

# THE DESTINATION

## NEWS THAT TRAVELS

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KARACHI

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### Security forces kill 49 terrorists in KP, Balochistan operations

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Security Forces have killed forty nine terrorists/ Khwarij in an intelligence driven operations in various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhawa and Balochistan against Indian Proxies, Fitna Al Khwarij and Fitna Al Hindustan. During these operations, a large quantity of explosive, IED detonating remotes, weapons, ammunition and motor cycles were recovered and destroyed. According to a press statement released by ISPR, a media wing of Pakistan Army, in a determined effort to eliminate terrorist threats and dismantle the khwarij and terrorist networks, over the last few days, Security Forces conducted a series of high tempo joint intelligence driven operations along with Police, as part of relentless counter terrorism campaign aimed at eliminating Indian Proxies, Fitna Al Khwarij and Fitna Al Hindustan.



### Zardari for further strengthening Pakistan-China economic, trade cooperation

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday called for further strengthening economic and trade cooperation between Pakistan and China, particularly by promoting greater business-to-business engagement and exploring new avenues of collaboration. The president expressed these views during a meeting with Hao Yuejiao, President of the China Africa & Asia Trade & Cooperation Promotion Association, a press release issued by the President House Media Wing said. The president welcomed efforts to enhance trade and investment ties between the two countries and emphasised the importance of expanding mutually beneficial cooperation. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla was also present during the meeting.



A large number of people attend the 403rd Urs celebration at the shrine of Sufi saint Hazrat Mian Mir Darbar.

## Opposition retains Sept 27 protest, long march plan

■ Gohar slams govt over violation of SC order on Imran Khan's hospital transfer

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The opposition has decided to maintain its plan for a protest and long march on September 27, while also agreeing to invite all opposition parties to participate. A joint parliamentary opposition meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mahmood Khan Achakzai, with Raja Nasir Abbas, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Shahid Khattak, Asad Qaiser, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail



Afridi and Salman Akram Raja among others in attendance. The meeting discussed the overall political situation, the health of PTI founder Imran Khan, implementation of Supreme Court

orders and the opposition's future political strategy. Opposition leaders expressed deep concern over Imran Khan's health and said no compromise would be accepted regarding his health or treatment. According to the meeting's declaration, the opposition accused the government of staging a "drama" over Imran's health and expressed serious concern over the alleged failure to implement Supreme Court orders. The opposition claimed that the government had committed contempt of court by failing to comply (Continued on Page-4)

## Pakistan, Google sign MoU to boost AI, digital skills and IT exports

■ PM Shehbaz vows equitable development of Balochistan, calls for dialogue to address grievances

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the challenges facing Balochistan should be resolved through dialogue, stressing that the people of the province have the first right over its resources. Addressing the Balochistan National Workshop, Shehbaz welcomed the participants and said the purpose of the dialogue was to listen to them and to the people of Balochistan. The prime minister said Balochistan is



home to both Baloch and Pashtun communities and highlighted the region's traditions of courage, hospitality and tolerance. He said different parts of Balochistan joined Pakistan at the time of its creation and that the decision reflected the wishes of local elders and people. Shehbaz said no patriot could take up arms in the name of grievances and called for turning the "road of blood" into a "road of peace". He alleged that hostile countries were providing resources to infiltrators, while Pakistani soldiers were sacrificing their lives to protect others.

"Whatever has happened, has happened; now there must be a grand dialogue," the prime minister said, adding that those willing to correct their course should be welcomed. He said even the most difficult problems could be resolved through dialogue and reiterated that the people of Balochistan had the first right over the province's resources. He said the government was prepared to listen to the province's legitimate grievances not once, but a thousand times.

## Imran Khan taken back to jail after tests at PIMS, not at Al-Shifa Hospital

● Attaullah Tarar confirms PTI founder was transferred back to prison after doctors declared him medically fit: Says they were taken to PIMS due to security situation created by PTI workers at Al-Shifa Hospital

Mudassar Iqbal

ISLAMABAD

Former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan was taken back to Adiala jail after undergoing a medical check-up at PIMS Hospital, and not at Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad in the wee hours of Friday, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar confirmed that Imran Khan was transferred back to jail early on Friday, hours after being taken to a hospital for court-ordered medical checks. "A team of qualified doctors... declared him medically fit. After the completion of this entire process, he was transferred back to Adiala Jail," Attaullah Tarar wrote on X. The minister said "In the light of the Supreme Court's decision, the prisoner was taken to the hospital under appropriate security arrangements during the intervening night of August 20



and 21, 2026. A team of qualified doctors, including an ophthalmologist, a cardiologist, and a physician, conducted a detailed examination of him and declared him medically fit." Tarar further said "His sister, Mrs Azma Khan, remained present throughout all stages of the medical examination/treatment." He maintained after the (Continued on Page-4) completion of this entire process, he (Imran Khan) was transferred back to Adiala Jail at approximately 0500 hours on the morning of August 21, 2026. In

another tweet, Attaullah Tarar revealed that the PTI leader was taken to PIMS Hospital, and not to Al-Shifa International Hospital as directed by the Supreme Court. "The medical examination was conducted at PIMS Hospital, where doctors from Al-Shifa Hospital were also present," Tarar said and added "In view of the security situation created by PTI workers on the way to and outside Al-Shifa Hospital, they were taken to PIMS Hospital, and according to the medical examination, they were found to be healthy."

The minister said they have been provided with medical facilities before as well, and even now, medical facilities will be provided whenever they need them. Earlier reports said Imran Khan was taken to the hospital in accordance with the orders issued by the Supreme Court earlier this week. He was brought to the hospital via Pitras Bokhari Road and entered through Gate No. 1. Shifa International Hospital is located in Islamabad's Sector H-8, which also houses several educational institutes and other government offices. Visuals from outside the hospital showed that both Pitras Bokhari Road and Service Road South had been cordoned off, and a sizeable contingent of law-enforcement personnel was present there on Thursday night. "It's confirmed that he has arrived at Shifa International Hospital," Zulfi Bukhari, a spokesman for PTI, told AFP on Thursday night. "The Supreme Court's order has been complied with," he added.

## Makkah defence pact emerges as new framework for regional security: Reports

● The agreement brings the three countries under a common defence framework and establishes the principle that an attack on one member would be treated as an attack on all

City Reporter

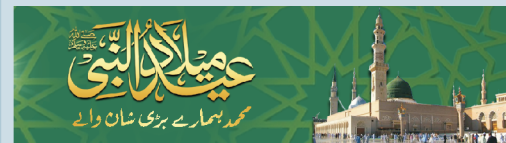
ISLAMABAD

The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye has emerged as a significant framework for strengthening collective defence and promoting peace and stability in the Middle East and South Asia. The agreement brings the three countries under a common defence framework and establishes the principle that an attack on one member would be treated as an attack on all. According to reports published by Bloomberg and Azerbaijan-based Caliber, the pact reflects changing regional security dynamics and the growing need for new



strategic partnerships. The agreement is aimed at strengthening coordination among the three countries and addressing emerging security challenges in the region. Pakistan's nuclear capability, military strength and strategic partnerships are also seen as adding significant weight to the new defence arrangement. The pact could pave the way for deeper security and defence cooperation between Islamabad, Riyadh and Ankara, further strengthening their role in regional peace and stability.





## Govt Declares 12 Rabi ul Awal Holiday on August 26

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan will observe a 12 Rabi ul Awal holiday on Wednesday, August 26, the federal government confirmed on Friday. The Cabinet Division issued a formal notice announcing the nationwide off day to mark Eid Milad un Nabi, the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The notification came after approval from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. It applies across the country, giving citizens a break from work and school on this important religious day.

Sindh's provincial government also announced its own holiday for the same date. This means offices, schools, and most businesses in the province will remain shut, matching the federal decision.

The date was set after Pakistan's moon-sighting body met last week. The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, led by Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad, found that the Rabi ul Awal moon had not appeared. As a result, the 12th of the month falls on this coming Wednesday. Eid Milad un Nabi holds deep meaning for Muslim. The Eid of the technical committee comes.



## Punjab education boards to recruit staff after 15 years

News Desk

LAHORE

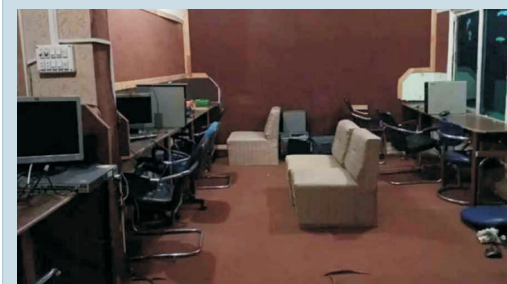
The Punjab government has decided to resume recruitment in the province's educational boards after a gap of 15 years, with hiring for various vacant positions now under way.

According to officials, recruitment will be carried out in several educational boards, including those in Lahore and Faisalabad, to fill a range of vacant posts.

The positions include computer programmer, assistant and senior computer operator, among others. Posts of deputy secretary, assistant secretary and estate officer will also be filled. In Lahore, recruitment will be conducted for 33 posts in grades 16 and 17.

The appointments will be made through the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC), according to the details released by the authorities.

The recruitment drive is expected to help address staffing shortages in the educational boards and strengthen their administrative and technical capacity.



## Govt plans nationwide crackdown on illegal call centres

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The federal government has decided to launch a nationwide crackdown on illegal call centres following reports of foreign nationals allegedly operating an international network involved in cyber fraud and obscene content.

According to sources, a special task force will be established under the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) headquarters to coordinate action against illegal call centres across the country.

The task force will investigate allegations involving extortion, blackmail, gambling and online scams, sources said.

Details of operations conducted against call centres will be submitted to the Ministry of Interior on a daily basis, according to officials.

Authorities have also prepared a list of call centres operating in Karachi, while all relevant institutions have been directed to extend full cooperation to the task force during its operations.

The decision comes days after authorities arrested 284 foreign nationals during a raid on an illegal call centre in Islamabad.

The nationwide operation is aimed at identifying and dismantling illegal call centre networks involved in cybercrime and other unlawful activities, sources said.

## Federal Directorate of Education Honours Top Achievers in SSC Annual Examination 202526

# Malaysian home minister visits NADRA headquarters, praises digital services

■ Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail visited NADRA headquarters in Islamabad and praised its digital systems, technology-driven services and initiatives aimed at public convenience.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail visited the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) headquarters in Islamabad, accompanied by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry.

NADRA Chairman Lt Gen Muhammad Munir Afsar received the visiting delegation and briefed the Malaysian minister on the authority's modern systems, digitalisation initiatives and measures introduced to improve the delivery of services to citizens.

During the briefing, the delegation was apprised of NADRA's use of



modern technology and digital solutions aimed at making identity and registration-related services

faster and more accessible to the public.

The Malaysian home minister described his visit to NADRA as encouraging and appreciated the authority's progress in digitalisation and its use of technology to facilitate citizens.

He also praised NADRA's initiatives for providing faster and more efficient public services, saying its modern technology and digital services reflected Pakistan's technological capabilities.

The Malaysian minister and members of his delegation also toured different sections of the NADRA headquarters, where they reviewed the authority's systems and service-delivery mechanisms.

## CASS Lahore Event Highlights Need to Link Geopolitics with Economic Transformation

■ Haroon Sharif stressed the need to leverage Pakistan's geopolitical relevance, CPEC and strategic partnerships for investment, technology transfer, industrial development and export growth.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore organised an event titled, "Redefining Power: Geoeconomics, Technology and Security in an era of Strategic Competition" on 19 August 2026. As an independent think tank, CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in national security in its wider context. The event was attended by academics, intellectuals, and domain experts. Ms Sibra Waseem, a Research Assistant at CASS Lahore, delivered the opening address. Mr Haroon Sharif, Chairman, PREF, Islamabad, highlighted that Pakistan needs to build on its geopolitical relevance by translating strategic partnerships and CPEC into investment, technology transfer, and industrial ecosystems. He highlighted opportunities arising from Pakistan's strategic location. He underscored the need to diversify the country's energy mix and reduce vulnerability to imported oil, accounting for 85 per cent of requirements. He stressed the need to create opportunities for 4 million annual labour-market entrants. Additionally, he suggested focusing on sectors with potential for value addition, productivity and exports, alongside knowledge and technology partnerships, R&D and greater private-sector participation. Dr Safdar Sohail, Executive Director, SPRC, Islamabad, emphasised the need to link Pakistan's geopolitical relationships with economic transformation by converting strategic opportunities, particularly through the US and CPEC, into manufacturing



capacity, technology partnerships and export competitiveness. Given Pakistan's narrow export base, he stressed the importance of development finance and industrial policy. He highlighted the provinces' role following the 18th Amendment, alongside better data, standards and integration of finance, manufacturing and SMEs to build a self-sustaining economy. Taking discussion further, he also commended the PAF for its decisive victory in the May 2025 war, even in the face of severe financial constraints. In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS, Lahore, emphasised that military power remains essential, but economy, technology, and national security are becoming interconnected, with disruption in one affecting others. For Pakistan, this transformation is significant given its geostrategic location, connectivity and growing digital economy, which must be converted into sustainable economic gains. Furthermore, he underscored a growth strategy that stands behind the strong while ensuring a level playing field for development.

## Rain lashes twin cities as Nullah Lai water level rises

■ Wasa teams and heavy machinery have been deployed along Nullah Lai and in vulnerable low-lying areas to deal with any emergency



News Desk

ISLAMABAD

- Heavy rain in Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Friday increased the flow of water in Nullah Lai, prompting authorities to step up monitoring of the waterway and vulnerable areas.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, Golra received the highest rainfall at 60mm, followed by Bokra with 31mm, Shamsabad and Pirwadhai with 25mm each, New Katarian with 21mm and Gawalmandi with 22mm.

Managing Director of the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) said the heavy downpour had once again increased the flow in Nullah Lai. The water level at Katarian was recorded at 11 feet, he said. Wasa teams and heavy machinery have been deployed along Nullah Lai and in vulnerable low-lying areas to deal with any emergency. Additional staff has also been stationed in areas at risk of flooding. The Wasa managing director said a rain emergency remained in place in Rawalpindi due to the prevailing weather conditions. A rain emergency is in force in Rawalpindi, with authorities continuing to monitor Nullah Lai and other drains amid the possibility of further rainfall. The Managing Director of Wasa said the heavy downpour had once again caused a rise in the flow of Nullah Lai. According to him, the water level at Katarian reached 11 feet, requiring continued monitoring of the situation. Officials are closely watching the water level at key points along the nullah so that emergency measures can be taken promptly if the flow rises further. The authorities are also monitoring adjoining drains and vulnerable locations where accumulated rainwater could create difficulties for residents.



# Aurganzeb, ICCD discuss expanding cooperation in Islamic finance, halal markets

- The Finance Minister underscored the importance of strengthening linkages between Pakistan's business community and international business networks.

Business Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) on Friday discussed ways to expand economic cooperation, promote halal markets and strengthen Islamic finance and private-sector collaboration.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD), Shaikh Yusef Hassan Khalawi to discuss the opportunities for cooperation. The ICCD Secretary General was accompanied by CEO, Al Baraka Bank Pakistan, Muhammad Atif Hanif and Director, International Relations of ICCD,



Ms. Aalia Jaffar, according to press release issued by finance ministry. On the occasion, the finance minister

underscored the importance of strengthening linkages between Pakistan's business community and international business networks. He highlighted the potential for greater engagement and collaboration through the Chamber's global outreach and platforms. Khalawi briefed the finance minister on the expanding international outreach of the Islamic Chamber and its engagement with business communities, including those in non-OIC countries. He highlighted the Chamber's efforts to connect Muslim business communities globally with private-sector and institutional partners and promote greater halal economic cooperation. They discussed the growing global halal economy and opportunities for Pakistan to strengthen its presence across sectors including halal food, fashion, halal tourism, services and other consumer markets. The finance minister

emphasized the importance of moving beyond a broad halal concept towards identifying specific products, sectors and markets where Pakistani businesses can expand and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

The participants also discussed opportunities to strengthen Pakistan's Islamic finance ecosystem and promote greater collaboration with international platforms working in Islamic economics and finance.

The importance of developing commercially viable opportunities and improving market linkages for Pakistani businesses was highlighted.

Khalawi shared international experiences in halal business development, sustainable tourism and Islamic economic cooperation.

## PSX registers 574 points jump on Friday

- PSX to remain closed on eve of Eid Milad



Staff Reporter

KARACHI

Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) registered 574 points jump and settled at 177166 points on the closing session on the last day of the week on Friday. A total of 565 companies' shares were traded in the stock market. Shares of 246 companies saw

gains, while shares of 216 companies experienced a decline. Over 680 million shares, valued at more than Rs 35 billion, were traded in the stock market.

PSX to remain closed on eve of Eid Milad

The Pakistan Stock Market will remain closed on August 26, 2026, on the occasion of 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal. The federal government has announced a nationwide public holiday on August 26 to mark Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH).

Following approval from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Cabinet Division issued an official notification declaring a nationwide public holiday for Wednesday.

## Weekly inflation rises 0.49pc as petrol, onion prices surge

- Weekly inflation in Pakistan rose 0.49 percent, pushing annual inflation to 9.66 percent as petrol, onions and chicken became more expensive, while several essential items recorded price declines.

Staff Reporter

KARACHI

The impact of higher petroleum prices has started to emerge as weekly inflation in Pakistan increased by 0.49 percent, pushing the overall annual inflation rate to 9.66 percent.

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has released its report on weekly inflation, showing that the prices of 23 essential commodities increased during the week, while 10 items became cheaper and prices of 18



commodities remained unchanged.

According to the PBS, petrol prices increased by 3.77 percent

during the latest week, while onion prices rose by 14.17 percent and chicken became 3.35 percent more expensive. Prices of other essential commodities, including gram pulse, garlic and tea, also increased.

On the other hand, egg prices decreased by 5.78 percent during the week, while diesel prices recorded a decline of 5.15 percent.

The report said tomato prices fell by 4.99 percent and potato prices declined by 1.17 percent. Prices of sugar, LPG and bananas also decreased during the week.

## Shafay Hussain arrives in Canada to court investment, expand bilateral trade

- Punjab Industries Minister Chaudhry Shafay Hussain has arrived in Canada to attract foreign investment, promote special economic zones and strengthen Pakistan-Canada trade ties.



NEWS DESK

TORONTO

Punjab Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain has arrived in Canada on an investment-promotion mission aimed at attracting foreign capital to Punjab and expanding trade and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Canada.

The provincial minister received a warm welcome in Toronto, where a reception was organised in his honour by Canada Gateway Expo Chief Organiser Rana Muhammad Tanveer and the Pakistan Muslim League's Canada chapter.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canada Muhammad Saleem, Consul General in Toronto Khalil Ahmed Bajwa, diplomats, business leaders, overseas Pakistanis and members of the Pakistani community attended the reception. Addressing the gathering, Shafay Hussain described overseas Pakistanis as the country's "true ambassadors" and a valuable national asset, saying their contribution extended beyond remittances to investment, trade and building Pakistan's economic links

with international markets.

He said overseas Pakistanis could play a particularly important role in connecting foreign investors and businesses with opportunities available in Punjab.

"Overseas Pakistanis have a key role in Pakistan's development and economic stability," the minister said, adding that the diaspora could help create new commercial partnerships between Pakistan and countries such as Canada.

Punjab pitches special economic zones to Canadian investors

Shafay Hussain used the visit to highlight Punjab's investment potential, saying the province offered a conducive environment for industrial and commercial activity along with infrastructure developed to facilitate investors.

He invited Canadian businesses to explore opportunities in Punjab's special economic zones, saying investors operating in the zones could benefit from incentives, including income tax exemptions for up to 10 years and a one-time facility for duty-free import of machinery, subject to applicable laws and regulations.

## Oil set for second weekly rise as unsettled US-Iran war crimps supply

- Oil prices remained near recent highs on Friday, heading for a second weekly gain as the U.S.-Iran conflict disrupted Middle East supplies and traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD

Oil prices were little changed on Friday, but were on track for a second weekly rise as the stalemated U.S.-Iran war continues to disrupt supply from the key Middle East producing region.

Brent crude futures rose 4 cents to \$93.82 a barrel by 0142 GMT, after climbing 2.4% in the previous session. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures slipped 6 cents to \$86.78 a barrel, after climbing 2.3% in the prior session.

During the previous five days of gains, Brent gained more than 7% and WTI climbed more than 8%, reaching their highest since July



24. Prices have climbed on concerns the inconclusive state of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran will mean the continued curtailment of supply from major oil producers such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE and Kuwait.

The earlier peace deal between them expired this week with no effort by either side to restart talks

and U.S. President Donald Trump threatened economic retaliation against nations supporting Iran.

"Both sides are dug in but lacking the luxury of time to play the waiting game, against a backdrop of crude prices grinding unerringly higher," IG analyst Tony Sycamore said on Friday. On Wednesday evening, Trump threatened "economic warfare

and isolation on an unprecedented scale" against Tehran, warning of consequences for any country that provided "any type of lifeline to Iran".

This week, the United Arab Emirates suspended all financial and economic transactions with Iran until further notice, highlighting the fraught ties between the major Gulf Arab oil producer and Tehran.

Thousands of people have been killed in the Iran war, which began on February 28 when the U.S. and Israel launched military strikes on Iran. Since then, Tehran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and Iranian attacks on energy facilities across the Middle East have disrupted global oil and gas flows.



A vendor preparing traditional chicken roast for customers outside his restaurant at Railway Station Road.



# “Scholarships as Soft Power: United States and the Impact of Exchange Programs”



By: Sawera Noor

In the contemporary world, states do not only rely on their military strength or political pressure to gain influence in world politics. Instead, they also use softer tactics to shape global opinion and build long-term relationships around the world. One of the most effective tools is the education, particularly in the forms of scholarships and exchange programs. The United States has been employing this technique for decades, using classrooms as the arenas for diplomatic negotiations. Annually, more than millions of international students go to the United States to pursue their dream studies from different parts of the world. This demonstrates its pivotal position as a global center for learning and cross-cultural interaction. The main goal of this American public diplomacy is to win the hearts and minds of people which is quite

simple but also a powerful objective. The United States encourages its ideas of openness, creativity, and diversity by providing overseas students with the opportunity to study there. These scholarship programs are not just about getting education in the USA, they are more about changing people's perception about America's image. Its other key goal is to build long-term relationships with other states by using public diplomacy. After getting degrees from the United States, a large number of students that return to their home countries where they later became leaders in academia, business, or government. Their positive experiences in America often lead to stronger and more cooperative relations with the United States in the future.

The United States of America uses well structured and organised strategies to achieve these objectives. Since 1946, the Fulbright Program has been operating, which is one of the most important United States exchange programs. Since the program started it has supported over millions of participants from over 160 countries, making it one of the largest academic exchange programs in the world. Each year more than thousands of students, scholars, and professionals are taking part in these exchange programs. Moreover, these programs are usually fully funded, that's why it attracts talented people from different parts of the world. Students do not only gain education from there but they also experience American culture by interacting with the local gthen



communities there and also building long-lasting connections. Alumni networks further strengthen these relationships over time.

In 2026, the effectiveness of these approaches can be seen clearly. Through these exchange programs, several professionals and leaders from Asia, Africa, and other regions of the Global South have studied in the United States of America. Today, they are being employed in different international organisations, government agencies, and academic institutions. The long-term impact of U.S. exchange programs is demonstrated by the numerous Nobel Prize winners and world leaders who have graduated from the American institutes. Even if these people do not directly represent the American interests, their experiences can frequently influence how they think and give them a more impartial or favourable opinion of the United States. This form of influence is

slow but is always deeply rooted.

However, this type of approaches also have several challenges. One of the major criticisms is that these programs are not entirely neutral and they may serve political purposes. Some states view them as the tools of influence rather than simple educational opportunities. Also the other issue is about unequal access, as only a limited number of students gets benefit from these scholarships. This raises a lot of questions about fairness and equality. Moreover, the issue of brain drain cannot be ignored, as there are some students that chooses to stay in the United States instead of returning back to their home, which could negatively affect their home nations.

Furthermore, the United States is no longer the only state using this public diplomacy strategy. Countries like China have also expanded their own scholarship programs and are now hosting over hundreds of thousands of international students per year. This has created a new kind of competition in the world, where countries are trying to influence global perceptions through educational programmes. As a result, scholarship diplomacy has become a key part of global power competition in the modern world.



By: Asghar Ali Mubarak

## US President claims ; Armed tension with Iran is over...?

US President Donald Trump has claimed in a letter to Congress that armed tension with Iran has now ended. The following are the important facts and legal aspects behind this claim:

This statement by the President is actually a legal defense. Under the 'War Powers Act', the President must seek Congress's approval within 60 days for any military campaign. 60 days have passed since the war began on February 28, so the President took the position that, because the ceasefire has been in effect since April 7, the war is now over, and he does not need any approval from Congress.

President Trump named this military campaign 'Operation Epic Fury' and said that he would continue to give instructions to the military as Commander-in-Chief to protect American interests. Opposition reaction: Democrats and Senator Chuck Schumer have called the claim "nonsense" and illegal. They say thousands of US troops are still at risk and that the tension has not subsided as long as the Strait of Hormuz is closed.

The president is using the indefinite extension of the ceasefire he extended on April 21 as the basis for the cessation of hostilities.

Pakistan, which is currently mediating through the "Islamabad Talks", sees President Trump's claim as a positive opportunity to turn this temporary peace into a permanent peace agreement.

The next legal step of the US Congress. After US President Donald Trump claimed that "tensions with Iran are over, The US Congress, especially Democrats, is considering legal measures to limit the president's powers: War Powers Resolution (Joint Resolution):

Democratic leaders are preparing to introduce a joint resolution in the Senate and House of Representatives. Its purpose is to bind the president not to take any further military action against Iran without congressional approval. Although Trump can veto it, it would put intense political pressure on him. Power of the Purse: Congress has the power to control the defense



budget. Lawmakers are proposing to block funds allocated for 'Operation Epic Fury' or limit their use only to defense purposes so that the president cannot restart the war at will.

Legal Challenge:

Human rights organizations (such as the ACLU) and some legal experts plan to take the matter to federal courts. They argue that the president's claim that "the 60-day legal period clock stops during a ceasefire" is a clear violation of the War Powers Act of 1973.

Congressional Hearings:

The Senate Armed Services Committee has decided to subpoena Defense Secretary Pat Hegseth and other military officials to determine whether "hostilities have truly ceased" on the battlefield or whether the president is simply making this claim to avoid legal complications. National Security Powers Definition:

Finally, regarding the definition of national security powers:

Next turning point:

If Congress succeeds in blocking the funds, it will be difficult for President Trump to order another attack on Iran, which could bolster Pakistan's mediation efforts. Following US President Donald Trump's decision to ignore the War Powers Act, Democrats have developed a multi-pronged strategy to challenge the president's military powers: 1. Legislation and new resolutions Democrats are planning to introduce a "No War Without Authorization" bill in the Senate and House of Representatives. It aims to clarify that a ceasefire does not legally mean an end to hostilities and that the 60-day period remains in effect. 2. Funding Strike Democrats, led by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, are proposing amendments to the upcoming defense budget that would block the use of funds for "aggressive military operations" in the Middle East. Only

operations" in the Middle East. Only provide money for operations that are defensive in nature or that have been formally authorized by Congress. 3. Public pressure and investigative hearings. Democrats on the Senate Armed Services Committee (such as Jane Shaheen) are trying to prove through public hearings that the president's claim that "the tension has subsided" is false. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the presence of US troops in the region still reflect an active war situation.

4. Judicial recourse;

Democratic legal experts and organizations like the ACLU are working to file petitions in federal courts to declare the president's position that a ceasefire stops the 60-day "countdown clock" illegal.

5. Election narrative;

Democrats want to make this a major issue in the 2026 midterm elections, in which Trump will be portrayed as a president who is violating the Constitution and pushing the country into an "illegal war."

Importance for Pakistan:

If Democrats succeed in pressuring the President, it will make it harder for President Trump to strike again, paving the way for a lasting peace deal through the Pakistan-led "Islamabad Talks." The American public's reaction to US President Donald Trump's claim that "armed tension with Iran is over" is sharply divided, but according to recent polls, the majority seems to be against this military campaign. The following are the salient aspects of the public reaction:

Majority disapproval: According to the latest Washington Post-ABC-Ipsos poll (May 2026), 61% of Americans believe that the use of military force against Iran was a mistake, while only 36% consider it the right decision.

Economic burden and inflation:

The main reason for the anger against this war among the American public is the economic impact. Gasoline prices have exceeded \$ 4 per gallon, which has made life difficult for ordinary citizens.



By: Muhammad Mohsin Khan (Rajput)

## Shifting Angles of Gulf Diplomacy

In international politics, there are moments when seemingly separate economic, diplomatic, and strategic forces converge so intricately that they defy conventional frameworks of analysis. The recent tensions between Iran and United States, along with the evolving regional dynamics surrounding them, represent one such complex chapter. In this scenario, Gulf politics, financial pressures, and shifting diplomatic priorities have intertwined to create an environment where even the alignment among "brotherly Muslim nations" appears increasingly uncertain. It is no longer hidden that the politics of the Middle East are not driven solely by ideological or religious affiliations. Instead, they are shaped by economic interests, security concerns, and layered relationships with global powers. Within this context, the escalation between Iran and the United States ceased to be a distant geopolitical dispute and transformed into a direct challenge for regional states, influencing both their domestic stability and foreign policy orientations. The situation of a key South Asian country serves as a telling example of this complexity. On one hand, it has been grappling with economic fragility, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, and mounting pressure from international financial institutions. On the other hand, it sought to position itself as a responsible regional actor by attempting mediation in the Iran-US conflict. While this initiative appeared constructive in principle, aimed at fostering peace and stability, it inadvertently

triggered a series of unexpected reactions. Amid these developments, a financially robust Gulf state widely recognized as a global business and tourism hub unexpectedly

demanding the repayment of its loan. This move exerted additional

pressure on the already strained economy of the South Asian country. However, this was not merely a financial transaction; it

carried implicit political and diplomatic signals. At the time of this demand, the country was already navigating economic challenges under an international bailout program, striving to stabilize its financial system. The repayment demand raised concerns about a potential depletion of foreign exchange reserves and cast doubt on the country's ability to sustain its diplomatic role. A nation under severe economic stress often finds it difficult to act as an effective mediator in major regional conflicts. Thus, financial vulnerability directly constrained its diplomatic maneuverability. Another critical dimension of this scenario lies in the rapidly evolving relationships and priorities within the Gulf region itself. While some Gulf states have been strengthening their ties with the United States, tensions with Iran have simultaneously heightened their security concerns. In such an environment, attempts by a third party to adopt a neutral or mediatory role are not always welcomed, particularly by those who perceive the conflict in binary terms, leaving little room for neutrality. Analysts suggest

that the conduct of the Gulf's "business hub" reflects a deliberate effort to assert clarity in its strategic positioning amid shifting alliances. From its perspective, neutrality or a middle-ground approach may conflict with its broader strategic interests, especially during

periods of heightened regional tension. Furthermore, the South Asian country's deepening relations with other Gulf states have also played a significant role in shaping this dynamic. In international politics, maintaining a balance among multiple alliances is a delicate endeavor. When a country engages with different blocs simultaneously, it often encounters challenges of trust and perception. Consequently, its cautious or relatively softer stance on certain

issues has been viewed with skepticism by some actors. The responses of Gulf countries to potential or ongoing US actions against Iran have not been uniform. While some have adopted firm positions, others have preferred a more cautious diplomatic approach. In such a fragmented environment, mediation efforts by a financially constrained country despite having balanced ties with various stakeholders become inherently complex and sensitive. This situation also raises a fundamental question: does the notion of "brotherly Muslim nations" still hold the same meaning in contemporary geopolitics? Or have these relationships become primarily driven by economic interests, security imperatives, and strategic calculations? The prevailing evidence suggests that, despite shared religious or cultural affinities, states prioritize their national interests above all else. Recent tensions in the Middle East have further underscored the reality that modern diplomacy extends far beyond statements of goodwill or symbolic gestures. It requires a strong economic foundation and a clear strategic vision.

While limited diplomatic engagement may be possible even under economic strain, such an approach is unlikely to remain sustainable in the long term. In conclusion, the Iran-United States conflict and the regional alignments surrounding it have introduced new dimensions to Gulf diplomacy. They have demonstrated that a country's position in global and regional affairs is ultimately determined by a combination of economic strength, diplomatic skill, and strategic foresight. Those nations that successfully maintain a balance among these elements will continue to play influential roles on the evolving global stage, while others may find themselves merely adapting to the currents shaped by more powerful actors.

# THE DESTINATION

Editor's Mail

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Mudasser Iqbal  
Chief Editor

Tahir Chudhary  
Resident Editor Lahore

## Opposition retains Sept 27 protest, long march plan

with the judicial directives. The joint parliamentary party decided to approach the Supreme Court on Saturday over the alleged contempt of court and retained its decision to hold a PTI-led protest on September 27. The opposition also agreed to invite all opposition parties to participate in the protest and long march. The declaration said the opposition would intensify its public outreach campaign across Punjab and other parts of the country and continue its joint struggle to protect the Constitution, democracy and rule of law.





**Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting Ms Hao Yuejiao, President of the China Africa & Asia Trade & Cooperation Promotion Association, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on 21 August 2026.**

## Trump warns of 'economic D-Day' against Iran days before six-month mark of war

- The immediate response from Iran hawks has been praise and a call for patience as it plays out, while other analysts warn that Trump is refusing to learn the lessons of his predecessors.

WEB DESK

NEW YORK

Nearing the six-month mark of the Iran war and facing diminishing stockpiles of key weapons, the Trump administration is touting a crushing financial campaign against Tehran, promising an “economic D-Day” against a country that has so far withstood nearly five decades of punishing American sanctions.

With sparse details, President Donald Trump announced this week that the U.S. would be imposing an “unprecedented” level of economic warfare and isolation on Iran, aiming to force its leadership to cave to demands to end its nuclear program and fully reopen the crucial Strait of Hormuz to oil and natural gas tankers.

It reflects the dire reality Trump faces with an increasingly unpopular war he can’t seem to end just months before pivotal



Trump is refusing to learn the lessons of his predecessors.

In an interview Thursday on CNBC, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent offered a small glimpse of what may be ahead, threatening secondary sanctions on nations and companies that conduct business with Iran.

He did not say exactly whom would be targeted as part of this next phase of the administration’s “ Operation Economic Fury,” which earlier had focused on entities and individuals that buy oil from or bank with Iran. China and India, however, are major buyers of Iranian oil.

“If you insist on doing business with them, then the U.S. Treasury and U.S. government will put its full might and force against you,” Bessent said. “It’s time for our allies and the rest of the world to make a decision.”

Some experts see ‘uncharted waters’ that could force Iran’s hand Despite decades of U.S. sanctions against Iran.

midterm elections that will decide whether his Republican Party keeps control of Congress. Whether out of desperation or strategy, the president is refocusing America’s might on bringing Iran to its knees through an accelerated sanctions campaign against one of the most economically penalized countries in the world.

The immediate response from Iran hawks has been praise and a call for patience as it plays out, while other analysts warn that

## Iran president says time to end war while in position of strength

- Tehran is keeping the key Strait of Hormuz partially shut and Washington is persisting with a naval counter-blockade of Iran.

WEB DESK

TEHRAN

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Friday it was time to end the months-long Middle East war with the United States because Tehran was in a position of strength over Washington.

Talks between the decades-old foes remain on hold, with both sides in the war started by the US and Israel in February locked in a stalemate.

Tehran is keeping the key Strait of Hormuz partially shut and Washington is persisting with a naval counter-blockade of Iran.

"It is better that we bring the war to an end now as we are in a position of power and dignity," Pezeshkian said in a meeting with doctors.

"The whole world acknowledges our victory and emphasises that America has attacked our schools, hospitals and infrastructure in violation of all regulations



and is hated around the world."

His comments came after Iran's foreign ministry accused the US of "economic terrorism" and "crimes against humanity" after Washington said it would ramp up sanctions to heap pressure on Tehran.

"The perpetrators and instigators of these sanctions are deserving of trial and punishment for committing such heinous crimes," it said in a statement carried by state media.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Thursday vowed Washington would "collapse" the Iranian regime with its

threatened campaign nearly six months since their war began.

The comments underscored how the Trump administration is shifting to economic rather than military pressure on Tehran as the US president's unpopular war drags on.

China also criticised Washington's economic plan, saying that US "sanctions and pressure" would not resolve the Middle East conflict. Washington had urged other governments including Beijing to join efforts to isolate the Iranian economy.

Asked about US President Donald Trump's threats, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told reporters on Friday that "sanctions and pressure will not help resolve the issue". "China calls on all relevant parties to take responsible measures and resolve the problem through political and diplomatic means," he said. Chinese President Xi Jinping is due to visit the White House on September 24 when the topic of Iran is sure to come up, as it did when Trump travelled to Beijing for a summit in May.

## Prince Harry and 6 others to learn initial cost of failed Daily Mail case

- In addition to an initial payment, which could be up to 10 million pounds, they will find out how they will pay the outstanding amount.

WEB DESK

LONDON

Prince Harry and six others, including Elton John, are set to find out Friday how many millions of pounds they will have to pay initially to the publisher of Britain’s Daily Mail newspaper following their failed invasion of privacy case.

Following their defeat in a High Court case in London last month alleging malpractice, such as the illegal hacking of phones, the high-profile figures will learn the scale of their exposure to the roughly 34 million pounds (\$46 million) in legal costs accumulated by Associated Newspapers Ltd. The losing claimants are believed to be insured for around half that total.

In addition to an initial payment, which could be up to 10 million pounds, they will find out how they will pay the outstanding amount.

The publisher had strongly denied the claims made during the 11-week trial in London, which ended on July 7 when Justice Matthew Nicklin said there had been a shortage of evidence to support the claims and found a possibility that the reporting came from legitimate sources.

Nicklin is due to give his decision on the financial implications of that decision in a written statement at 2 p.m.

Associated Newspapers has asked for



more than 9.9 million pounds as an interim payment, while lawyers for the claimants say the interim payment should be just over 7.9 million pounds. The other high-profile figures behind the case were Doreen Lawrence, the anti-racism activist whose son Stephen was stabbed to death in 1993 as he waited for a bus; Elton John’s film producer husband David Furnish; actors Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley; and politician Simon Hughes.

The judgment comes two days after it was made public that Harry and his wife, Meghan Markle, are moving back to the U.K. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who are no longer working royals, decamped to California more than six years ago but will relocate back later this month to live in a nonroyal residence outside London.

Harry’s defeat against Associated Newspapers brought an end to a trio of lawsuits accusing tabloid publishers of using unlawful tactics, such as phone hacking or hiring private detectives to dig up dirt on his life.



## Indonesia and China discuss increasing defense cooperation and energy security

- Indonesia’s economic ties with China have flourished in recent years, reaching about \$167 billion in 2025.

WEB DESK

JAKARTA, Indonesia

Top ministers for Indonesia and China discussed increasing defense cooperation and strengthening food and energy security between their countries at their meetings Friday in Jakarta.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono said they aimed to ensure a new bilateral dialogue delivered progress toward their priorities for strengthening cooperation: political, economic, security, maritime and people-to-people relations.

China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Indonesia and China also agreed to better coordinate on their major priorities of development and security, so as to provide strong safeguards for

the modernization of both countries.

“We will jointly oppose unilateral bullying and power politics. We must also remain vigilant against attempts in the region to challenge the outcomes of victory in World War II and turn back the wheel of history. We should safeguard international fairness and justice, as well as the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries,” Wang said in their joint statement.

Sugiono said they discussed strengthening food, energy and mineral security through the development of industries that support national resilience, which in the future will encompass areas such as artificial intelligence, the joint development of communications satellites and other advanced technology initiatives.

# At least 50 killed, mostly children, as overloaded boat capsizes in Nigeria

- Deadly boat accidents are relatively common in Nigeria, where overcrowding, poor maintenance and weak enforcement of safety regulations often contribute to disasters

WEB DESK

Nigeria

At least 50 people, mostly children, died after an overloaded boat capsized on in Nigeria's northwest Sokoto state, witnesses said.

The accident took place near Gorau in Goronyo local government area and rescue efforts are continuing, said Abdulkadir Yusuf, an area manager at the National Inland Waterways Authority.

A Reuters witness saw 50 bodies, many wrapped in mats and traditional cloths, lying in the forecourt of a community mosque ahead of their

burial in Gorau later on Thursday. Deadly boat accidents are relatively common in Nigeria, where overcrowding, poor maintenance and weak enforcement of safety regulations often contribute to disasters on the country's rivers and waterways, particularly during the rainy season.

One local resident said the boat had been carrying farm owners and labourers hired to harvest rice and that more than 70 people had been onboard when it capsized. Another resident said there were 57 people on board.

Yusuf said the bodies of around 40 children had been found.

Nasiru Adamu, a lawmaker at the

Sokoto state legislature from the area, said that those onboard were mostly aged between 10 and 15 years old, adding that 16 people had been rescued.

"We have buried 46 people, and even more dead bodies have just been brought. The death toll is 53," said Sharhabilu Kiliya, one eyewitness.

Mustapha Umar, director of relief and rehabilitation at the state's emergency management agency, said officials were heading to the scene and would provide further information later.

In January, at least 25 people died when a leaking boat capsized in Yobe state, northeast Nigeria.





# Anayah Shahid Wins Hearts With Bold Zanjeerain Performance

■ Sahar Hashmi praises Anayah Shahid's emotional turn as Shireen in Zanjeerain's latest episode

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD

Anayah Shahid Zanjeerain fans are buzzing after actress Sahar Hashmi openly praised her co-star's latest performance. Sahar took to Instagram Stories to share her excitement, calling Anayah a true "Star Girl" following a powerful episode of the hit drama. The clip Sahar shared showed Anayah's character, Shireen, facing the weight of her past choices. In an emotional scene, Shireen finally names Sohrab Khan as another person behind the



show's central conspiracy. Sahar didn't stop at praising Anayah alone. She also gave credit to Reza Ali Abid and content creator Saboor, saying their combined effort made the episode unforgettable. Her

caption read simply, "Boys, it's about time. So so so proud." Anayah's role as Shireen has grown stronger with every episode. Known for her bold nature and deep loyalty, the character has become a fan favourite. Viewers say her raw, emotional scenes bring

real depth to the story. In this latest episode, long-buried secrets finally came out. Betrayal, tension, and hidden truths unfolded quickly, giving Anayah room to show a more vulnerable,

intense side of Shireen. Both fans and fellow actors took notice. Social media reactions poured in soon after the episode aired. Many viewers praised the show's fast pace and its emotional weight. Sahar Hashmi's public appreciation added even more attention to Anayah's growing reputation in the industry. As Zanjeerain continues to unfold, all eyes remain on Shireen's next move. With secrets still surfacing, viewers expect even more twists ahead. For now, Anayah Shahid's performance stands out as one of the drama's strongest moments yet.



## One-second spray that stops bleeding from deep wounds

■ Varanasi is Babu's first collaboration with Rajamouli. The first look shows him as a fierce warrior covered in blood and riding a white bull with a trident in hand.

WEB DESK

LAHORE

Researchers in South Korea have unveiled a breakthrough medical spray that can stop severe bleeding in just one second. The innovation could change how doctors and emergency responders handle deep and uneven wounds in critical situations. Scientists at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) have developed a new medical powder known as AGCL Powder. It is a next-generation hemostatic agent, designed to stop bleeding almost instantly when applied directly to a wound.

Unlike traditional methods that may take time or require pressure, this spray works within seconds. Once it comes into contact with blood, it immediately begins to seal the injury.

How AGCL powder works When AGCL Powder is sprayed onto a wound, it reacts rapidly with calcium ions present in the blood. This chemical interaction triggers the powder to transform into a

strong hydrogel layer.

Within just one second, the hydrogel forms a solid physical barrier over the wound. This barrier effectively seals the injury, preventing further blood loss even in deep or uneven wounds.

Designed for safety and versatility

The spray is made from natural and biocompatible materials, making it safe for medical use. Researchers say it also has antibacterial properties, which adds an extra layer of protection against infection.

Because it can adapt to irregular wound surfaces, the spray is especially effective where traditional bandages or gauze may fail. Built for extreme conditions One of the most notable features of AGCL Powder is its durability. The product remains effective for up to two years, even when stored in extreme temperature or high-humidity environments.

This makes it particularly useful for battlefields, disaster zones, and emergency medical settings, where conditions are often unpredictable and resources limited.

# Sindh Minister Claims Mahira, Fahad Denied Sitara-e-Imtiaz

■ Mahira Khan, Fahad Mustafa Were Twice Nominated, Minister Claims

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI

Sindh Culture and Tourism Minister Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah has claimed that the federal government rejected nominations for leading Pakistani actors Mahira Khan and Fahad Mustafa for the prestigious Sitara-e-Imtiaz. Speaking at the opening of the eight-day Wes-Dhaari Sindh Theatre Festival 2026 in Karachi, Zulfiqar Shah said the Sindh Culture Department had nominated both actors for the national honour on two separate occasions.

According to the minister, the nominations were submitted by a committee comprising prominent personalities. He claimed,

however, that the federal government did not approve the recommendations, while the reasons for their rejection were not made public. The minister questioned why Mahira Khan and Fahad Mustafa, whom he described as two of Sindh's prominent entertainment figures, had not received federal recognition despite their contributions to Pakistan's film and television industries.

Sindh artists gaining international recognition Zulfiqar Shah also highlighted the growing international profile of artists from Sindh, saying performers from the province have established audiences not only across Pakistan but also in India and Gulf countries.



## Experts warn excessive hot drinks in winter can dry skin

■ Experts suggest moisturisation amid dry cold

HEALTH DESK

NAIROBI, Kenya

Dry skin is one of the most common complaints during the winter months, largely due to lower humidity levels.

According to details, the nutrition experts said that some popular hot drinks, widely consumed in winter, can contribute to skin itching and flaking.

During winter, consumption of tea and coffee tends to increase. This rise can often lead to dry skin because of their diuretic effect. Coffee and hot chocolate, in particular, rank among the worst contributors to skin dryness in cold weather.

Experts said that excessive intake of caffeine-containing drinks — more than five cups of tea or coffee a day — leads to skin dehydration. This effect appears more clearly in people who do not regularly consume caffeine. High intake during winter increases urine production, meaning the kidneys expel more fluids, which results in overall dehydration of the body.

These drinks do not only dry the skin. Over

time, they may also contribute to the appearance of wrinkles and skin sagging.

For this reason, the specialists have advised that drinking a glass of water for every cup of caffeinated beverages such as tea or coffee. Adequate water intake remains the most effective way to maintain healthy skin.

According to the UK National Health Service (NHS), adults should drink six to eight glasses of water daily. Water is a healthy, low-cost drink that quenches thirst and contains no calories or sugars that could harm dental health.

That said, tea and coffee are not necessarily harmful when consumed in moderation. The



part of a healthy, balanced diet.

Other winter skin-care measures have included the bathing with warm water rather than very hot water. Extremely hot showers can cause severe skin dryness. Lowering the water temperature and applying moisturiser after bathing helps protect the skin. Moisturising twice daily, in the morning and evening, is generally recommended.

## Aamina Sheikh shares views on beauty standards, cosmetic procedures

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD

Actress Aamina Sheikh has shared her candid views on beauty standards, cosmetic procedures, and self-acceptance during a recent appearance on a podcast. During the interview, Aamina addressed frequent remarks about her prominent forehead, visible veins, and frown lines. She revealed that she has never opted for cosmetic treatments to alter these features, explaining that they naturally become more noticeable when she expresses certain emotions.

The actress said she was pleasantly surprised when fans referred to her expressive forehead as her "signature feature," describing the feedback as reassuring and uplifting. Commenting on the growing trend of cosmetic enhancements in the entertainment industry, Aamina expressed doubts about its lasting appeal.

She said such procedures often feel unnatural and believes the trend will eventually fade. In her view, imperfections are essential in shaping individuality and personality and should be embraced rather than concealed.

## Sunita Ahuja Reportedly Withdraws Divorce Case Against Govinda



WEB DESK

MUMBAI

The ongoing marital dispute between Indian actor Govinda and his wife Sunita Ahuja appears to be moving toward a resolution, with reports claiming that Sunita has withdrawn the divorce petition she had filed against the actor.

Sunita was recently seen outside

Mumbai's Bandra Family Court with her son, Yashvardhan Ahuja, and their lawyer, prompting speculation about the purpose of her visit. When approached by paparazzi outside the court, Sunita, 59, chose not to discuss the matter and instead jokingly said they had come to celebrate a birthday.

"Birthday manane aaye hai," she said before leaving.

Govinda's manager Shashi Sinha later told HT City that Sunita had visited the court to withdraw the divorce petition she filed against Govinda on December 5, 2024.

According to reports, the petition was filed under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, and included allegations of adultery, cruelty and desertion.



Misbah Arshad has been crowned Miss Universe Pakistan, becoming the fourth Pakistani woman to represent the country at the prestigious international pageant.



# First Test: Archer, Robinson leave Pakistan struggling at 59-3 at lunch

- Pakistan still trail by 179 runs; England score 409 in first innings



Sports desk

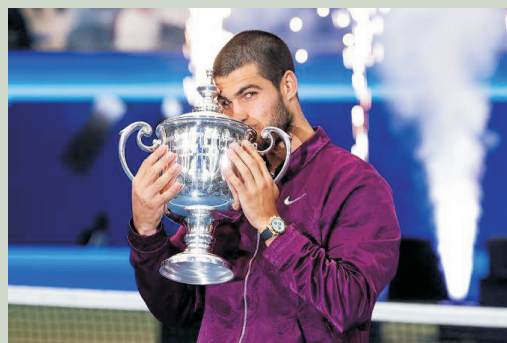
TEHRAN

England's Jofra Archer and Ollie

Robinson combined to claim three wickets as Pakistan struggled in the morning session of the third day of the opening Test at Headingley on Friday. Pakistan reached lunch at 59 for three,

remaining 179 runs behind England's first-innings total. Shan Masood was unbeaten on 28, while Saud Shakeel was not out on five. After England finished their first

innings at 409 all out and a 238-run advantage, Pakistan got off to a shaky start to their second innings as Archer dismissed experienced opener Imam-ul-Haq (zero) in the second over. Archer struck again in his next over, dismissing another opener Azan Awaiz (nine) as Pakistan slipped down to 13/2. Following the early setbacks, in-form Abdullah Shafique (15) joined Masood in the middle, and the duo mustered 38 runs for the third wicket until the former fell victim to Ollie Robinson in the 14th over. Pakistan dismissed England for 409 in their first innings on the third day of the opening Test at Headingley on Friday, but still trailed by 238 runs after being bowled out for 171 in their own first innings. England, who resumed the day on 364-8, added another 45 runs before being all out in 89.5 overs. Jamie Smith and Jofra Archer initially frustrated Pakistan with a 28-run partnership that took England beyond the 400-run mark and further extended their advantage. Khurram Shahzad eventually broke the stand, claiming his second wicket of the innings by dismissing Smith for 25 off 52 balls. The batter struck two boundaries during his stay at the crease. Archer continued to add valuable runs before Josh Tongue joined him. Tongue hit Abbas straight down the ground for a boundary as England moved past 400.



## Alcaraz to return for US Open title defence

WEB DESK

England

Carlos Alcaraz announced on Thursday that he will return at the US Open to defend his title after recovering from a wrist injury that has sidelined him for the past four months.

"I'm back," the seven-time Grand Slam champion said in a video posted on social media. "Here we go." The Spaniard has not played since withdrawing from the Barcelona Open in mid-April with a right wrist injury, missing both the French Open and Wimbledon.

Alcaraz became the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam in January with his triumph, at age 22, at the Australian Open.

He added the ATP hard court title in Doha in February.

But after withdrawing in Barcelona he pulled out of tournaments in Madrid and Rome before withdrawing from Roland Garros, where he was the two-time reigning champion.

He pulled the plug on the French Open a month before the tournament was to start and withdrew from Wimbledon almost six weeks before The Championships were to begin.



## Australia's Hussey mulls role with England for Ashes series

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Australian great Mike Hussey could face his own country in the Ashes after saying Friday he was open to joining England as their Test batting coach.

Hussey has had an informal approach from England's new red-ball coach Stephen Fleming, the duo having spent 15 years as team-mates and then coaches at Indian Premier League side Chennai Super Kings.

"We obviously get on really well and work a lot together," former Test stalwart Hussey told Fox Sports, where he is employed as a commentator.

"So it was just a bit of a passing comment, really saying, 'Look, what do you reckon? Would you think about being the batting coach?'"

Hussey, known as "Mr Cricket" for his technical expertise, has just returned home after coaching Welsh Fire in The Hundred and said he had not given it proper consideration yet.

# Challengers edge Stars in a thrilling one-wicket win

- Conquerors bagged their second consecutive as they registered a 58-run win over Strikers

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

The second round of the National Women's U19 Tournament saw Challengers pipping Stars by just one wicket in a thrilling contest at the Oval Academy Ground, while Conquerors handed Strikers a 58-run defeat at the National Bank of Pakistan Sports Complex on Friday.

On Saturday, the teams will rest with the third round of the tournament set to take place on Sunday with Invincibles taking on Strikers and Conquerors facing Stars.

At the Oval Academy Ground, Challengers were set a target of 96 by Stars, which they chased in 24.5 overs with one wicket in hand. Opening batters Pakeeza Shabbir (21, 31b, 3x4s) and Esha Tir Razia (10, 22b) gave their team a 34-run start before Stars took eight for 28 to enforce a collapse.

No.9 Maryam Ahmed (16 not out, 23b, 2x4s) and no.10 Farya Sadaqat (15, 14b, 2x4s) then stitched a match-winning 32-run stand between them. With just two needed for the win, Stars' pacer Barirah Saif bowled Farya but no. 11 Huba Nadeem made sure to remain not out in the



two balls she faced as Challengers got over the line.

Earlier, Challengers' skipper and player of the match Memoona Khalid's off-spin bowling bought them four wickets as Stars innings lasted for 27.3 overs. Qamrosh Farhan (26, 63b, 1x4) and Sawera

Ramzan (25, 22b, 2x4s, 1x6) top-scored for Stars with only Afsheen Imran (12, 32b) entering the double figures with them.

Memoona's took 20 in her five overs, while Maryam, Esha and Aleena Shah picked up a wicket each.

At the NBP Sports Complex,

Conquerors were invited to bat first and they posted a strong 155-5 run total in the allotted 30 overs. Amna Shahnawaz (30, 54b, 4x4s) and Malaika Suhani (28, 37b, 5x4s) gave their team a head start with a 55-run opening stand.

While Conquerors' no.3 and 4 Maryam Sajjad and Noor-e-Sahar both fell to Zainab Khanum early, it was the contributions from player of the Hadia Mina (22, 30b, 1x4), wicketkeeper-batter Nasreen Ashraf (21, 20b, 4x4s) and Narjis Bibi (13 not out, 8b, 2x4s) that led Conquerors past 150-run mark.

Zainab picked up three for 25, while Adieyah Noor and Maria had a wicket each to their name. In turn, Strikers lost their top five for single digits to slip to 25-6. Adieyah (28, 77b, 4x4s) and Samia Ashraf (20, 38b, 3x4s) then put on 62 runs but in vain as Stars were dismissed for 97 in 28.3 overs.

Hadia returned figures of 6-0-19-3, while Abeera Riazuddin and Areeqa Fatima picked up two wickets each. Round two - Scores in brief

## Lyon survives with Renshaw only change for 2d Bangladesh Test

- Bangladesh coach Simmons wary of Australia backlash in second Test



SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Veteran spinner Nathan Lyon avoided the axe on Friday with Australia opting for the same attack in the second Test against Bangladesh, while Matt Renshaw comes in at the top of the order.

A pace-friendly pitch is predicted at the Great Barrier Reef Arena in Mackay as the hosts look to bounce back from a nine-wicket upset in the first Test in Darwin last week.

Captain Pat Cummins initially told a news conference they were considering Scott Boland in an all-pace attack alongside himself, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood. But barely an hour later officials

confirmed Lyon was safe after another look at the wicket.

The 38-year-old Lyon, who took 1-125 in Darwin in his first match back after a hamstring injury last December, has not missed a home red-ball Test when fit since 2012.

Renshaw is the only change, coming in for his first Test since 2023 to replace opener Jake Weatherald, who was dropped after six underwhelming Tests.

"A really tough one for Wethers, I thought he was awesome around the group, really like the way he goes about it," Cummins said ahead of the clash starting on Saturday.

"But over the course of six Test matches (he) just didn't quite score the runs that he or we would've liked." Cummins said left-hander Renshaw, who will open with Travis Head, deserved his chance.

"He's been really impressive, some great off-season tours to Pakistan and Bangladesh with the white-ball, so he looks in good nick."

## Op-order batters must play aggressively, say Gul Feroza, Shawaal Zulfiqar

- Pakistan women cricketers Gul Feroza and Shawaal Zulfiqar say they are adapting to faster cricket, with aggressive top-order batting and fearless play key ahead of the Women's Asia Cup.

SPORTS DESK

LIVERPOOL

Pakistan women cricketers Gul Feroza and Shawaal Zulfiqar have said cricket has become faster and they are adapting accordingly, stressing that aggressive batting by the top order is essential and that the team has been encouraged to play fearless cricket.

The Pakistan women's cricket team's training camp for preparations for the Women's Asia Cup is underway in Lahore. Speaking during the camp, Gul Feroza and Shawaal Zulfiqar said they were playing more scenario-based matches, including games against male players.

They said scenario matches were more beneficial because players could not get a complete sense of field conditions while batting in the nets, whereas matches provided an understanding of every aspect of the game. They added that this was why they were focusing on playing more matches during the training camp. Gul Feroza said her



individual performance was improving, but the team needed to bring consistency to its overall performance. She said the team had failed to perform according to expectations at the T20 World Cup, which was disappointing. She added that important events were now approaching, including the Women's Asia Cup and the Asian Games, and the team's target was to

perform as well as possible in both competitions. Meanwhile, Shawaal Zulfiqar said making a comeback after an injury was not easy. She said she had been out of the team due to back-to-back injuries, but had worked very hard to perform well after returning. Shawaal said the period of injury was difficult and required players to remain mentally strong. She added that playing alongside male players was proving very

beneficial as it was giving the team experience of playing stronger and more competitive cricket.

Shawaal Zulfiqar also said the team's confidence was increasing under captain Fatima Sana. She said Fatima had recently played in The Hundred and was sharing her experience with the team, which was motivating other players as well.





A man purchases flags from a vendor along Prince Road ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi celebrations.

## Manki Road Accident: Dumper Crushes Rickshaw, Four Dead in Swabi

■ Dumper truck crushes speeding rickshaw, turning it into scrap near Swabi

Staff Reporter

Swabi

A devastating Manki Road accident has claimed four lives and left three people seriously injured in Swabi. The crash took place when a rickshaw, moving at high speed, collided head-on with an oncoming dumper truck. Rescue 1122 officials confirmed that the impact was extremely severe. The rickshaw was completely destroyed, turning into a pile of scrap metal within seconds.

As soon as the news spread, rescue teams and ambulances



rushed to the accident site. Workers carefully pulled out the bodies and injured passengers from the crushed vehicle. First aid was given on the spot before shifting victims further.

The injured were rushed to the nearest hospital in critical condition. Doctors are monitoring them closely as their condition remains serious. Meanwhile, the bodies of those who died

were sent to District Headquarters

Hospital Swabi for post-mortem examination.

Police reached the scene soon after the accident and began collecting evidence. Early findings point to over-speeding and careless driving as the main reasons behind the crash. Authorities have taken the dumper driver into custody, and questioning is currently underway to determine full details of the incident.

Local residents living near Manki Road have raised serious concerns about traffic safety.

## Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz arrives in Quetta for one-day visit

● Maryam Nawaz to meet attack victims' families, hold talks with leaders

SPECIAL REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A high-level defence delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, headed by Lieutenant General Banza Mwilambwe Jules, Chief of Defence of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. Upon arrival at GHQ, the visiting dignitary was presented a Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest,



regional security environment and avenues for enhanced bilateral defence and security cooperation were discussed. Both dignitaries expressed

satisfaction over the longstanding cordial relations between Pakistan and Democratic Republic of Congo. A Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) was signed which aims at broadening and strengthening defence and security cooperation between the two countries. Earlier, Lieutenant General Banza Mwilambwe Jules, also called on Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of the Air Staff. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism, operational capabilities and unwavering commitment of the Armed Forces of Pakistan towards maintaining peace and stability in the region and acknowledged the significant progress achieved through indigenization and self-reliance.



## Pakistan, Syria vow to expand defence and security engagements

■ Field Marshal Asim Munir holds meeting with Syrian FM: Both discuss regional security, defence cooperation

SPECIAL REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Pakistan and Syria reiterated the resolve to expand the bilateral engagements in the field of defence and security. According to an ISPR statement released on Friday, Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to discuss the regional security environment and enhanced bilateral defence cooperation. Shaibani arrived in Islamabad leading a high-level delegation on Wednesday evening to review bilateral ties and discuss regional developments amid tensions between the United States (US) and Iran in the Middle East. Shaibani's visit marked the first time in 19 years that a Syrian foreign minister visited Pakistan. He met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Field Marshal Asim Munir during his visit.

"During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security

environment and avenues for enhanced bilateral defence and security cooperation were discussed," the ISPR statement said.

Field Marshal Asim Munir highlighted Pakistan's longstanding fraternal ties with Syria and shared Islamabad's perspective on global peace and regional stability.

The Army Chief also underscored the importance of cooperation and collaborative efforts to address common security challenges. Shaibani appreciated the role played by Pakistan's armed forces in promoting regional peace and stability, the ISPR said and added "Both sides reiterated their resolve to further strengthen bilateral ties and expand engagements in the fields of defence and security."

Speaking to journalists in Islamabad on Thursday, Shaibani said Syria was also studying whether to join the new joint defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye but had not yet taken a decision. The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed by the three countries on Aug. 7, stipulates that an armed attack against one of its members would be considered.

## 21,951 Pakistanis Deported From Gulf Countries Since March

■ National Assembly told deportees included beggars, absconders and jailed workers

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

were sent back for several reasons. These included overstaying visas, begging, illegal entry, drug cases, refused asylum bids, and fake documents.

Among the total, 4,628 people were absconders who had fled their sponsors. Another 1,294 were deported after serving jail time abroad. Officials also blacklisted 968 individuals.

Lost passports led to 1,155 deportation cases. Visa rule violations accounted for 689 more. Gulf authorities also refused entry to 342 Pakistanis at their borders.

Saudi Arabia sent back the most people, close to 15,500 in total. The UAE followed with 3,803 deportations. Oman deported



1,606 Pakistanis, while Bahrain sent home 521. Qatar recorded 429 deportations, and Kuwait deported 97 people during the same period.

A separate group of 6,662 Pakistanis fell under an "Others" category. The ministry did not explain what specific offences this group covered.

Exploring Middle Eastern Cultural Goods Beggars made up a notable share of the numbers, with 472 Pakistani nationals deported for begging in Gulf states.

Nine Pakistanis were sent back from the UAE through Interpol channels. Other cases involved expired work permits, expired passports, theft charges, and travel from conflict zones.

Immigration rule violations and impersonation cases also featured in the deportation list, officials noted.

Saudi Arabia alone deported 3,921 absconders, the highest such figure among Gulf states. The UAE followed with 636 absconder cases.

For overstaying and illegal residence, Saudi Arabia deported 1,924 Pakistanis. The UAE recorded 347 such cases, while Oman deported 295 people for similar reasons.

## Hafizabad Kite Factory Raid: Police Seize 10,000 Kites

■ Four Suspects Arrested as Authorities Crack Down on Illegal Kite-Making Operations



WEB DESK

LAHORE

In a major Hafizabad kite factory raid, police recovered more than 10,000 ready-made kites from a facility operating within the limits of the city police station. The action came as part of an ongoing effort to curb kite-making activities across the district. Officials confirmed that a huge stock of kite-making equipment was also seized during the raid. This equipment was reportedly being used to produce kites on a large scale for illegal sale. Police arrested four suspects allegedly linked to the kite-making operation.

Legal proceedings have now been initiated against all those taken into custody.

The Hafizabad District Police Officer said a strict, zero-tolerance policy is being enforced against both kite-making and kite-flying activities in the region. He added that such measures are necessary to protect public safety.

The DPO further warned that strong and immediate action will be taken against anyone found endangering the lives of citizens through kite-related activities. He urged residents to report any suspicious kite-making operations to the police.

This latest raid reflects the administration's renewed focus on preventing kite-flying incidents, which have historically caused injuries and fatalities in Punjab. Authorities say more operations are expected in the coming days as part of the crackdown. Residents have largely welcomed the move, hoping it will help reduce risks associated with kite string injuries during the flying season.



A large number of people purchase cantaloupes displayed by vendors at the Fruit and Vegetable Market in the Federal Capital.