strong... on this," she said. "If we want to end this war, we all have to focus our efforts. Take it to a new level." Germany blamed Moscow for the Leipzig incident on Tuesday and said it was shutting a Russian consulate and ending the contract for a cultural centre in Berlin. Russia's President Vladimir Putin in televised comments later branded those moves "another mistake, a serious one", saying it "clearly runs counter to the interests of the German people". German media reported Wednesday that police had identified two Russian suspects linked to the attempt. The Sueddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) daily and the regional public broadcasters NDR and WDR said the first suspect was a Belarus national who also held a Russian passport. The second held Latvian and Russian passports and was believed to have acted as logistics coordinator and instructor for the attack. Germany Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said there was a "large number of people who can now be sanctioned in addition. "Russia has escalated, Russia has carried out this hybrid attack, and now Russia must live with the consequences," he said, speaking from Ireland. EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said the Leipzig incident marked "a new escalation" in Europe.

D 8 Secy Ge Ankara visit focusses on health, climate cooperation

The Secretary-General and the Minister also exchanged views on the 2nd D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Health, to be hosted by Türkiye, emphasizing the importance of substantive preparations and concrete outcomes

DNA

ANKARA: Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), had high-level engagements during his latest visit to Ankara, Türkiye, focused on advancing cooperation in health, climate action, and other priority areas of the D-8 agenda.

Most prominently, the Secretary-General had an in-depth session with the Minister of Health, H.E. Prof. Dr. Kemal Memişo lu, during which he conveyed deep appreciation for Türkiye's important role in the D-8 and its formidable capacities as well as rich experience in multiple aspects of the health sector. The two sides reviewed the evolving D-8 health cooperation agenda and exchanged views on translating existing commitments into more practical and result-oriented cooperation. The subjects covered included: opportunities for enhanced cooperation in pharmaceuticals and medical manufacturing, vaccines, biotechnology, research and innovation, digital health, and capacity-building. The importance of leveraging the complementary strengths and expertise available across the nine D-8 Member States was underscored, besides the need to foster stronger linkages among relevant institutions.

The Secretary-General and the Minister also exchanged views on the 2nd D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Health, to be hosted by Türkiye, emphasizing the importance of substantive preparations and concrete outcomes. The Secretary-General proposed organizing a D-8 Webinar on Digital Health, drawing on Türkiye's experience and good practices, which was welcomed by the Ministry.

The Secretary-General further sought the Minister's support in strengthening D-8 engagement with relevant international health organizations to reinforce Member States' efforts in agreed priority areas. It was agreed to maintain close coordination between the D-8 Secretariat and the Ministry of Health of Türkiye to advance the health cooperation agenda and preparations for the 2nd Ministerial Meeting.

The Secretary-General's other major engagement in Ankara was his participation in the comprehensive Briefing organized for Diplomatic Missions on Türkiye's preparations as the incoming Presidency on the COP31 and Leaders' Summit, to be held in Antalya in November 2026. The Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and President-Designate of COP31, H.E. Murat Kurum, delivered a substantive address, outlining the Presidency's core approach centered on 'Dialogue, Consensus, Action.'

On the sidelines, the Secretary-General interacted with Minister Murat Kurum and reaffirmed the D-8's strong support for Türkiye's COP Presidency and readiness to contribute constructively towards a successful Conference in Antalya. The engagement built on the momentum generated by the First D-8 International Ministerial Meeting on Environment, held in Istanbul on 17 July 2026, and the adoption of the 'Istanbul Declaration,' which provided an important framework for advancing D-8 cooperation on environment and climate change. The D-8 Secretariat and Türkiye are also in consultations on possible D-8 engagements during COP31.

The Secretary-General also interacted with H.E. Fuat Oktay, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TBMM), Ambassadors of D-8 Member States, and other distinguished speakers. The occasion provided a valuable opportunity for fruitful exchanges on COP31 preparations as well as matters of mutual interest.

The Ankara visit concluded with a meeting between the Secretary-General and Member of Parliament Mr. Ali Şahin, at the TBMM. The exchanges focused inter alia on the current D-8 agenda, Türkiye's long-standing support for the Organization, and opportunities for further strengthening cooperation among D-8 Member States.

The Secretary-General highlighted the importance of sustained political and institutional support for advancing D-8 priorities and translating the Organization's expanding agenda into tangible outcomes. MP Mr. Ali Şahin affirmed his strong support for the D-8 and its objectives and exchanged views on ways to further enhance the Organization's visibility, salience, and contribution to cooperation among its Member States.

Overall, the Ankara engagements reflected the Secretary-General's emphasis on strengthening coordination with Member States, advancing implementation of Summit and Ministerial-level decisions, and promoting practical, project-based and result-oriented cooperation across the D-8.

The Secretary-General was accompanied during the visit by Ambassador Mustafa Özcan, Director-I, and Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan, Executive Assistant, D-8 Secretariat.

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan Dr. Maen Khreasat and others attending a diplomatic reception in Islamabad. – DNA

King Charles meets Pakistan cricket team at Clarence House

LONDON: PAKISTAN cricket team players and officials met King Charles at Clarence House, the historic royal residence, in London. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi was also present at the meeting, where the monarch spoke with the players and team officials. According to Naqvi, King Charles encouraged the Pakistani players and praised the country's efforts for peace. The king also discussed cricket and Pakistan's efforts to maintain peace and security in the country with Naqvi. During the meeting, the British high commissioner told King Charles that Pakistan and Naqvi had played an important role in efforts for peace in the region. Speaking to Geo News, Naqvi described his meeting with King Charles as "very productive". Naqvi has since left the UK and is returning to Pakistan. The national cricket team is currently in England for a three-match Test series. The Green Shirts, who entered the England series with a 1-1 draw away against West Indies, were blown away by the hosts in the opening fixture as they succumbed to an innings and 103-run defeat in Babar's absence. In the subsequent fixture at Lord's, where they had not lost a single Test since 2010 and were on a two-match winning streak, Pakistan succumbed to an equally humbling defeat as hosts prevailed by a massive 194 runs to clinch an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. – **APP**

Ufone and Telenor Pakistan secure nine awards at Dragons of Pakistan 2026

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

China donates vaccines to Pakistan to fight livestock diseases

ISLAMABAD: China has donated veterinary vaccines against lumpy skin disease (LSD) and brucellosis to Pakistan to support livestock disease prevention and control. The vaccines, provided by China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, were handed over at the National Agricultural Research Centre in Islamabad, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday.

Pakistan's Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain said the vaccines would help strengthen disease prevention and protect livestock productivity, particularly for rural households dependent on animal farming.

Lumpy skin disease and brucellosis can affect animal health, reproduction and milk and meat production, causing losses for livestock farmers.

The vaccines will be administered under technical and regulatory requirements covering quality control, cold-chain management and post-vaccination monitoring. A field demonstration of vaccination procedures was also held at the centre. Hussain said Pakistan and China would continue expanding cooperation in veterinary services, agricultural research and animal disease control. – **DNA**

Fakhar-e-Alam praises China terming his visit impressive

ISLAMABAD: Famous Pakistani performing-arts celebrity and aviator Fakhar-e-Alam has expressed strong admiration for China following his first-ever visit to the country, saying the experience was far more impressive than he had expected. Alam, a well-known figure in Pakistan's entertainment industry, has worked as a singer, television host and actor and has built a large following over the years.

According to a Gwadar Pro's report, he has also gained recognition for his achievements in aviation, including his historic solo flight around the world.

With a substantial social-media following, Alam regularly shares his travels and experiences with his audience.

Sharing his impressions of China after completing the visit, Alam described the country as "glorious" and said he was deeply impressed by what he saw, adding that he could not wait to visit again. During his trip, Alam explored some of China's advanced transport, technological and industrial infrastructure. At the Port of Tianjin, he was particularly impressed by its highly automated operations, including driverless trucks and cranes operating without on-site human operators. He highlighted the role of Chinese technology in the port's operations and expressed amazement at the level of automation, particularly Huawei's contribution to the system.

Alam also visited the global headquarters of Chinese home-appliance giant Haier in Qingdao, describing the experience as a major learning opportunity.

He praised the company's management for its warm welcome and hospitality. "It was an honor and a real pleasure to visit the global HQ of Haier in Qingdao," he wrote, adding that it was a "big learning experience" and praising the company's hospitality. In Qingdao, he also visited the headquarters of Hisense, where he said the experience helped him gain a deeper understanding of China's journey of innovation and growth. "It was an absolute delight to visit the Hisense HQ in Qingdao," Alam wrote, saying that the more time he spent there, the more he understood about China's innovation and growth. As this was his first trip to the country, he said the experience had left him "speechless."

The Pakistani celebrity also visited Beijing and experienced China's high-speed rail system for the first time. He praised the smoothness of the journey, describing his first high-speed rail experience as "smooth like silk."

From the automated operations at Tianjin Port and visits to leading Chinese companies in Qingdao to experiencing Beijing's high-speed rail, Alam's trip exposed him to various aspects of China's technological and economic development. His first-hand experience left a strong impression on the celebrity, who praised China's innovation, infrastructure and hospitality and expressed his eagerness to return to the country. – **DNA**

Putin denies plan for new Russia military...

FROM PAGE 01

around 140 million, was highly unpopular and prompted an exodus of draft-age men from Russia. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied plans for another call-up. "There is no scenario today that would require mobilisation," Putin told a plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok. "This is a disinformation campaign by the enemy in the run-up to the State Duma elections, aimed at influencing the outcome," he said, referring to Russian parliamentary elections later this month. "As is well known, our people enlist voluntarily and sign a contract," he said. Kyiv did not immediately respond to Putin's comments. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in July that Moscow was preparing for a "new wave of mobilisation in the autumn", having suffered heavy losses on the front. Russia's battlefield advances have slowed considerably this year, as widespread drone use on the front has made swift, large-scale troop movements more difficult. The Institute for the Study of War – a US-based think tank – said in July that Moscow appeared to be setting the "conditions" for another round of mobilisation, citing recently-passed legislation allowing the army to recruit more types of convicts in wartime. Mobilisation remains a "very personal decision for Putin and is ultimately contingent on Putin's personal perception of the battlefield situation and the Kremlin's stability," it said. Both sides have suffered huge military casualties in the conflict.

Iran attacks US targets despite...

FROM PAGE 01

Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei warned the US on Wednesday that Iran had adopted a "new strategy" in the war that "will shatter your foundations". Iran's pummelling of US military targets across the region came after a US attack that hit a wedding in the country's south, prompting fury from Tehran. The Iranian Red Crescent said shrapnel from the missile attack in the coastal town of Kuhestak killed four people, including a child, and wounded more than 50. The US military did not address the attack directly. US Central Command (Centcom) spokesman Tim Hawkins claimed "the US military never targets civilians, unlike the IRGC", referring to Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Pakistan shares grief of Nepali...

FROM PAGE 01

Amb. Dhital thanked the Prime Minister for his kind and reassuring words of support and stated that this gesture would be long remembered by the people of Nepal. She also briefed the Prime Minister on the current state of bilateral cooperation.

Body of climber Dr Asma Mushtaq brought to Spantik base camp

THE body of Pakistani climber Dr Asma Mushtaq has been safely brought to Spantik Peak Base Camp by the Arandu Volunteer Rescue Team, Information Minister Ataullah Tarar said. In a post on X, Tarar said the body of Asma, who died on August 20 after suffering a serious high-altitude medical emergency while descending from the 7,027-metre-high Spantik Mountain in the Karakoram range, would soon be airlifted from Spantik Base Camp to Skardu. He added that the body would then be transported to Lahore, subject to the availability of a suitable flight. "Further updates will be shared accordingly," the minister said. Her body was recovered two days back, and the recovery operation has been a prolonged and difficult mission due to harsh weather conditions at high altitude. – **APP**

Briefs

Pak, Australia agree to strengthen coop in various sectors

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday emphasized the need to translate research into practical, scalable and farmer-oriented solutions, particularly in climate-resilient agriculture, water management, crop improvement, horticulture and agricultural value chains. The minister held a meeting with Dr. Suzie Newman, General Manager Partnerships, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), and the Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan to discuss further strengthening bilateral cooperation in agricultural research, climate resilience, biosecurity, water management and agricultural trade. The Federal Minister appreciated Australia's longstanding partnership with Pakistan through ACIAR, noting that cooperation in agricultural research has continued since 1984 and has contributed to research, capacity building and agricultural development. The Australian side reaffirmed the importance of the longstanding Pakistan-Australia agricultural research partnership and expressed interest in further strengthening collaboration in areas aligned with Pakistan's agricultural priorities. ACIAR highlighted its focus on demand-driven, locally led research, capacity building and translating research outcomes into practical benefits for farmers and the wider agricultural sector. The meeting discussed opportunities to further enhance Pakistan's agricultural and horticultural exports to Australia, particularly through addressing phytosanitary requirements, strengthening plant-health systems and facilitating market access. The Australian side welcomed continued technical engagement between the relevant institutions to address such issues. The Federal Minister highlighted agricultural biosecurity and plant health as key areas for expanded cooperation and proposed collaboration in pest identification, molecular diagnostics, DNA barcoding, pest surveillance, risk analysis, quarantine management and modern digital plant-health systems. Both sides discussed the potential for enhanced technical cooperation in climate- and weather-based pest forecasting, GIS-based surveillance, early-warning systems, invasive pest management and locust preparedness, including environmentally sustainable approaches to pest control.—**APP**

PSX gains over 153 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) reversed its previous bearish momentum to record a recovery on Thursday, gaining 153.09 points, a positive change of 0.09 percent, to close at 174,929.69 points against 174,776.60 points recorded in the previous trading session. The ready market witnessed an increase in trading volume to 627.447 million shares, compared to 610.181 million shares traded in the previous session. However, the overall traded value decreased to Rs 25.186 billion from Rs 31.861 billion. Market capitalization edged upwards to Rs 19.587 trillion, recovering from Rs 19.581 trillion recorded a day earlier. Out of 494 companies that traded in the ready market, 252 posted gains, 207 suffered losses, while 35 remained unchanged, reflecting a broad-based stabilization in market sentiment. Tasdeeq Information led the volume chart with 94.951 million shares, followed by Cnergyico PK with 80.990 million shares and Pak Refinery with 23.941 million shares. Among the top gainers in the ready market, Tandlianwala Sugar Mills Limited surged by Rs 43.13 to close at Rs 517.27, while Pakistan Engineering Company Limited advanced by Rs 40.20 to settle at Rs 690.18.—**APP**

Direct flights between Tashkent and Karachi

Speaking at the ceremony, representatives of the Sindh provincial government described the launch of the flight as another practical step by Uzbekistan towards bringing the two brotherly peoples closer together, increasing tourist flows, and supporting business diplomacy.

DNA

KARACHI: Starting from September 3, direct flights between Tashkent and Karachi have been launched by Centrum Air.

On the same day, at 4:20 a.m. local time, the airline's Airbus A320 aircraft arrived in Karachi from Tashkent. In accordance with tradition, the aircraft received a ceremonial water-cannon salute upon arrival at Karachi Airport The welcoming ceremony was attended by representatives of the Sindh provincial administration and local government authorities, members of the diplomatic corps in Karachi, representatives of the Sindh Tourism Development Corporation, airlines, tour operators, and the media.

Speaking at the ceremony, representatives of the Sindh provincial government described the launch of the flight as another practical step by Uzbekistan towards bringing the two brotherly peoples closer together, increasing tourist flows, and supporting business diplomacy. Thus, the number of direct flights between Uzbekistan and Pakistan has reached eight per week.

Egypt, China mark 70 years of diplomatic ties

CAIRO: Egypt and China are marking the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year, celebrating a partnership that has expanded considerably since Cairo became the first Arab and African capital to establish formal ties with Beijing on May 30, 1956 Relations between the two countries have steadily deepened through high-level visits and cooperation across politics, trade, culture, education and technology, with Chinese President Xi Jinping's current visit to Egypt drawing considerable public and media attention. Beyond official diplomacy, ties have also developed at the cultural and people-to-people level. Egyptians have studied Chinese since 1958, with the language increasingly seen as a gateway to opportunities in trade, technology, tourism, archaeology and heritage conservation. Dr. Rehab Mahmoud, head of the Confucius Institute at Cairo University, told Arab News that interest in studying Chinese had grown significantly over the past two decades. She said the expansion accelerated after China began establishing Confucius Institutes internationally in 2004 as part of efforts to strengthen cultural and educational links with other countries. Egypt had only one university department teaching Chinese between 1958 and 2000, Mahmoud said, but the number has since grown to 36 across Egyptian universities. Many Egyptian students have also traveled to China on scholarships in a range of disciplines as cooperation between universities in the two countries has expanded. Mahmoud said Egypt and China share the legacy of two ancient civilizations, while China's rapid development in recent decades has further encouraged Egyptians to learn the language and seek employment in sectors connected to Chinese businesses and institutions. Dr. El-Sawy Ahmed, an expert on Chinese affairs, said relations between the peoples of Egypt and China stretched back far beyond modern diplomatic ties.He pointed to ancient trade links and the movement of merchants along Silk Road routes as early sources of contact between the two civilizations. Economic relations now play an increasingly important role, he said, citing the growing presence of Chinese products in the Egyptian market. Chinese cars, for example, have become increasingly popular among Egyptian consumers because of their competitive prices and improving quality, he said. El-Sawy added that Xi's visit had attracted significant attention in both Egypt and China and came at an important moment in bilateral relations. Cooperation has also expanded into archaeology and heritage preservation. Dr. Emil Henin, an art conservator, told Arab News that Xi's visit was being closely followed by specialists in a range of fields, including those working in heritage conservation. Henin said he had visited China three times, beginning with a scholarship in 2020, and had been particularly impressed by the country's development and architecture. He also praised the work ethic and hospitality he encountered during his visits, saying Chinese colleagues showed considerable respect for cultural differences. Days before Xi's visit, an Egyptian-Chinese archaeological mission announced new discoveries during excavations at the Temple of Sekhmet site in Mit Rahina, Giza. The finds included stone blocks and fragments of statues, many dating to Egypt's New Kingdom and particularly the reign of Ramses II. Archaeologists also uncovered objects made from limestone, red granite and schist, along with pottery fragments, faience amulets, small terracotta and limestone figurines, ostraca and votive stelae.—**Agencies**

UN's Sudan probe says foreign fighters fuelling conflict

KHARTOUM: Foreign fighters and support networks are fuelling the conflict in Sudan and worsening violence against civilians, a UN-backed investigation warned Thursday. The United Nations' independent fact-finding mission on Sudan said foreign involvement was strengthening the military capabilities of the country's warring parties, enabling increasingly sophisticated military operations, with devastating consequences for ordinary people. Since April 2023, the conflict between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has killed tens of thousands and forced millions to flee their homes. In a report, the probe documented the recruitment, training and deployment of foreign personnel to support the RSF, with transnational entities also facilitating the transfer of weapons, ammunition, military technology and logistical support. It also said there were reasonable grounds to believe that the regular army used foreign-supplied drones in its operations that harmed civilians and civilian infrastructure. "This external support has not brought greater protection for civilians," said the fact-finding mission's chairman Mohamad Chande Othman. "Instead, civilians are paying the price through attacks on homes, hospitals, schools, markets and places of refuge." The UN Human Rights Council established the probe in October 2023, to begin gathering evidence of violations in Sudan. The independent investigative team does not speak on behalf of the United Nations. The investigation documented the deployment of up to 2,000 ex-military Colombian contractors who directly operated combat drones, artillery, and advanced weapons alongside RSF units.—**APP**

France recorded 'hottest summer ever'

PARIS: France experienced its hottest summer on record in 2026, marked by heatwaves, drought and massive wildfires, the environment minister said on Thursday "We have just lived through the hottest summer ever recorded since measurements began in 1900," Monique Barbut said at a presentation of the summer climate report, which for meteorologists covers June to August. France joins Belgium and Britain in recording their hottest-ever summers after a season that scorched Europe, the globe's fastest warming continent. Scientists say that human-made climate change has made extreme weather events more intense and more frequent. France endured multiple severe heatwaves, including one in late June that set a new intensity record. Another, stretching from late July into August, matched the record for the country's longest heatwave, lasting 23 days, a mark previously set in 1983. During this period the country was hit by several major wildfires. "By the end of August, forest fires had already burned six times more area than the average of the last twenty years," Barbut said. The weather service Meteo-France said Thursday the country saw 53 days of heatwave conditions over the summer, a "completely unprecedented number". "The summer of 2026 will go down in history," the minister said. "The question we must now ask ourselves is how it will be remembered ... As the first in a long series of summers that continue to break records. Or as a moment when we rose to the challenge of adaptation and mitigation," by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, she added. Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu tasked Barbut in late July with presenting new measures to speed up implementation of France's national climate change adaptation plan. On Thursday, she promised conclusions "by the end of September", including a five-year funding plan. —**APP**

Pak's edversity secures rapidev investment in Saudi Arabia for global AI education push

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-founded technology education company Edversity has secured strategic investment from Rapidev Group in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to expand its AI-powered learning platform across the Kingdom, wider GCC and international markets after training more than 12,500 learners in emerging technologies. The investment was announced during LEAP 2026 in Riyadh and marks a new phase in Edversity's expansion, bringing the company into the Rapidev Group of Companies, said a press release here. The partnership will combine Edversity's education and talent network with Rapidev's technology, engineering and international experience to help the platform reach more learners and connect technology education with employment opportunities. Founded in Pakistan in 2021, Edversity provides training in artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, cloud computing, data, blockchain and other emerging technologies. Its programmes combine teaching by industry professionals with practical projects, mentorship, skills assessment and career development. The company said it had achieved over 70 per cent placement outcomes in selected batches, with graduates moving into technology jobs, freelance work and remote careers. Edversity Founder and CEO Saad Siddiqui told APP that there was a major gap between the technology skills people learn and what employers actually need. We are building Edversity around that missing link, connecting learning, practical experience, verified skills and employment, he said. Siddiqui said the partnership with Rapidev would provide the technology, operational strength and international reach needed to take this model to a much larger scale The investment will help Edversity expand across Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC, enter more international markets and increase its programmes in AI, cybersecurity, cloud computing, data and other emerging technologies. The company also plans to strengthen AI-powered personalised learning, skills verification and assessment, while building stronger links between learners and employers. Saudi Arabia will play a key role in the company's international expansion. Edversity has established a presence in Riyadh through The Garage and plans to use the Kingdom as a regional base to develop partnerships with employers, technology companies, educational institutions and other organisations across Saudi Arabia and the GCC. The company said its expansion was also in line with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030 and the Human Capability Development Program, particularly efforts to develop future-ready skills, strengthen digital capabilities and prepare talent for emerging industries. We started in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia is becoming an important international base for us, and our long-term opportunity is global, Siddiqui said. Wajid Gulistan, Founder and Group CEO of Rapidev Group, said the global technology industry needed not only more graduates but people who could turn their knowledge into practical skills. He said Edversity had built a strong foundation in practical technology education and employment outcomes, while Rapidev's technology and scaling capabilities could help build a platform with wider international impact. Founded in 2017, Rapidev Group has more than 200 engineers and developers, has developed over 30 hardware and software solutions and completed more than 50 major projects. It serves customers in more than 10 countries. The partnership will provide Edversity with strategic investment as well as access to engineering expertise, technology infrastructure, international networks.—DNA

GPXP's interest in expanding investment lauded

ISLAMABAD, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik met with Khaled Al Saati, CEO of Gulf Petroleum Exploration Pakistan (GPXP), and Mosleh Al Otaibi of Gulf Petroleum Exploration to discuss the company's ongoing operations and prospects for expanding investment in Pakistan's energy sector. Gulf Petroleum Exploration Pakistan (GPXP), a Kuwaiti company operating in Pakistan's exploration sector, expressed keen interest in expanding its investment and further contributing to the country's energy development. The Federal Minister welcomed GPXP's interest and assured the company of the government's full support and facilitation for its investment and expansion plans. "Pakistan and Kuwait are brothers, and our two countries share a longstanding relationship," the Minister said, emphasizing the importance Pakistan attaches to strengthening economic and investment ties with Kuwait. Khaled Al Saati and Mosleh Al Otaibi expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for its continued support and facilitation. They reiterated GPXP's commitment to Pakistan and said the company was keen to expand its investment in the country's energy sector.—**DNA**

Yemen warns of Houthi threat to regional security

DNA

SANA'A, YEMEN – The Yemen Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a statement outlining the government's position on the ongoing conflict, warning that the activities of Houthi militias pose a grave threat not only to Yemen but to regional stability and international maritime trade. According to the statement, the Houthis' continued military and political actions endanger the security of the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a vital corridor for global commerce. The ministry emphasized that the group's destabilizing role extends beyond Yemen's borders, threatening freedom of navigation and international shipping routes. The Yemeni government highlighted that external military, financial, and logistical support for the Houthis has prolonged the war, undermined peace efforts, and worsened the humanitarian crisis. It called for respect for international law, implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and a stronger international response to violations, stressing that impunity only fuels further instability. Despite the challenges, the statement reaffirmed Yemen's commitment to a political solution as the "safest and most viable path" to end the conflict. Such a solution, it noted, must be based on ending the coup, restoring state institutions, and upholding Yemen's national, regional, and international obligations. The ministry urged the international community to consider the broader implications of the Houthi threat, particularly for maritime security and global trade, and to support efforts aimed at restoring peace and stability in Yemen.—**APP**

Escaped monkeys bite 3 people in Syria

LONDON: Three people were injured on Wednesday after escaped monkeys bit them in Salqin, a city in Syria's western Idlib countryside, local media reported The injured residents were taken to Salqin Central Hospital for treatment, while efforts were underway to capture the three animals, Syria's state-run television said, citing the local Facebook page Salqin City. Videos circulating on social media appeared to show monkeys running through city streets and confronting passers-by, prompting some residents to flee. The incident was the second involving escaped monkeys in Salqin in recent months. In June, a group of monkeys escaped from an amusement park and roamed several streets before residents located them in the Qusour neighborhood and attempted to capture them. Footage from that episode showed at least one monkey moving through the city as residents tried to bring it under control. The recurrence of such incidents has reportedly raised questions about safety standards and official oversight of facilities that keep wild animals near residential areas, in a country where animal-welfare protections are uneven and enforcement has been strained by years of conflict.

US hands over ancient sarcophagus fragments to Lebano WASHINGTON: The United States on Thursday announced the return of Roman-era sarcophagus fragments to Lebanon that were looted from the southern city of Tyre and recovered by an FBI investigation. The decorative, lead fragments were returned to the Lebanese consulate in New York on Wednesday, ahead of their repatriation, the US embassy in Lebanon said. The recovery "reflects the strong US-Lebanon partnership in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property", the embassy said. Lebanese Culture Minister Ghassan Salame said the fragments "were unearthed in the Tyre area during illegal excavations". "The fragments bear distinctive artistic, decorative and technical characteristics typical of workshops that produced lead sarcophagus in Tyre, which were among the city's active and prolific workshops in antiquity." According to the FBI, the antiquities "were stolen from illicit excavations in or around Tyre and were exported outside of Lebanon's borders". The trade in looted antiquities is widespread in the Middle East. New York, one of the world's art capitals, is home to many wealthy collectors, galleries, and auction houses.—**APP**

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Briefs

Mohsin Naqvi says cricket tin Pakistan not finished

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi has labelled claims of cricket being finished in the country as "unreasonable", citing Pakistan's improved rankings under his tenure to prove otherwise. "South Africa lost to Namibia, India lost to Ireland. At least check there, has cricket finished there?" said Naqvi while speaking to reporters in London on Wednesday.

The PCB has received much criticism for the mid-series shakeup during the national team's Test tour of England, in which seven players and two coaches from the initial squad were replaced after heavy defeats in Headingley and Lords.

The decision gathered the ire of fans, pundits and former players alike. Former Pakistan captain Azhar Ali was one of them – while speaking to Dawn on Wednesday, he said that difficult decisions like these cause "insecurity among the players," and that they need to be made within stable frameworks. Naqvi, however, believes it inappropriate to claim that Pakistan cricket is at its worst, and that the white-ball teams have shown improvement in the recent past.

"You used to be ranked eighth in ODIs, which has now gone up to fifth. You have had six ODI series, out of which you have won four, but still, our cricket is finished," he said, resorting to sarcasm. "Our success rate has gone up from 24 pc to 73pc, and I'm not talking about just one or the other specific match, but still, our cricket is finished."

UN says El Nino likely to intensify

DNA

WASHINGTON: El Nino could be the strongest since records began four decades ago, the United Nations' climate agency warned on Thursday, with the UN chief warning the world is in the "danger zone of extreme weather". The naturally-occurring weather phenomenon is set to become "very strong" in the months ahead and is near certain to persist through to February, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said. El Nino warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns.

"If this trajectory continues, it may be stronger than anything since our monitoring began – so literally off the charts we have used for the past four decades," WMO chief Celeste Saulo told reporters in Geneva. El Nino will peak towards the end of this year – though its knock-on impacts for the climate will continue well into 2027, said the WMO.

About two million children victims of sexual abuse

NEW YORK: About 20 million internet-using children across 21 countries were subjected to sexual exploitation or abuse on digital platforms in a single year, with most cases occurring on social media platforms, a new report by the UN children's charity said on Thursday.

More than one in five children aged 12 to 17 across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe experienced at least one form of sexual abuse or exploitation on online platforms in the year before being surveyed, the Unicef report estimated. Roughly 15m children in the countries surveyed were exposed to unwanted sexual content, 9m were pressured into sexual conversations or sharing sexual images, and 4m had sexual images shared without their consent, the report found. The number of children subjected to this abuse globally is certain to run into many tens of millions, it said. – **APP**

Protest against petroleum levy

JI shutter-down strike gets mixed response

JI Karachi chief Munim Zafar claims more than 300 small and large markets are closed in metropolis

DNA

KARACHI: The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) nationwide shutter-down strike call against the petroleum levy and inflation received a mixed response on Thursday, with markets and shops remaining partially closed in parts of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), while Punjab and Balochistan largely remained open for business. The JI announced the nationwide strike against the petroleum levy, rising fuel prices and inflation on September 3 (today), while its sit-ins in provincial capitals over the same demands, launched on August 16, continued.

In Sindh, several commercial areas in Karachi observed the strike, with JI Karachi chief Munim Zafar claiming more than 300 small and large markets were closed.

Markets in Federal B Area, Water Pump, Liaquatabad and Teen Hatti also remained largely closed. The Karachi Bar Association supported the strike and said it would hold a peaceful rally from the Sindh High Court to the Karachi Press Club against inflation. The Orange Line BRT service remained suspended from the morning due to the JI sit-in, while the Green Line continued operating normally. Near Korangi Crossing, unidentified people reportedly burned a tyre and two motorcycles, blocking the road. The Akbar Road motorcycle market also remained closed. In Hyderabad, the strike was partially observed, with Chandni Market, Furniture Market, Khokhar Mohalla and Resham Bazaar closed.

Thatta observed a shutter-down strike, with commercial centres, hotels, petrol pumps and shops closed in Makli, Gharo, Dhabeji, Mirpur Sakro, Garho and other areas.Commercial centres in Badin and Shikarpur also remained closed, including those in Golarchi, Talhar, Matli and Tando Bago. In Tando Muhammad Khan, shops that initially opened later closed. Larkana observed a complete strike, with major markets and commercial areas shut, while Hala in Matiari also witnessed a complete shutdown, with all business centres closed.

In Tharparkar, JI workers staged a symbolic protest at Kashmir Chowk, where petrol was sold to citizens at Rs225 per litre.

In KP, the strike received a mixed response in Peshawar, with most shops on Ashraf Road closed while businesses in Qissa Khwani, Saddar, University Road and other markets remained open. Lawyers in Peshawar also boycotted court proceedings on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council's call, expressing solidarity with the JI strike and citing rising food and petroleum prices. Lower Dir observed a complete strike, with commercial centres closed and traffic significantly reduced. Markets in Batkhela, Dargai, Sakakot and Thana Baizai in Malakand also remained shut, while the district bar association boycotted court proceedings. Charsadda saw partial closures in Tehsil Bazaar, with the district bar supporting the strike. Most business centres in Shabqadar were partially closed, while markets and commercial centres in Dera Ismail Khan remained open.

In Punjab, the strike was largely ineffective in Rawalpindi, where Raja Bazaar, Murree Road, Commercial Market and Tench Bhatta remained open, and traffic was normal.

In Lahore, JI workers and traders confronted each other on Mall Road over the strike call. The dispute escalated into heated exchanges and a scuffle, prompting a heavy police deployment. In Balochistan, business activity largely continued despite the strike call. In Quetta, most shops and commercial centres remained open, with activity continuing in Liaquat Bazaar, Shahrah-e-Iqbal, Kasi Road and adjoining areas.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Danish University. Islamabad, 3 September 2026. – DNA

Pakistan secures $3bn through its 'largest-ever' Eurobond transaction

Record transaction marks important milestone in broader road-to-market strategy, says finance ministry

Mehtab Pirzada

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has successfully raised $3 billion through a landmark dual-tranche Eurobond transaction, the largest-ever international bond issuance by the country in a single transaction, the Ministry of Finance said on Thursday. The transaction attracted nearly $6bn in orders, almost twice the amount issued, from a broad and diversified base of institutional investors across global markets and continents.

The offering comprises $1.75bn through a 5.5-year Eurobond carrying a coupon of 7.5% and $1.25bn through a 10-year Eurobond at 7.9%.

The ministry said strong demand across both maturities, particularly for the 10-year tenor, demonstrated Pakistan's ability to mobilise sizeable longer-term financing as international investors reassessed the country's improving macroeconomic and credit fundamentals.

"The competitive pricing across both maturities, together with strong demand extending to the 10-year tenor, demonstrates Pakistan's ability to mobilise sizeable longer-term financing," the ministry said.

It said the demand reflected investors' reassessment of Pakistan's improving macroeconomic and credit fundamentals. The transaction also marked an important milestone in the government's broader road-to-market strategy and was the first issuance under the country's renewed Global Medium-Term Note (GMTN) Programme.

The move follows Pakistan's inaugural Panda Bond and successive improvements in its sovereign credit profile. The ministry said the renewed GMTN programme would provide a platform for more diversified access to international capital markets.

It stressed that the government's objective was "not simply to raise additional debt", but to pursue active sovereign liability management.

The strategy involves diversifying financing sources, extending debt maturities, reducing refinancing and rollover risks, and replacing shorter-term and more expensive obligations with longer-duration financing where economically beneficial.

Pakistan has already pursued substantial early retirement of domestic debt ahead of maturity, and the ministry said the same approach was being extended to external financing. "Borrow better. Extend maturities. Diversify funding. Reduce refinancing risk. Improve the sovereign debt profile," it said.

The ministry said Pakistan's economic trajectory over the past three years had been increasingly recognised through successive sovereign credit-rating upgrades and improved access to international markets.

It said the depth of the order book, geographical diversity of investors and strong demand for the 10-year bond offered a "powerful market-based signal of renewed confidence" in the country's medium- and long-term trajectory.

"Now, global investors have reinforced that assessment with billions of dollars of actual capital," the ministry said.

Petrol prices deregulation to come into effect next year

Petroleum Pricing Committee holds 7th meeting; resolves to continue reforms to encourage greater competition in fuel supply chain

Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: The Committee on Petroleum Pricing chaired by Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, met to review the petroleum pricing framework and deliberate on measures to make fuel pricing more transparent, predictable while protecting consumers from undue price volatility. The Committee agreed on a set of recommendations for strengthening the existing pricing mechanism and decided that its final report would be submitted to the Prime Minister for consideration and approval soon.

For diesel pricing, the Committee approved the guiding principles for possible rules based intervention in case of emergency situation with clearly defined price shock triggers and possible corrective measures.

The Committee also reviewed the recommendations for petrol pricing formula while setting a likely target of June 2027 for deregulation of petrol, ensuring a gradual transition towards competitive market-based pricing while protecting consumers from undue price volatility.

The Committee also reviewed the current IFEM mechanism and agreed to a revised methodology of IFEM calculation. OGRA assured IFEM audit for FY26 would be completed by end of CY26. The Committee further directed OGRA to submit written recommendations on consolidation & performance of existing OMCs especially in terms of adoption of best practices & latest technologies.

The Committee reviewed the report of sub committees on price stabilization fund benched marked against various successful and failed global models and directed the subgroup to further refine its proposals. The committee however observed that in view of ultimate deregulation of market, maintaining adequate fuel reserves would be more appropriate than establishing a stabilization fund.

The recommendations agreed by the Committee are aimed at bringing greater predictability and transparency in petroleum pricing, ensuring market efficiency and safeguarding consumers against abrupt price movements, while facilitating Pakistan's gradual transition towards deregulation.

Subcommittee headed by Mr Naeem Ghauri would meet with Chairman FBR to assess whether taxation regime needs to be reviewed in light of changing market conditions. The meeting was attended by other members of the committee including National Coordinator NCMC, Mr Zahid Mir and Mir Naeem Ghauri along with Representatives of OGRA, FBR, Finance Division, KPMG and officials of Petroleum Division.

Fresh notices issued to Momina, Chadhar

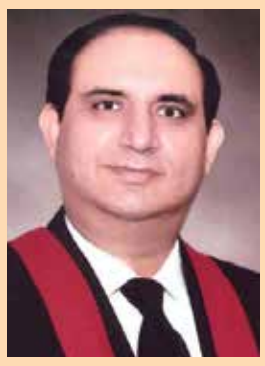
LAHORE: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) on Thursday issued fresh notices to actor Momina Iqbal and PML-N MPA Saqib Chadhar after new digital evidence emerged in a case involving allegations of harassment and threats. Iqbal had accused Chadhar of harassing and threatening her online, including allegations of cyberbullying. The actress initially raised the allegations on social media, drawing significant public attention. The NCCIA subsequently registered a case against Chadhar under various provisions of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) and the Pakistan Penal Code.

In a statement issued today, a NCCIA spokesperson said a special investigation team had been formed to conduct a fresh inquiry in light of the new evidence. The team will be headed by an officer of deputy director rank and will review the new digital evidence, previous records and other relevant information, he added.

The spokesperson further said the team has been directed to complete the investigation within one month and submit its report to the NCCIA director general. Further legal action will be decided in light of the findings, the spokesperson added. – **APP**

Justice Raheel Kamran Sheikh steps down as LHC judge

Justice Raheel, appointed to the LHC on May 7, 2021, was due to retire in 2036



LAHORE: Justice Raheel Kamran Sheikh has stepped down as a Lahore High Court (LHC) judge, ending a tenure that began with his appointment in May 2021. Justice Raheel, who was appointed to the LHC on May 7, 2021, was due to retire in 2036. In his resignation, he said serving as a judge had been an honour and a matter of pride. He described his years on the bench as important and fulfilling and said he was leaving the judiciary with a commitment to the Constitution and the rule of law. Following his resignation, Justice Raheel said he planned to pursue legal scholarship, policy research and comparative judicial practice. "My years on the Bench have been the most formative and fulfilling of my professional life. However, after deep and sustained reflection, I have concluded that my further development as a jurist, and my capacity to contribute to the rule of law and access to justice, would be best served by a period of broader engagement with legal scholarship, policy research and comparative judicial practice," reads the resignation. He also sent a copy of his resignation to the registrar of the Lahore High Court. Outgoing Justice Raheel holds a law degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science and is a Barrister of the Middle Temple. He was enrolled as an Advocate of the High Courts in April 2000 and as an Advocate of the Supreme Court in September 2012. During his legal career, he served as a member of the Pakistan Bar Council from 2016 to 2020 and chaired its Human Rights Committee. – **DNA**

King Charls to host Oman Sultan

OMAN: King Charles and Queen Camilla will host Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, the sultan of Oman, at Windsor Castle for a state visit to the United Kingdom from October 20 to 22, Buckingham Palace announced on Thursday. The visit comes as tensions in the Middle East remain high following United States and Israeli military actions against Iran in February, which led to retaliatory strikes on Israel and Gulf states hosting United States military bases, according to statements from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Allegations that United States President Donald Trump threatened to bomb Oman if it interfered with efforts to restore commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz have circulated in regional media, but no official statement or confirmation has been issued by the White House or the US Department of Defense as of Thursday. – **APP**

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Tajikistan, UAE envoys meet in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Yusuf Sharifzoda, held a meeting with Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, Salim Mohammed Salim Al-Bawab Al-Zaabi, in Islamabad on Thursday. During the meeting, the two envoys discussed matters concerning bilateral relations between Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates, as well as cooperation and coordination of positions in the context of their diplomatic activities in Pakistan.Both sides emphasized the importance of continuing mutually beneficial cooperation and further strengthening friendly relations between Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates.

Bajaur youth sets to test fly his own made helicopter

PESHAWAR: A young man from Bajaur, named Subhanullah, with his limited financial resources and tireless efforts of six years, has built a helicopter on his own. His family members while talking to media on Thursday said, Subhanullah's technical skills and unique effort since his childhood pushed him to go for something unique. The government has indicated that a test demonstration of the helicopter will be held at the Bajaur Sports Complex on September 6. If the trial is successful, permission may be granted for the helicopter to fly. Subhanullah while describing his passion said, he spent six years working continuously on the project using whatever resources were available to him. He is now preparing to take the helicopter to the testing stage.
He said the government had given him an opportunity to demonstrate the helicopter and assured him that permission to fly it could be considered if the trial proves successful. Subhanullah comes from a working-class family. During the seasonal period, he earns a living by selling traditional footwear in Punjab, while for the rest of the year he works as a daily-wage labourer to meet his expenses. –**APP**.

ARID enhances Pak-China agri research collaboration

RAWALPINDI: The Faculty of Agricultural Engineering and Technology at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) expanded Pakistan-China scientific cooperation through its participation in the GEO-STEP International Summer School hosted by Henan University, China The international academic forum brought together 50 researchers and scholars, including 26 international delegates, to facilitate technical exchanges, cross-cultural learning, and joint research discussions, said a press release issued here on Thursday. Delivering a key lecture titled "Smart Agriculture in Arid Regions: Localized Innovation and Practical Applications of Precision Agriculture Technologies in Pakistan," Associate Professor Dr. Tahir Iqbal detailed Pakistan's progress in smart sensing, precision irrigation networks, and climate-resilient farming.–**APP**

ICCI election campaign gains momentum

ISLAMABAD: The election campaign for the upcoming Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) elections gained further momentum as prominent businessman and trader leader from Tarnol, Wajid Ayub, hosted a reception attended by a large number of chamber members and representatives of the business community. Former ICCI President Zafar Bakhtawari, nominated presidential candidate Zakaria Zia, Malik Shabbir, Javed Wazir, Muhammad Arif, Akhtar Zaman Tanoli, Shoaib Abbasi, Malik Tanzal, Noor Zaman Khan, Hamid Khan, Hafiz Saeed, Malik Abid and Haji Salam Haider were among the prominent participants. The reception was also attended by candidates contesting for seats on the ICCI Executive Committee, including Altaf Hussain Shah, Rashid Tufail, Muhammad Arif, Shahid Abbasi, Kamran Kakakhel and Waqas Khan. Other prominent participants included Sajjad Abbasi, Amjad Sajji, Safir Ahmed, Babar Chaudhry, Atiq Janjua, Imtiaz Abbasi and Haris Malik. A large number of ICCI members and representatives of the business community attended the gathering, reflecting growing interest and participation in the chamber's upcoming elections. The reception provided an opportunity for business leaders, traders and candidates to interact and discuss issues concerning the business community and the future role of the ICCI. The participants expressed their commitment to strengthening the chamber and working collectively for the promotion and protection of the interests of the business community.

Salman stresses collective role in establishing peace

LAHORE: Punjab Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique on Wednesday said that scholars, government officers, politicians and people from all walks of life must play their collective role in establishing lasting peace in society. He was addressing a seminar as chief guest organized by the Center of Excellence for Countering Extremism. Khawaja Salman Rafique congratulated the Center of Excellence for Countering Extremism for organizing a seminar on an important subject, saying that all segments of society must work together for the progress of Pakistan. He said that the country's elders had rendered immense sacrifices for Pakistan and Almighty Allah had bestowed great honour and respect upon the country at the global level. He appreciated the role of the Center of Excellence for Countering Extremism in eliminating extremism from society. The provincial minister said that a better law and order situation was being ensured across Punjab. He added that peace had been restored in the Kachha area, where the Punjab government had also allocated a development budget of Rs22 billion. Recalling the tragedy of the Army Public School incident, he said Pakistan had made significant sacrifices in its fight against terrorism and extremism. He said the country was being appreciated internationally due to the efforts of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. Khawaja Salman Rafique said that, in accordance with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the provincial government was promoting inter-Muslim harmony and inter-faith unity. **APP**

CDA employees' kids offered major fee cut

ISLAMABAD: Children of Capital Development Authority (CDA) employees will receive major fee concessions at the Global System of Integrated Studies (GSIS) under a newly signed agreement The CDA Officers Association and Global System of Integrated Studies (Pvt) Ltd signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Thursday for the welfare of CDA employees and their families. The event was attended by CDA Member Estate, Muhammad Zaman Watto, CDA Officers Association General Secretary, Chaudhary Kamran Bakht, Principal/Director Admin of GSIS, along with other CDA officers and employees. Under the agreement, GSIS will waive all one-time admission fees for children of regular CDA employees. The refundable security deposit will also be waived. The MoU also provides a 50 per cent reduction in monthly tuition fees, allowing CDA employees' children to study at the institution at half the regular tuition cost. CDA Officers Association General Secretary Chaudhary Kamran Bakht said the agreement would reduce the financial burden on employees. He said admission and security fees had been completely waived for children of CDA officers and employees. Children of CDA employees will also receive priority during admissions. They will be given preference on the waiting list over members of the general public. They will have full access to academic facilities, co-curricular activities and student development programmes. They will be treated at par with regular fee-paying students. CDA Member Estate Muhammad Zaman Watto described the agreement as an important step for the welfare of CDA employees and their families.
He said the authority had always remained committed to protecting employees' rights and ensuring their welfare.–**APP**

Islamabad : Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif handsover a cheque of reward of 1 Crore to Ms. Razia Naureen, a nurse of PIMS Islamabad, who saved life of a child during an unfortunate incident at NICU of the PIMS.

Major grid upgrades at Faisalabad, Islamabad, Ghazi-Barotha

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan plans to upgrade key power transmission infrastructure at Faisalabad West, Islamabad West and Ghazi-Barotha grid stations under the Power Transmission Strengthening Project-II (PTSP-II). According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the planned development works include the upgradation of Faisalabad West Grid Station with two 500-kV line bays, along with installation of 111-MVAR shunt reactors at three major grid stations. According to the documents, the shunt reactors will be installed at Faisalabad West Grid Station, Islamabad West Grid Station and Ghazi-Barotha Grid Station. The project also envisages two 220-kV transmission lines at Islamabad West Grid Station as part of the planned transmission infrastructure works. The development works are being supported through a $45 million concessional loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under PTSP-II. The financing is identified as ADB Loan No. 4692-PAK. The document records the loan signing date as December 25, 2025 and its effectiveness date as March 24, 2026. The loan is scheduled to close on December 31, 2031. According to the documents, the entire US$ 45 million financing is currently unutilised.

ADMISSIONS NOTICE

COLLEGE OF MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY (PIMS)

BS 4 YEARS DEGREE PROGRAME IN ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

College of Medical Technology, (CMT) Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad, (PIMS) a Federal Public Sector College, envisions improving the quality of life through Education, innovation and cost effective quality Health Care of national and international level. CMT is seeking applications from highly motivated individuals who are innovative, creative and desirous to excel in their fields.

PROGRAMME OFFERED:

S. No.	Name of Courses
1.	BS Medical Laboratory Technology
2.	BS Radiology & Imaging Technology
3.	BS Vision Sciences
4.	BS Anesthesia Technology
5.	BS Dental Technology
6.	BS Cardiovascular Sciences

1. Applicants must have passed HSSC-II with **minimum 50% Marks** in Pre-Medical or Medical Technology (allied health sciences) group.
2. Applicants must have passed the **AHS entry test** conducted by Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU), Islamabad in the month of September 2026 with at least 50% (Fifty percent) marks.
3. Both Male/Female are eligible to apply.
4. Maximum age at the closing date of advertisement is **20 years**.
5. Candidate who have appeared in the **HSSC-II annual exam 2026** and are waiting for the declaration of their result may also apply. Such candidate must submit a **Hope Certificate** by their respective institution along with the HSSC-II roll number slip.
6. Candidate applying on the basis of Hope Certificate shall submit their HSSC-II result **within 03 days** of its declaration. Failure to so shall render their application liable to rejection.
7. The First Merit List shall be prepared strictly in accordance with the approved quota policy from among the eligible candidates who have passed the HSSC Examination in 2026, followed by the waiting list from the year 2026, for vacant seats.
8. Only if required, the Second Merit List shall be prepared in accordance with the approved quota policy from the remaining eligible candidates who have passed the HSSC Examination in 2025, followed by the waiting list from the year 2025, for vacant seats.
9. Candidates working in any Government Sector must provide NOC from their respective departments.
10. Total **150 seats** are allocated for BS Degree Program in six (6) above mentioned different disciplines. (25 seats per Discipline)
11. 20% seats are reserved for Technology groups.
12. **Domicile Certificate** of student is mandatory at the time of submission of application "Form" for admission; otherwise application will not be entertained.
13. The quota for **persons with disabilities** shall be observed in accordance with the approved quota policy. A valid Disability Certificate issued by the competent authority must be attached with the application form.
14. The list of **Provisionally Selected Candidates** shall be displayed on the notice board of College of Medical Technology (CMT), PIMS, Islamabad.
15. **Final selection** shall be subject to presentation and verification of original documents by administration section, College of Medical Technology (CMT), PIMS, Islamabad.

MERIT CALCULATION:

Weightage formula for Admission:

a. SSC / O- Level	10%
b. HSSC or equivalent	40%
c. Entrance Test	50%

HOW TO APPLY:

1. Admission forms, along with Prospectus shall be available in the office of Cashier of College of Medical Technology (PIMS) Islamabad on payment of Rs. **1,000/-**.
2. Applicants are advised to carefully read the **eligibility** criteria before purchasing the Prospectus and Application Form. **The Prospectus/ Application Form, once purchased, shall not be refundable or exchangeable.**
3. Duly filled Form will be collected at College of Medical Technology (PIMS) uptill date **14-09-2026**.
4. Candidates applying for more than one discipline shall mention those disciplines in order of preference on the given form.

DOCUMENT REQUIRED

1. Attested copies of the **Matriculation Certificate/ Marks Sheet, HSSC (I& II) Certificate/ Mark sheet, Domicile Certificate, CNIC/ B-Form of the and applicant, CNIC of the father/ guardian.**
2. Copy of **SZABMU Entry Test** result conducted in the month of **September.2026.**
3. Two attested copies of **Character Certificate** issued by the last attended institute.
4. **Two (02) recent passport-size photographs**, one of which must be duly attested on the back side.
5. Copy of Original **Domicile** of candidate.
6. **Original Migration Certificate (OMC)**, where applicable, to be submitted at the time of admission.
7. **Pay Slip and PIMS Service Card** (for applicants applying under the PIMS Employees' Quota).
8. **Disability Certificate**, if applying under the disabled persons quota.

NOTE:

1. Application Forms shall be issued only upon presentation of the **HSSC Marks Sheet**.
2. **Incomplete applications or applications received after the due date shall not be entertained.**
3. **Hostel accommodation shall be provided to male students only**, subject to availability of accommodation and in accordance with the approved hostel allotment policy.
4. **No Hostel Facility is available for female students.**
5. Submission of **Forged or Fabricated Documents** shall result in cancellation of admission and legal/ disciplinary action under the applicable rules.
6. Applicants may indicate their order of preference as per priority for **all six disciplines / specialty** in the prescribed Application Form.
7. The **Competent Authority reserves the right to cancel or withdraw any admission at any stage** without assigning any reason, in accordance with the applicable rules and regulations.

Distribution of Admission Seats at the College of Medical Technology (CMT) in Accordance with the Approved Quota Policy

Merit	Punjab	Sindh (R)	Sindh (U)	KPK + Ex-FATA	Baluchistan	G.B	AJ&K	ICT	PIMS Staff	SP. Person	Total
9	57	14	8	14+3	7	3	3	15	14	3	150

(PROF. DR. AYESHA ISANI MAJEED)
Principal, College of Medical Technology (CMT)
Ph. 051-9261191

PID(I)21431/26

Pak, KSA, Türkiye partnership can foster muslim unity

Ashrafi particularly highlighted the role of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, saying his engagement with the Saudi leadership reflected a strategic understanding of the need to prevent the crisis from becoming a conflict between Arab and Muslim states

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Coordinator of the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, on Thursday said the evolving strategic partnership between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye could play a historic role in promoting unity, peace and collective security across the Muslim world. Addressing a high-level strategic policy forum titled "The Makkah Pact and the New Geometry of Power: Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Türkiye Shaping an Emerging Regional Order", Ashrafi said the restraint demonstrated by Saudi Arabia during the recent regional crisis was critical in preventing the situation from escalating into a wider conflict among Muslim countries. Ashrafi said the rapid escalation following Israel's attack on Iran could have triggered a dangerous chain reaction in the region. He said Saudi Arabia had made clear that neither its territory nor its airspace would be used against Iran, emphasizing that Riyadh's policy of restraint helped prevent the conflict from developing into an Arab-Iranian confrontation. He said such a confrontation would ultimately have had grave consequences for the wider Muslim world. Ashrafi particularly highlighted the role of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, saying his engagement with the Saudi leadership reflected a strategic understanding of the need to prevent the crisis from becoming a conflict between Arab and Muslim states. He recalled that Field Marshal Asim Munir travelled to Saudi Arabia and met Saudi Minister of Defence Prince Khalid bin Salman, where the importance of preventing a broader confrontation was discussed. Ashrafi said subsequent high-level engagement involving Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman reflected a shared strategic vision to ensure that the regional conflict did not turn into a war among Muslims. He said Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye had subsequently emerged as important pillars of a broader effort for preserving regional stability, Muslim unity and collective security. The Pakistan Ulema Council chairman also emphasized the importance of religious unity within Pakistan, saying the country had demonstrated an unprecedented level of Shia-Sunni solidarity during the crisis. He said scholars from different schools of thought had collectively condemned attacks on Iran, expressed solidarity over the loss of lives and worked to maintain peace and unity inside Pakistan. Ashrafi said the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee had provided an important platform for bringing scholars and religious communities together, demonstrating that sectarian differences could be overcome in the larger interest of national unity and peace. He said this unity was particularly significant at a time when attempts could be made to exploit regional tensions to create divisions within the Muslim world. Referring to the emerging Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye alignment, Ashrafi said the partnership could become an important strategic framework for cooperation, but stressed that the Makkah Pact carried a significance that extended beyond conventional political or strategic alliances. He said decisions taken through strategic cooperation among states were important, but the Muslim Ummah should not lose sight of the unique spiritual and symbolic importance of Makkah and the Kaaba. Ashrafi emphasized that the future of Muslim unity should be rooted not only in strategic interests but also in faith, solidarity, peace, mutual respect and collective responsibility. He said the emerging regional order provided an opportunity for Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye to work together for peace and stability while helping bridge differences within the Muslim world.–**DNA**