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Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz arrives in Thailand
BANGKOK: Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has arrived in Thailand as the first stop of her official foreign tour. Upon her arrival at Suvarnabhumi Airport in the Thai capital, Bangkok, CM Maryam Nawaz and her delegation were warmly received by Pakistan's Ambassador to Thailand, Rukhsana Afzal, along with senior officials. Top-ranking officials from the Thai government were also present at the airport to welcome the Chief Minister and the high-level delegation from Punjab. Meanwhile, Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday embarked on a five-day official visit to Japan.

Onic Celebrates Two Years of Redefining Pakistan's Digital Telecom Experience...Page 3



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with a delegation of Challenge Fashion Private Limited of China held.

Chehlum of Imam Hussain being observed with reverence

KARACHI\RAWALPINDI\ LAHORE: The Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the martyrs of Karbala is being observed with traditional reverence and respect in Lahore and across the country on Friday. Due to the Chehlum (Arbaeen) of Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S.) and the final day of the Urs of the Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hajveri (R.A.), strict security measures have been implemented. Punjab Police is on high alert for the mourning processions, majalis and Urs.

Inspector General Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has stated that strict arrangements have been ensured for

the sacred events. He urged people of all sects to promote religious harmony and tolerance. He assured comprehensive security for majalis, mourning processions, and Urs ceremonies.

Meanwhile, 644 majalis will be held and 392 mourning processions taken out to mark Chehlum of Karbala martyrs, for which more than 37,000 police officers and personnel have been deployed. Strict security measures have been adopted throughout the Punjab. KARACHI The main procession of Chehlum will be taken out at 1 pm from Nishtar Park. Police have sealed MA Jinnah Road and surrounding streets by placing containers for the

security of the procession. Shops in markets along the procession route have been closed after scanning by the bomb disposal unit.

Mobile phone service has been suspended in several areas of Karachi, and a ban has been imposed on pillion riding on motorcycles. More than 4,000 police personnel have been deployed for procession security. Section 144 has been enforced in the city, and a red alert has been issued across Sindh due to the security situation. QUETTA In the capital of Balochistan province, the main Chehlum procession will emerge from Imambargah Mominabad on Alamdar Road.

CJP faces criticism for bypassing majority decision to hear petitions challenging 26th Amendment

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi is facing criticism after Supreme Court (SC) committee minutes revealed that he ignored a majority decision last year to form a full court to hear petitions challenging the 26th Constitutional Amendment. The three-member committee, operating under the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act 2023 to form regular benches, was chaired by CJP Afridi in late October last year, with Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Munib Akhtar as members. The majority Justices Shah and Munib had ordered the petitions be fixed before a full court on November 4, 2024.

According to the minutes, CJP Afridi argued the committee lacked legal authority to direct the

formation of a full court. He also consulted all judges individually and nine of the 13 supported the formation of a constitutional bench to hear the case. Now that the CJP's justification for the non-formation of a full court is in public domain, lawyers are questioning his conduct by asking who will determine how many judges had opposed and what question was placed before each judge.

How could judges have been consulted on a matter which, according to the statute, was not within their jurisdiction? Why every week all 23 are not consulted?" asked a lawyer, on the condition of anonymity. Likewise, advocate Abdul Moiz Jaferii said he failed to understand why an informal poll of other judges was taken by the

CJP after the practice and procedure committee - as it then was - had made a majority decision.

I similarly fail to understand why such a determination, if it was needed after the committee decision, was not taken in a formal full court meeting. I also fail to understand why the CJP was willing to interpret the 26th Amendment in favour of the executive's influence, and reluctant to have the Amendment's constitutionality first tested by a full sitting of his peers," said advocate Jaferii. Meanwhile, advocate Asad Rahim Khan said that the job of the chief justice, before everything else, is to preserve the independence of the judiciary; not to accept its subordination by the executive.

PM Shehbaz reiterates resolve to strengthen Pak-China ties

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday inaugurated a special economic zone (SEZ) in Islamabad to be set up by a Chinese textile group projected to generate exports worth \$400 million for the country, the Associated Press of Pakistan reported. Pakistan has held strong bilateral relations with China, which has supported

it through many investments and development projects, such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which, currently in its second phase, has been termed a "lifeline" for the country's economy.

The phase II of the program is expected to focus on industrialisation, special economic zones, clean

energy, agriculture and livelihood projects. The project will be set up by the Chinese textile group Challenge Fashion Private Limited, which is set to invest \$100m over five years in the project. PM Shehbaz met with the company's delegation led by its chairman Huwang Weiguo, expressing Pakistan's willingness.

Torrential rains claim 146 lives in K-P, five die in rescue helicopter crash

ISLAMABAD: A catastrophic wave of torrential rains and a deadly cloudburst wreaked havoc across Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa on Friday, leaving at least 146 people dead and 15 injured, while a Pakistan Army helicopter carrying flood relief supplies tragically

crashed amid the chaos, killing all five personnel on board, officials confirmed.

According to a preliminary damage assessment released by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), a total of 146 people-comprising 126

men, eight women, and 12 children-have died in rain-related incidents across the province in the last 24 hours. At least 15 people have been injured, including 12 children. Rescue and relief efforts are underway in the affected regions.

PM Shehbaz continuously monitoring KP flood situation, says Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is fully aware of the ongoing flood situation and has directed urgent relief operations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). According to Tarar, the prime minister has instructed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider to maintain constant coordination with the KP government to expedite relief activities in the affected areas. He further revealed that a special cell has been established at the Prime Minister's Office, which is in 24-hour contact with the NDMA. "PM Shehbaz Sharif has personally visited the NDMA headquarters three times during the recent spell of rains and flooding to review rescue and relief efforts," said the information minister. Tarar emphasised that the government's primary focus remains on rescue and relief operations. Efforts are underway to safeguard human lives, he added.

LHC summons ECP over disqualification petitions

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday summoned the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) over petitions challenging the issuance of disqualification notifications following convictions. Justice Khalid Ishaq heard the petitions filed by Muhammad Ahmad Chattha and Muhammad Ahmad Khan Bachhar, represented by Advocate Shehzad Shaikat. Last month, Advocate Shaikat argued that the ECP issued the disqualification notification without hearing the respondents, whereas under Article 63-A of the Constitution, a decision on disqualification can only be made after hearing the candidate.



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Saturday, August 16, 2025

Reserves triple without new debt

Pakistan's economy has navigated one of the most turbulent times in recent history, marked by record inflation, depleted foreign exchange reserves and external account pressures. From inflation peaking at 38% in May 2023 to reserves falling to critically low levels at \$4.4 billion, the country faced severe macroeconomic instability. However, decisive monetary tightening, structural reforms and improved external inflows have shifted the trajectory towards stability.

Speaking at the Independence Day event, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmad said the economy is now on a path to sustainable growth, with inflation brought down to historic lows, reserves tripled without adding foreign debt and the current account posting a surplus for the first time in more than a decade. The SBP commemorated the Independence Day with a flag hoisting ceremony. In his keynote address, Governor Jameel Ahmad said that the SBP is striving to ensure monetary and financial stability for long-term prosperity of the nation.

He noted that in the recent past, "we have faced unprecedented economic challenges and we are now on a path towards economic stability and sustainable growth". The governor pointed out that inflation had reached 38% in May 2023 and in response, the SBP adopted a series of measures. These efforts paid off, with inflation dropping to 11.8% by May 2024 and to a historic low of

3.2% by June 2025. He remarked that the SBP responded to the improving inflation outlook by reducing its policy rate in seven gradual steps, from 22% to 11%, since June 2024. "Our monetary policy remains geared towards maintaining the hard-earned gains in price stability, while ensuring inflation remains within 5-7%," Ahmad said. "This will help unlock broader economic and business opportunities." Regarding external sector improvements, he shared that Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have nearly tripled, rising from \$4.4 billion at the end of FY23 to \$14.5 billion by the end of FY25.

The current account surplus of \$2.1 billion, the first in 14 years, and record-high remittances of \$38.3 billion from overseas Pakistanis have significantly contributed to this improvement. Ahmad stressed that the SBP has endeavoured to build foreign exchange reserves to improve economic resilience against external shocks, adding that the increase in reserves has been achieved without any rise in foreign debt. International credit rating agencies have upgraded Pakistan's rating in recognition of recent measures, which will help unlock foreign investment opportunities. Stressing the importance of technological innovation in financial inclusion, the governor highlighted the SBP's digital initiatives, including the spinning off Raast - Pakistan's instant payment system - into a separate subsidiary to enhance service offerings for the adoption of digital payments.

DR. SYED MEHBOOB
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ANALYST
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Diplomacy is a very difficult, challenging, and demanding task, needs special qualities, hard work, far-sightedness, and first-hand knowledge of countries where diplomats' duties are assigned. I have interviewed, met, and discussed with many diplomats for the last several years. I encountered some diplomats with extraordinary qualities, and His Excellency Engineer Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari, the Consul General Sultanate of Oman, is one of them. Brother Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari has a very attractive personality with a very special smile on his face, has warmth, sincerity, love, respect, and a hospitality which is a centuries-old treasure of Omani culture. His Excellency Engineer Sami Abdullah Al-Khanjari is one of the most popular Consul Generals in Karachi. He is highly liked and

admired by Pakistanis. A down-to-earth, soft-spoken, pleasant personality, having a beautiful smile with traditional and warm hospitality when meeting you, attracts your heart and mind in a way you will never forget him and would like to meet him again and again. He can fluently speak Urdu, English, and Arabic, and possesses excellent communication skills. He holds a bachelor's degree in Electronics and Electrical Engineering, alongside a qualification in Telecom Engineering from Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. He completed his Ph.D. from Indus University, Karachi.

Brother Sami Abdullah Al-Khanjari is always available whenever I request him for any meeting, discussion, or interview. He is always down to earth, and I never felt he was a foreigner, alien, or stranger, and always felt that he is similar to us, among us, there is no distance, no language barrier, as he speaks beautiful Urdu. You will see him always in Omani attire, with a traditional turban, and he always greets and welcomes you with respect and love. When you meet with him for even first time,

the walls of strangeness will fall and you will feel that you are sitting with your own family member. Not only me, but everyone is his fan. Whenever I discussed his personality with anyone, I always found positive sentiments and opinions about him, especially among business and media communities. Our Chief Editor and CEO, Mr. Jawed Malik, is also a fan and admirer of Engineer Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari and has high regard for him. On 13th August 2025, we visited the Omani consulate, and besides me and Mr. Jawed Malik, Brig (R) Syed Karar Shah was also with us. It was the first meeting of Mr. Karar Shah with His Excellency Eng. Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari. He was also impressed after meeting with him. Engineer Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari is a heart and minds conqueror.

Mr. Sami Abdullah is very keen to strengthen bilateral ties between Pakistan and Oman and is very active in this regard. He is very cooperative with business and media persons. He loves Pakistan, its culture, and its people. He always admires Pakistan, and when I took a delegation of Youth to the Omani

consulate he was very affectionate with them and advised them to never speak ill of their country. He said that Pakistani youth are highly talented and gifted, and if they are guided in the right way, they can turn Pakistan into a developed nation. He said Pakistan has great potential to develop and hoped that in the coming years it will emerge as a great and dignified one among the international community and will overcome its difficulties.

His Excellency Engineer Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari is the Consul General of Oman posted in Karachi since August 2022 and is a very active, vibrant, and highly patriotic person. This is his first posting as Head of Mission in Karachi. Earlier, he was serving in the Missionary as Head of Telecom Department in his country. As an engineer, he has demonstrated his skills in his country. He keeps the pain of humanity in his heart. When Pakistan witnessed severe floods, he felt deep sympathy for the affected people and ordered a ship loaded with relief goods for the flood victims from his country and handed it over to the government of

Pakistan to provide relief to flood victims. He also has a special passion for sports. He is often seen attending sporting events and encouraging athletes. He is highly respected and admired in all circles. He is a person dear to each and every one. His services to promote Pakistan and Oman relations are now part of history and will always be remembered.

I bow down my head to gratitude Almighty Allah to trillions of times to thank Him that He has bestowed me the courage, creativity and research ability that I dedicated all my skills, abilities for my beloved country and I feel immense pleasure that I am part of historical efforts to promoting Pakistan Oman friendship and also very much thankful to His excellency Engineer Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari who always encouraged me and was always available whenever I requested for any kind of information. Insha Allah, soon the golden jubilee of my articles is commencing as I am near to completing fifty articles on Oman. I request our readers, friends, well wishers to remember me in their prayers.



Karachi Municipal Commissioner Noor Hassan, who is hoisting the flag after the national anthem on the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, is cutting the Independence Day cake.



Karachi Municipal Commissioner Noor Hassan, who is participating in the main procession on the occasion of Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain, is also present on the occasion. Superintendent Engineer B&R Salman Rehman Memon, Superintendent Engineer M&A Mumtaz Ali Zardari and Director Parks Asim Ali Khan are also present.

Sindh Government Spokesperson Nadir Gabol Visits OICCI, Showcases Pro-Business Reforms and Development Initiatives



KARACHI: The Spokesperson for the Government of Sindh, Nadir Gabol, visited the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) in Karachi - the oldest trade representative body in Pakistan, established in 1860 and representing leading foreign companies that contribute nearly one-third



of Pakistan's total tax revenue. During his meeting with the OICCI leadership, Nadir Gabol outlined the Sindh Government's comprehensive strategy to foster trade, investment, and industrial growth in the province. He emphasized that Sindh is positioning itself as Pakistan's premier hub for commerce through a combination of infrastructure development, business reforms, and investor facilitation.

Among the flagship projects discussed were: SITE Phase 2 Industrial Zone - A new 2,000-acre industrial estate to attract domestic and international investors, backed by billions of rupees in infrastructure upgrades. Sindh Business One Stop Shop (SBOS) - A newly launched digital portal to automate and streamline company registration, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and promote transparency. Safe City Project - Advanced surveillance, command, and control systems to enhance law and order, ensuring a secure environment for businesses and citizens. Hub

River Canal (100 MGD) - Recently inaugurated to improve Karachi's water supply, directly benefiting industries and residential areas. Road and Port Connectivity Improvements - Ongoing upgrades to highways, industrial access roads, and links to Karachi Port and Port Qasim to facilitate smoother goods movement. Renewable Energy Expansion - Continued investment in wind and solar projects in Jhimpir, Thatta, and other districts to meet industrial and urban energy demands sustainably. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Initiatives - Successful execution of large-scale PPP projects in health, education, and infrastructure, setting a model for private sector collaboration.



On the occasion of August 14, Chairman Tariq Aziz Baloch, Vice Chairman Jam Muhammad Jokhio and departmental officers hoisted the flag at the Town Municipal Corporation Gadap office today. On this occasion, an independence cake was cut and special prayers were offered for the security, prosperity and development of the country. Photo: Muhammad Sajid



Municipal Commissioner New Karachi Town Aya Hamdullah Baloch, along with Town Vice Chairman Shoaib Bin Zaheer, are hoisting the flag at the town office on the occasion of Independence Day, while on the other hand, a group photo with students.

Tariq Traders Alliance Organizes Flag Hoisting Ceremony on Independence Day



The Tariq Traders Alliance organized a flag hoisting ceremony to celebrate the 78th Independence Day of

Pakistan. President Ilyas Memon, along with participants, hoisted the national flag and chanted slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad".

Flag Hoisting Ceremony The ceremony was attended by Chairman Nasir Mahmood, General Secretary Saleem Inter, and other central office bearers, as well as shopkeepers. Message from the President Ilyas Memon emphasized the importance of appreciating and valuing the country, highlighting the sacrifices made by the armed forces and the trading com-

munity.

"Pakistan is a blessing, and the trading community has always contributed to its safety and prosperity. We must appreciate the sacrifices made by our armed forces and value our freedom." The event highlighted the significance of independence and freedom, drawing parallels with the struggles faced by the Palestinian people. The president emphasized the importance of appreciating the sacrifices made by those who fought for Pakistan's independence.

Marka-e-Haq, organized by the Workers Welfare Fund in Islamabad



Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain has reiterated the pledge that the people of Pakistan will never compromise on country's sovereignty.

Addressing a seminar, in connection with Marka-e-Haq, organized by the Workers Welfare Fund in Islamabad today, he said the nation will continue its unconditional support to the armed forces in defence of the motherland.

The Minister said the historic event of Marka-e-Haq marks a fresh chapter in the long saga that began in 1947 and continues to be written today. It serves as a powerful reminder that Pakistan's survival and honour are not merely defined by borders, but by the continuity of a living ideology.

Chaudhry Salik Hussain recalled that a few months ago, Pakistan once again made history, when armed forces of the country, under the leader-

ship of Field Marshal Asim Munir, thwarted Indian aggression.

He said it was not just a military triumph but a victory of the very ideology upon which Pakistan was founded.

The Minister also commended the Workers Welfare Fund for providing quality education, better healthcare, and development opportunities to labour class.

On the occasion, Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Mohammad Awn Saqlain appreciated efforts of the Workers Welfare Fund for the betterment of the industrial workers.

Secretary WWF Zulfiqar Ahmad presented the welcome address.

Director General NUML Brigadier Shahzad Munir said the valiant armed forces are always ready to defend every inch and corner of the motherland. Students of the WWF sponsored educational institutions also presented patriotic songs and performances to mark the event. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain distributed prizes and shields among the students.

"Marka e Haq Jashn e Azadi Sepaktakraw Championship" Karachi Club won the boy's event and MirpurKhas Club Clinch girl's Title

KARACHI (SPORTS REPORTER)

Marka e Haq Jashn e Azadi Sepaktakraw Championship boys' event was won by Karachi Club while the girls' event won by MirpurKhas Club. Four teams of boys and girls participated in the championship organized by Hyderabad Sepaktakraw Association at Sindh Agriculture University Tando Jam. The chief guest of the closing ceremony, Anwar Hussain Khanzada, Director Sports, distributed trophies and certificates to the winning teams.

On this occasion, Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation Secretary General Noushad Ahmed Khan, Sindh Sepaktakraw Association Vice President Dr. Dilip Kumar, Secretary MirpurKhas Division's Akhtar Ali, Benazirabad's Aqeel Ahmed, Hyderabad Division's Secretary and Organizing Secretary Muhammad Khalid, Women's



Wing Member Humaira Rajput and others were present.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, the chief guest Anwar Hussain Khanzada said that I am very happy that the Hyderabad Association, in collaboration with the Sindh Sepaktakraw Association, organized the Marka e Haq Jashn e Azadi Sepaktakraw Championship in our university. He added that we will organize events with the Sindh Sepaktakraw Association in

the future as well and our full cooperation with you will be involved in promoting Sepaktakraw. Noushad Ahmed said that our vision is to organize as many Sepaktakraw events as possible in other cities of Sindh apart from Karachi. Finally, Dr. Dilip Kumar thanked all the guests, players, officials and especially Anwar Hussain Khanzada who assured all possible cooperation.



Opposition Leader K.M.C Saifuddin Advocate is inaugurating the park in Block 12 along with Chairman Gulberg Town Nusratullah.

CORPORATE NEWS

India's Economy Reels from Pakistan's Strategic Success, Saeed Ghani

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani has claimed that Pakistan's successful Operation "Banyan Al-Marsous" has dealt a severe blow to India's economy, leading to its diplomatic isolation and growing public dissatisfaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

"India is now facing global isolation, while the world stands with Pakistan," Ghani stated during an address at a luncheon hosted in his honor by the North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry (NKATI). "The Indian people themselves are turning against Modi, who has pushed their economy toward collapse," he added.

The luncheon was attended by NKATI President Faisal Moiz Khan, senior industrialists, and trade leaders, including Yunus Khamisani. Strong Army Essential Despite Differences, Says Ghani

Acknowledging his past disagreements with the military on certain political issues, Ghani underscored the critical role of the Pakistan Armed Forces in ensuring national security.

"I have had differences with some of the army's actions, but when it comes to the defense of the country, there is no alternative to our armed forces. A strong military is essential, and any political force that seeks to weaken it is aligning with the enemy's agenda," he warned.

The minister said India, once seen as a regional power, now appears weakened, while Pakistan is gaining international recognition and support. "It's time to safeguard our dignity and our nation from internal and external conspiracies," Ghani emphasized.

PPP's Continued Support for Industry. Highlighting the Pakistan

Peoples Party's pro-business stance, Ghani stated that the party has always worked to resolve the issues of the industrial and business community on a priority basis.

He noted that Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has allocated special development funds for industrial areas, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has directed full cooperation with industrialists to boost economic growth and industrial development.

Independence Day Becomes a Symbol of Victory Speaking at the event, NKATI President Faisal Moiz Khan said this year's 78th Independence Day has taken on historic importance due to Pakistan's recent military success.

"This Independence Day is significant not just as a celebration of freedom, but also as a symbol of our victory over India's aggression.

ABAD and NAVTTC Launch Free Technical Training Program for Youth on Independence Day

KARACHI: On the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, the Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan (ABAD) and the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) have jointly launched a technical training program for the country's youth. This program has been designed under the Prime Minister's Youth Initiative to equip young people with modern construction skills.

ABAD Chairman Muhammad Hassan Bakshi, in his special Independence Day message, congratulated all Pakistanis on the 78th anniversary of independence, saying that this day reminds us of the sacrifices made for freedom and the importance of unity. He expressed hope that Pakistan will continue to grow stronger, more stable, and more prosperous in the coming years.

Hassan Bakshi

announced that, as part of Independence Day celebrations, ABAD and NAVTTC are offering free technical training courses as a gift to young people. Under this program, 500 seats have been allocated for selected candidates who will be trained in building electrification, plumbing, Building Information Modeling (BIM), and other high-demand skills. All courses will be completely free, with expenses covered by ABAD and NAVTTC.

He further said that these courses will not only play a vital role in strengthening Pakistan's construction industry but will also create employment opportunities for Pakistani youth in the global market. Upon completion of the training, participants will receive certificates and job opportunities will be offered through ABAD members, enabling them to enter professional life immediately.



KARACHI: MQM Paksitan Leader Shakir Ali is cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the three-day solar energy exhibition. On this occasion, CEO Karim Charania, Board of Directors Nooruddin Charania, Senior Sales Manager Muhammad Talaq Warsi, CEOs of various EPC Companies Bilal Naeem Waqas Khaliq, Nadir Chandio, Mazhar Hussain, Asad Khan Rana Atif and others seen in picture held at Expo center Karachi.

Onic Celebrates Two Years of Redefining Pakistan's Digital Telecom Experience



KARACHI: Onic proudly marks its second anniversary, celebrating two years of transforming Pakistan's telecommunications landscape through a fully digital, end-to-end customer experience.

As the country's first fully digital telecom brand, Onic empowers users with complete control over their mobile journey, free from the limitations of traditional telecom. Built for digital natives, the brand champions freedom, flexibility, and transparency, fostering a loyal community that views Onic as a partner in their connected lifestyle.

Since launch, Onic has eliminated the need for physical interactions, enabling cus-

tomers to activate SIMs, manage accounts, recharge, and access support entirely through intuitive mobile and web platforms. This frictionless approach has set new standards for telecom convenience in Pakistan.

Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G, said: "Onic's rapid rise is a testament to our Group's vision to lead Pakistan's digital transformation. In just two years, Onic has redefined the mobile experience with unmatched convenience, transparency, and control, setting a new benchmark for the industry and inspiring the future of telecom in Pakistan."

Omer Bin Tariq, Country Head - Onic Pakistan, added:

"As we celebrate this milestone, I am humbled by how far we've come in redefining telecom for Pakistan. In just two years, we have built a best-in-class app experience, achieved complete digital payment adoption, and proudly served an entirely app-based user base. This is only the beginning, we will continue to push boundaries, set new benchmarks, and build a more connected, digital future for the country."

With a seamless digital ecosystem at its core, Onic remains committed to expanding innovation, enhancing accessibility, and supporting Pakistan's journey towards a fully connected and digitally empowered society.



NKATI President Faisal Moiz Khan presents a commemorative shield to Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani. Also present are KCCI Managing Committee Member Imran Moiz and other dignitaries.

Indian exports under threat due to US tariff hike, Pakistan should seize the opportunity, Zubair Tufail

KARACHI: Pakistan's 78th Independence Day has brought a message of economic growth and prosperity. The country's economic indicators are moving in a positive direction, and improving trade relations with the United States and China have raised hopes of economic recovery and development among the industrial and business community for the coming years. If the government addresses the concerns of the business sector, Pakistan's economy could soon become strong and stable. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif, along with their team, are making dedicated efforts toward this goal.



According to UBG's central spokesperson Gulzar Feroz, these views were expressed by United Business Group (UBG) President and former FPCCI President Zubair F. Tufail during a conversation with representatives of the business commu-

nity on Independence Day.

Zubair Tufail said that the government must promote locally manufactured products and services both in domestic and international markets. It should prioritize reducing local industrial production costs and facilitating ease of doing business for local and foreign companies. This would help boost investment and significantly increase Pakistan's total exports.

The UBG President highlighted that the recent increase in US tariffs poses a serious threat to India's \$87 billion exports to the United States. These exports constitute 18% of India's total exports and more than 2% of its GDP.

Zong Celebrates Pakistan's 78th Independence Day with Nationwide Campaign and Special Offers



ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading technology innovation company, marked the country's 78th Independence Day with vibrant celebrations in its offices across Pakistan, followed by the launch of its nationwide digital campaign "Pak Sar Zameen Shad Baad."

The anthem-inspired theme reflects the nation's collective pride, resilience, and hope, while also embracing the power of cross-cultural harmony as Pakistani and Chinese employees came together to honor shared values of unity and progress.

The day's celebrations commenced with flag-hoisting ceremonies honoring the nation, followed by cake-cutting events that brought employees together in a display of national pride and unity. Zong leadership across Pakistan addressed employees, emphasizing the company's role as a modern, people-first brand that not only connects millions of Pakistanis digitally but also fosters mutual respect and understanding across cultures.

Highlighting the importance of the day, Mannan Shabbir, Head of Human Resources, remarked: "Independence Day is a time to celebrate our nation's courage and the values that bind us. This year, with the nation still feeling the resonance of Marka-e-Haq, our celebrations take on deeper meaning; they honor the sacrifices that protect our freedom and remind us of

the unity that sustains Pakistan. At Zong, we believe being a responsible business means standing by our people and communities: we celebrate together, we support those in need, and we keep the country connected so every citizen can join the conversation about our future." As part of its Independence Day celebrations, Zong is also offering exciting discounts on monthly social bundles, complemented by the exclusive 14th August thematic digital campaign. Users can now enjoy 20 GB data, 500 Zong minutes and SMS, and 100 other network minutes for just Rs. 500, making it easier than ever to stay connected and join in the national spirit.

By blending national pride with cultural camaraderie, Zong continues to inspire people across Pakistan to stay connected, empowered, and proud of their identity.

Sino-Pak partnership brings barren land to life

KARACHI: The current season marks a triumph for Pakistan's agriculture as locally grown dragon fruit, cultivated on formerly unproductive coastal land in Karachi, arrives in markets across the country. The success comes after a four-year effort by Tiantian Farm, a Chinese agricultural company, in partnership with another Chinese farm and three Pakistani companies, to convert 48 hectares of severely saline-alkaline soil - just 3 km from the sea - into fertile farmland using China's advanced land remediation technology. "These lands were once considered useless for farming. Now, they are producing high-quality dragon fruit," said Shan Ailin, Head of Tiantian Farm.

The trial cultivation area currently covers 20

hectares and expansion is underway at a rate of 5 hectares every three to five months. During peak seasons, the farm employs around 50 local workers. "The community's excitement is palpable - this is more than just agriculture; it's a new opportunity for the region," he added.

The farm in Karachi now supplies major supermarkets, specialty import stores and distributes the fruit to other Pakistani cities through domestic airlines. Remarkably, dragon fruit has become a sought-after ingredient in beverages, particularly in bubble tea shops. "The market response has been tremendous," noted Shan Ailin. "The fruit's vibrant appearance and fresh taste have created entirely new business opportunities in Pakistan's beverage sector."

Businessmen pledge to expedite economic uplift

KARACHI: Industrialists have vowed to work with the government on fast-tracking economic development and achieving prosperity in the long term as the country's macroeconomic indicators are already showing positive trends. Celebrating Pakistan's Independence Day, they noted that diplomatic and trade ties with major countries were also improving while global think tanks were giving encouraging signals about the economic outlook.

In a statement, SITE Superhighway Association of Industry President Masood Pervaiz said that the industrial and business community was optimistic about economic recovery and growth in the coming years on the back of improving trade ties with the US and China. "On the Independence Day, we express our solidarity with the country's leadership and vow to

cooperate with the government on socio-economic development of the country," he remarked.

Pervaiz voiced hope that the government would address concerns of the industrialists and business community to improve business climate and investor confidence through favourable policies and a fear-free environment for doing business. Speaking on the occasion, Federal B Area Association of Trade and Industry President Sheikh Muhammad Tehseen extended support to the government, saying that businesspersons were ready to uplift Pakistan's image and contribute to economic prosperity.

He urged the government to work on reducing the cost of production and improving the ease of doing business for local and foreign companies to stimulate investment and enhance exports.



Chairman Dr. Syed Sajjad Hussain addressing the Independence Day ceremony at the Australian Concept Infertility Medical Center.

Independence Day teaches us unity and sacrifice for the nation: Dr. Sajjad Hussain

KARACHI (STAFF REPORTER) - A grand and dignified ceremony was held at the Australian Concept Infertility Medical Center to mark Pakistan's Independence Day, filled with expressions of national enthusiasm and patriotism.

The chief guest was renowned infertility specialist and Chairman & CEO of the Australian Concept Infertility Medical Center, Dr. Syed Sajjad

Hussain. In his address, he said: "Independence Day gives us the message of sacrifice, unity, and responsibility. This day should always be celebrated with passion and pride."

Also present on the occasion were Senior Director Syed Amir Sajjad, TV anchors Shehzadi Kanwal and Bina Khan, and the talented young creator from Rehan School, Mah Roz Technology Wali,

who developed the world's first Sindh calculator.

A green and white cake was cut, and special prayers were offered for Pakistan's progress and prosperity.

At the conclusion of the event, commemorative shields and gift hampers were distributed among the participants, who also expressed their love for the country by singing national songs.



Chairman Town Municipal Corporation Mango Pir Haji Nawaz Ali Brohi, Vice Chairman Rana Muhammad Arif cut the cake and hoisted the flag on the occasion of Independence Day and attended the school function as the special guest (Photo Muhammad Sajid)

CJ explains why he didn't form full court

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi has justified his action to not constitute a full court to hear petitions challenging the 26th Amendment in November last year. The dispute began on October 31 last year, when Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Munib Akhtar, being members of the committee, formally addressed a letter to CJP Afridi, urging him to hold a meeting under the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act 2023.

The two senior justices requested the meeting specifically to address the petitions contesting the 26th Amendment, which involves changes to judicial authority and tenure. With no response from the CJP, Justices Shah and Akhtar held an independent meeting in Justice Akhtar's chambers to determine the next steps. Following this private session, the two justices decided by majority vote to fix the petitions against 26th Amendment before a full court on November 4 last year. Despite their decision, no cause was issued.

As minutes of committee meeting has been issued on the SC website, CJP Afridi's note is also attached wherein he gave justification for not constituting the full court. The CJP said that the consti-

tutional mandate vesting jurisdiction to any bench in the Supreme Court to hear a petition under Article 184 of the Constitution is but very clear. The CJP had personally sought the opinion of all 13 judges of the Supreme Court, with nine favouring a constitutional bench over a full court for hearing challenges to the amendment.

The disclosure came as part of the CJP's detailed communication addressing the concerns of justices Shah and Akhtar regarding the bench composition for a key constitutional matter. The CJP stressed that the decision reflected the collective preference of the court's majority and that he had acted in good faith to preserve institutional harmony. Freshly disclosed minutes of judges' committee meetings covering the period from October 31, 2024, to May 29, 2025, provide a rare glimpse into the apex court's inner sanctum, laying bare a paper trail of legal hair-splitting, procedural manoeuvring and judicial diplomacy surrounding one of the most politically charged amendments in the country's recent memory. According to the disclosures, the chief justice informed Justices Mansoor Ali Shah and Munib Akhtar of the majority view. -News Agency

US-Pakistan counterterrorism talks will help formulate joint action plan: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday said that counterterrorism dialogue between Pakistan and the United States will help in formulating a joint action plan amid strengthening ties between the two countries. According to a statement by the interior ministry today, Naqvi met with US Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism Gregory LoGerfo. Both officials discussed bilateral relations and agreed to increase cooperation in various fields, including counterterrorism, border security and counter-narcotics. "The counterterrorism dialogue will help in formulating a joint action plan," the statement quoted Naqvi as saying during the meeting.

The minister hoped for "positive results of Pak-US cooperation in eliminating terrorism". Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker and the federal interior secretary were also present on the occasion, it added.

"There has been an extraordinary improvement in Pak-US relations after the coming to power of President Donald Trump," Naqvi said. He praised US President Donald Trump's efforts for world peace and stated, "The elements of transparency, mutual trust and cooperation are prominent in Pak-US relations." "This is a great opportunity to promote mutual relations in every field," he added. -News Agency

Pakistan takes stand for 'equitable access' to green finance for developing nations

ISLAMABAD: Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Minister Dr Musadik Malik called for equitable access to green financing and other resources for developing nations at a meeting in Geneva on Friday, state-run Associated Press of Pakistan reported. He chaired the meeting on the sidelines of the fifth session of the plastic pollution treaty negotiations taking place in Geneva.

Billed as the most important environmental deal since the 2015 Paris climate accord, the 10-day summit brought delegates from 185 countries to finalise a global treaty to control plastic pollution. "Pakistan led a regional dialogue with Bangladesh, Egypt, Tajikistan, Malaysia, and

Sudan for an interactive briefing," according to a statement posted by Malik's team on X.

"Minister Musadik called for a fair Global Plastics Treaty and equitable green financing, so support reaches nations most impacted by pollution and climate challenges," the statement added. At the meeting, the climate minister noted, "those responsible for the highest levels of plastic consumption are often the largest beneficiaries of green financing." However, he added that the world's poorest nations are often left to fend for themselves in the fight against climate change. "Developing nations carry the heaviest burden of their environmental and socio-economic impacts," APP quoted him as saying. In a bid to rally the region towards fair and equitable green financing at the global plastics talks, the minister called for the treaty to take into consideration and prioritise "countries most affected by climate change and plastic pollution". Malik was of the opinion that "without fair access to resources and technology, developing nations cannot meet the environmental goals set by the global community." "By pushing for a united regional stance, Pakistan aims to strengthen the negotiating position of developing countries and ensure that the treaty addresses both environmental and economic fairness." -News Agency



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi exchanging views with Gregory LoGerfo, US Coordinator for Counterterrorism during meeting held at Ministry of Interior.

Supreme Court unveils modernised 2025 rules

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday formally published the Supreme Court Rules, 2025, replacing the Supreme Court Rules, 1980 in what the court described as its commitment to modernization, digitalization, and to bring procedural clarity in the justice system in line with global governance of law.

Framed under Article 191 of the Constitution, the new rules replaced "outdated provisions" and brought court procedures in line with contemporary legal, constitutional, and technological developments. According to a press

release issued by the SC on Thursday, the rules came into immediate effect.

The new rules were framed by a committee formed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi. The committee comprised four SC judges: Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, Justice Naqem Akhtar Afghani, and Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi.

According to a press release issued by the apex court, the committee engaged with judges, the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA),

and other bar associations. The final draft was placed before the full court and approved after detailed deliberation. Following the promulgation of the new rules, the SCBA issued a statement, stating that the SC did not consult with bars with regard to increase in court fees.

It demanded that the SC withdraw its decision to increase the fees, noting that such increase in fees will not help in dispensation of justice. Later in the day, the SC issued a public notice inviting suggestion to improve the rules. -News Agency



KARACHI: Governor Sindh, Kamran Tessori talking to media persons during the Shiite mourning processions in connection of 40th day Chehlum-e-Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S), grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), at M.A Jinnah road.

K-P rocked by string of terror attacks on police

PESHAWAR: Terrorists carried out 13 overnight gun and grenade attacks on the police in several districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) in which at least six policemen embraced martyrdom, officials said on Thursday. Many of those attacks were repulsed when the police fought back, inflicting injuries on the attackers, while the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), in an intelligence-based operation (IBO), killed three terrorists in Peshawar.

The overnight attacks were against police stations, checkpoints and patrols across seven districts of the province, police officer Mohammad Ali Babakhel told Reuters. The attacks came as the nation celebrated its 78th Independence Day. The unprecedented wave of violence struck multiple

districts, including Peshawar, Upper Dir, Lower Dir, Shangla and Bannu, in what officials described as an attempt to challenge the writ of the state on the eve of Independence Day.

Theremilitantsusedrocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers in some of the attacks, Babakhel said, adding six officers were martyred and another nine injured. Provincial police chief Zulfiqar Hameed later said that the fatalities occurred in two incidents. "Out of 13, we inflicted losses on them, repulsed them and forced them to flee in nine, 10 incidents," Hameed, the Inspector General (IG) of the K-P police, told reporters after attending funerals of the policemen in the Upper Dir district. The most severe attack occurred in Upper Dir's Panah Kot area, where

three policemen embraced martyrdom after their mobile van was ambushed. Six others were injured in the incident. Neighbouring Lower Dir district witnessed two separate attacks on police checkpoints in Maidan, Lajbok and Shadas. Constable Sanauallah was martyred in Lajbok, while Constable Sultan Zareen was injured in Shadas, police said. In Bannu's Miryan and Mazanga areas, terrorists fired an RPG-7 at police checkpoints, but officers returned fire, forcing the assailants to flee without inflicting casualties, the police said. Similarly, in Shangla's remote Choga area, attackers targeted a police station around 1:30am, but night-vision equipment and swift alerting of reinforcements enabled the police to repel the assault. -MD

Gaps in anti-laundering efforts: IMF

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has observed that Pakistan is not effectively using data on the ultimate real owners of companies, creating hurdles in disrupting corruption-related laundering schemes and checking front companies from securing government contracts.

The global lender's draft report on the Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment revealed major flaws in the effective implementation of the country's beneficial ownership regime. The IMF found "little evidence of routine coordination" between the Securities and Exchange Commission of

Pakistan (SECP) and investigation agencies for exchanging and using beneficial ownership data in financial investigations.

However, Pakistani authorities disagreed with the IMF's findings, stating that agencies were using beneficial ownership data, except in the case of Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Persons (DNFBPs). Pakistan tightened its beneficial ownership rules about eight years ago as part of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) conditions. However, as in many other cases, implementation remains far below the desired goals. The IMF stated that effective

use of beneficial ownership information in financial investigations requires regular exchanges between the SECP, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), commercial banks, money service providers, and investigation agencies. The IMF's diagnostic mission recommended that Pakistan institutionalise a multi-agency working group to review beneficial ownership data in support of corruption investigations. The IMF noted that Pakistan's beneficial ownership framework is an important foundational tool, but weaknesses in registry implementation. -News Agency

10 perish as flood fury ravages AJK, G-B

MUZAFFARABAD/GILGIT: Torrential rains and flash floods have caused widespread destruction across Azad Kashmir, Kaghan Valley and Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), leaving at least 10 people dead including women and hundreds stranded. cloudburst in asuburbanareaofMuzaffarabad killed five members of the same family. In Neelum Valley, around 50 tourists, who got trapped in Ratti Gali Nullah, were rescued, but about 500 others remain stranded at the base camp, where several bridges have been swept away and roads blocked.

In G-B's Ghizer district, floods in Khalti swept away five people. The bodies of a

woman and a child were recovered, while the search for three others continues. Six houses were completely destroyed, while flash floods in Chitorkhand and Dain Nullah blocked the Ishkoman River, prompting the evacuation of residents from low-lying areas due to fears of a breach.

The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) reported that a woman was killed after being struck by a rock in Dana Daliyaar, UC Machhiara, while another woman died and one person was injured after being swept away in Pulandri Nullah. In Jhelum Valley, three shops and a watermill were destroyed by flooding in Nar Dajian

Nullah, while three people trapped during flooding in Chhattar Nullah, Poonch, were rescued. In Bagh district, around 400 tourists stranded after their vehicle was caught in floodwaters were rescued. Landslides have blocked the Muzaffarabad-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa link road at Lohar Gali and the Bani Hafiz-Hattian Bala road in Jhelum Valley. Access to Leepa Valley has been cut off at Dudupura, and the Hajira-Abbaspur road in Poonch has been blocked at Berri. Floods have also washed away two pedestrian bridges in Nullah Lawat, while heavy rain in Nathiagali led to three girls drowning in Gilyat Tajwal; two were rescued. -MD

Pakistan denounces 'Greater Israel' remarks

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has hit back hard at recent remarks from the Israeli government hinting at plans for a so-called "Greater Israel" and the forced eviction of Palestinians from Gaza, calling the statements "provocative, illegal, and utterly unacceptable." In a statement on Thursday, the Foreign Office said such comments laid bare Israel's true intentions to tighten its grip on occupied land and trample on international law, the UN Charter, and related resolutions.

"The world must throw out these outrageous and unlawful ambitions," the spokesperson stressed. "The international community should move fast and take practical steps to stop the

occupying power from further destabilizing the region and committing more atrocities against the Palestinian people," the statement added.

The spokesperson noted that Israel's stance shows complete disregard for global efforts to secure lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. Reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause, the Foreign Office said it stood firmly for the Palestinians' legitimate rights especially their right to self-determination and the creation of an independent, sovereign, and contiguous Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. -News Agency



BAJAUR: Rescue 1122 officials are busy in rescue operation after landslide and flash flood caused by heavy rains, at Jabbarai district Salarzai area.

Hell must be holding a special pit for SBCA officers: SHC

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Tuesday came down hard on the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) over its inaction against illegal construction in the metropolis, terming it "the most notorious institution of the government" and directing it to submit a compliance report by September 16. The bench said in its remarks that a special pit in hell might be waiting for corrupt SBCA officers who allow illegal structures, knowing well that the building could collapse and kill residents.

A two-member bench, headed by Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, was hearing a petition against unlawful construction in Ramzanabad, Garden West. The petitioner's counsel, Farjad Ali Khan, submitted that only ground-plus-one structures were allowed in the area but a ground-plus-four building had been raised, where commercial activities were also under way, in viola-

tion of zoning laws. Officials of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and SBCA appeared in court in compliance with earlier orders.

When asked what action had been taken since the building's construction in 2000, the SBCA director said the matter had only recently come to their knowledge and would now be acted upon as per the court's directives.

The bench expressed strong displeasure over the response. "You will not do your work? Why is there a need for a court order? If someone dies, let them die - if the court orders, you will work," Justice Kalhoro remarked. He further observed: "Your job is only to earn money from under the table. SBCA is the most notorious institution of the government."

There will be a special place in hell for SBCA officers," The court ordered the SBCA to take action against

the illegal construction and submit an implementation report at the next hearing. LPG outlets in residential area The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Tuesday disposed of a petition against the operation of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) outlets in the residential area of Delhi Colony after being informed that the shops had been closed.

The petition, filed by Advocate Irfan Aziz, stated that the presence of LPG shops in a densely-populated locality posed a serious risk of accidents, which could cause damage to residents in case of a mishap. During the hearing, the government's counsel submitted a report informing the court that two unsafe LPG shops had been sealed, while one had been issued a warning to comply with SOPs. The shopkeepers had subsequently shut down their businesses and submitted affidavits to that effect. -News Agency

Millions of gallons of rainwater go to waste

LAHORE: Apart from drenching rooftops, streets, and alleyways, rainfall serves the crucial purpose of nourishing the parched layers of earth beneath the ground. Unfortunately, however, in a large city like Lahore, millions of gallons of valuable rainwater are wasted every year, due to the absence of adequate storage facilities. Every day, Lahore extracts 70 to 80 million gallons of groundwater.

WASA operates 600 tubewells in the city, while thousands more are run by private entities. Even though WASA has launched an underground water storage tank project aimed at conserving rainwater and helping restore the underground water levels, experts believe the efforts are disproportionate given the

rate at which groundwater levels across the city are dropping. According to Dr Muhammad Yasin, a water resources expert at the Centre for Integrated Mountain Research at the University of Punjab, the underground water level in Lahore is dropping by one to one and a half meters each year.

"If we extract a bucket of water from the ground, we should also return a bucket. Our university has constructed recharge wells at various locations. Previously, rainwater would accumulate for hours in different fields, but now, thanks to these recharge wells, it percolates into the ground," said Dr Yasin, who seconded other experts' views that if stored water was routed through recharge wells, the under-

ground water table could improve. "A recharge well is a simple but effective technique that filters rainwater through layers of stone, charcoal, and sand before directing it back into the ground. If rainwater is managed properly, not only can urban flooding be controlled, but this water can become a source of life for the earth."

Rain harvesting is not just a technique, it is a way to revive the earth's breathing and save every drop for a water crisis tomorrow," noted Sohail Ali Naqvi, Director of Freshwater at WWF-Pakistan, which has so far built 35 recharge wells across various institutions and locations in Lahore, including the University of Punjab. -News Agency

Cancer patients denied affordable treatment

KARACHI: Unlike societal attitudes, illnesses rarely discriminate on the basis of wealth and status. However, the treatment to fight off those deadly conditions is only reserved for those with a decent bank balance. Across the port city, no dedicated cancer diagnosis or treatment facility is available at the government level for low-income patients suffering from the fatal condition.

With no registry of cancer patients, the few cancer facilities available are brimming with patients. The chemotherapy facility at the Civil Hospital and the radiation unit at the Jinnah Hospital often deny treatment to patients, forcing them to seek private care. Only two radiation units have been set up in

the city at the Jinnah Hospital and Kiran Hospital, which are operating under the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

On the other hand, radiation facilities are available in two to three private hospitals in Karachi where one session of radiation therapy costs Rs15,000 to Rs20,000. In Pakistan, more than 185,000 new cases of cancer and 125,000 deaths are reported each year, with breast cancer, oral cancer and lung cancer among the most common. Medical experts are of the opinion that cancer is becoming increasingly common among the local population however, adequate cancer treatment facilities are missing at the government level. -News Agency

High-level Ethiopian Delegation Arrives in Pakistan to Launch "Plant Fraternity" Initiative



A high-level delegation of government officials and climate experts from Ethiopia arrived in Karachi on Friday to launch the "Plant Fraternity" initiative in various cities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Upon their arrival at Jinnah International Airport, the delegation was warmly welcomed by H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to Pakistan, and H.E. Ibrahim Khalid Tawab, the Honorary Consul in Karachi, alongside officials from the Ethiopian Airlines and Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The delegation is scheduled to visit Islamabad and Lahore for a series of "Ethio-Pakistan Green Dialogues" and mass plantation drive.

Coordinated by the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, the visit aims to strengthen bilateral ties through environmental cooperation under Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed's Green Legacy Initiative.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker underscored the significance of the visit, calling it a clear manifestation of the growing bilateral relations between the two countries.

The arrival of this delegation sends a powerful message to the world that Pakistan is not alone in its fight against climate change, the Ambassador remarked.

From a Drawing Room to Driving Reform: How Raastah Is Rebuilding Public Access to Licensing in Karachi



Founded by Oxford-bound social entrepreneur Adil Rahoo, the self-sustaining mobile learner driving licensing network has already processed over 1,350 licenses per month in underserved neighborhoods.

In a city like Karachi where nearly 80% of drivers do not have a legal license to drive, a civic-tech project known as 'Raastah' has been revolutionary in bridging the state institutional failure through their licensing outreach programme, without relying on government funding or donors.

Adil Rahoo, the founder of the NGO SFR Foundation and Raastah is a 29-year-old who returned to Pakistan after leading the 20,000 students of Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland as the first international Student President. He's the grandson of the late Shaheed Fazil Rahoo, one of Sindh's most prominent political martyrs for his struggle for Pakistan's democracy.

Adil built the entire system of Raastah from scratch. Each Raastah vehicle is equipped with a laptop, inverter, battery, camera, internet and a trained operations officer. Each vehicle targets dense localities where the licensing service has been tradi-

tionally inaccessible to the locals, such as Pakistan Chowk, Railway Colony, Lyari, Delhi Colony, Orangi, and Saddar. By connecting directly to the Sindh Police's DLS system, Raastah in many cases surpasses the daily volume of the Sindh Police's mobile licensing fleet in Karachi.

The secret behind the model's success is the sophisticated technology used in the project. In just 6 nights, Adil taught himself Python and built an AI-powered autofilling software that slashed license processing times from 20 minutes to less than 1 minute. The OCR and Machine Learning tool reads NICs, extracts key data, and



populates the government's DLS form in mere seconds, and is now a key standard in all Raastah vehicle units.

All Raastah units use CCTV monitoring, remote desktop surveillance, daily log generation, cloud computing, and AI validation, all developed in-house. Every license issued is tracked, time-stamped, and verified to ensure no bribery, corruption or fraud occurs within any of the public service units.

While the mobile units focus on issuing official learner driving licenses, the project does not stop there. Each applicant is supported through a structured follow-up system, which includes SMS nudges, reminder calls, and personalised guidance to help them upgrade their learner licenses into full driving licenses through their local licensing centre.

"Raastah is more than just about issuing a learning license to drive on the road for a year", Adil Rahoo explained. "It is about building a bridge to legitimacy, and formalising the vast majority of individuals in the country's legal system, often for the very first time, and then supporting them at each stage of the processes. The post-licensing support process is coordinated through Raastah's cloud-based system, which generates contact tracking used by phone operators to follow up."

The initiative started from a free licensing facility near KPT Bridge, a drive Adil powered from his home. "We didn't charge a rupee at first. We just wanted to see if people would show up", he recalled. "Hundreds showed up, and we soon found ourselves to be severely under capacity". Through trial and error, it evolved

into a structured operation within several weeks. Currently, three vehicle units operate across Karachi, issuing over 1,350 licenses each month. With preparations for growing to five units in August, the project has already helped legalise over 27 million PKR in income for gig and transport workers, particularly rickshaw and motorcycle drivers. Each license issued represents not just a document, but a full livelihood made legal, often for those previously shut out of the system due to bribery.

Raastah is financially self-sustaining. With each unit generating over PKR 70,000 in monthly net profit and over PKR 200,000 in gross revenue, all proceeds are reinvested back into expansion, technological development, continuous quality improvement and operations.

Raastah operates in regular and close coordination with Sindh Police and other local authorities. The Cantonment Board Clifton (CBC), including its Vice-Chair, Mr Najeeb Wali, supports enabling access to local councilors and community leaders in regions such as Punjab Colony, Gizri, P&T Colony, embedding the vehicle units directly in communities needing the service the most.

Israel unveils new West Bank settlement plan



MAALE ADUMIM/TEL AVIV: Israeli far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced that work would start on a long-delayed settlement that would divide the West Bank and cut it off from East Jerusalem, a move his office said would "bury" the idea of a Palestinian state. The Palestinian government, allies and campaign groups condemned the scheme, calling it illegal and saying the fragmentation of territory would rip up peace plans for the region.

Standing at the site of the planned settlement in Maale Adumim on Thursday, Smotrich, a settler himself, said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump had agreed to the revival of the E1 development, though there was no immediate confirmation from either. "Whoever in the world

is trying to recognise a Palestinian state today will receive our answer on the ground. Not with documents nor with decisions or statements, but with facts. Facts of houses, facts of neighbourhoods," Smotrich said.

Asked about his remarks, a US State Department spokesperson said: "A stable West Bank keeps Israel secure and is in line with this administration's goal to achieve peace in the region," and referred reporters to Israel's government for further information. The spokesperson said Washington remained primarily focused on ending the war in Gaza. The United Nations urged Israel to reverse its decision to start work on the settlement.

"It would put an end to prospects of a two-state solution," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told

reporters. "Settlements go against international law ... (and) further entrench the occupation." Israel froze construction plans at Maale Adumim in 2012, and again after they were revived in 2020, amid objections from the U.S, European allies and other powers who considered the project a threat to any future peace deal with the Palestinians. Restarting the project could further isolate Israel, which has watched some of its Western allies condemn its military offensive in Gaza and announce they may recognise a Palestinian state. Palestinians fear the settlement building in the West Bank - which has sharply intensified - will rob them of any chance to build a state of their own in the area.

In a statement headlined "Burying the idea of a Palestinian state," Smotrich's spokesperson said the minister had approved the plan to build 3,401 houses for Israeli settlers between an existing settlement in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the Palestinian president's spokesperson, called on the United States to pressure Israel to stop settlement building. "The EU rejects any territorial change that is not part of a political agreement between involved parties."

University is committed to providing every possible facility to its students. Regional Director Aiou Mrs. Nasreen Mirza



Mrs. Nasreen Mirza, Regional Director of Rawalpindi Region, Allama Iqbal Open University, stated that the university is committed to providing every possible facility to its students. "We want no individual to remain illiterate." The deadline for admissions to Matric, Intermediate, Teacher Training Programs, and Diploma/Certificate courses has been extended until August 25 without any late fee charges. However, there is no extension for admissions in other programs. Students are encouraged to send in their admissions on time to pursue higher education.

She further informed that in the Autumn 2025 semester, the admission deadline for Matric, Intermediate, Teacher Training Programs, and

Diploma / Certificate courses has been extended until August 25 without late fees.

However, there has been no extension in admissions for the following fresh and ongoing programs: BS, BBA (Fresh), BS Face-to-Face (Fresh), MPhil, MS, PhD (Fresh). The deadline for these programs remains August 18.

Students can obtain course-related information through the university's official website, Phone calls or Visiting the Main Campus, Block No. 26, Regional Office, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

Mrs. Nasreen Mirza added: "I kindly request our dear students to submit their admissions without delay to avoid wasting their academic year."

Our aim is to ensure students continue their education smoothly and without any obstacles. That is why we regularly provide updates and information through various channels."

Afghan Taliban mark 4th year in power, buoyed by official recognition from Russia

Afghanistan's Taliban authorities marked the fourth anniversary of their takeover on Friday, buoyed by Russia's first official recognition of their government, a step they hope other countries will follow. Parades were planned in several cities, including in central Kabul, where helicopters were set to drop flowers and the white-and-black flags of the Taliban's "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" fluttered across the city to mark their capture of the capital on August 15, 2021.

Taliban members gathered on Thursday night at a square near the shuttered US embassy seat of their enemy during their 20-year insurgency waving flags and setting off fireworks, an AFP journalist said. The military parade held last year with much fanfare at the Bagram airbase, once the linchpin for US-led operations, was cancelled this year, without public explanation.

The Taliban government remains largely isolated on the global stage over restrictions imposed under their interpretation of Islamic law, targeting women in particular. The International Criminal Court



issued in July arrest warrants for two senior Taliban leaders, accusing them of crimes against humanity over the persecution of women and girls, who are banned from most education and work, as well as parks, gyms and travelling without a male guardian.

But the authorities scored a victory in early July when Russia became the first country to officially recognise their administration. Kabul also enjoys close ties, despite lacking official recognition, with countries including Central Asian states, China and the United Arab Emirates. On the Western front, the Taliban government reported talks in Kabul with officials from Norway, Britain and the United States, among others. The authorities face almost no internal

opposition, though steep challenges stem from economic fragility, international aid cuts and the influx of four million Afghans expelled from neighbouring countries. Independent experts appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council on Thursday called on the international community not to normalise relations with the Taliban authorities and to reject their "violent and authoritarian rule." "Operating without legitimacy, the Taliban enforces an institutionalised system of gender oppression, crushes dissent, exacts reprisals, and muzzles independent media while showing outright contempt for human rights, equality and non-discrimination," the experts said in a statement.

Trump says Putin ready to make deal on Ukraine



MOSCOW/LONDON/KYIV: US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he thought Vladimir Putin was ready to make a deal on ending his war in Ukraine after the Russian president floated the prospect of a nuclear arms agreement on the eve of their summit in Alaska. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his European allies have intensified their efforts this week to prevent any deal between the US and Russia emerging from Friday's summit that leaves Ukraine vulnerable to future attack.

"I think he's going to make a deal," Trump said in a Fox News radio interview, adding that if the meeting went well, he would call Zelenskyy and European leaders afterwards, and that if it went badly, he would not. The aim of Friday's talks with Putin is to set up a second meeting including Ukraine, Trump said, adding: "I don't know that we're going to get an immediate ceasefire."

"Local events calendar Putin earlier spoke to his most senior ministers and security officials as he prepared

him possible progress on nuclear arms control or something business-related.

"We hope Trump won't be fooled by the Russians; he understands all (these) dangerous things," the official said, adding that Russia's only goal was to avoid any new sanctions and have existing sanctions lifted. Trump said there would be a press conference after the talks, but that he did not know whether it would be joint. He also said there would be "a give and take" on boundaries and land.

UN urges pressure on Taliban over girls' education ban

PARIS: The United Nations urged countries on Thursday to maintain diplomatic pressure on the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan, saying their ban on girls' education has left millions shut out of classrooms since the group retook power four years ago.

"At a time when some are seeking to normalise relations with the Taliban, I urge the international community to remain more mobilised than ever for the full and unconditional restoration of Afghan women's right to education," said Audrey Azoulay, chief of the UN's cultural and educational agency Unesco. Around 2.2 million girls are barred from schooling beyond the primary level, according to Unesco.

"Afghanistan sadly stands out as the only country in the world where secondary and higher education is strictly prohibited for girls and women," Azoulay said. "An entire generation of Afghan women is being sacrificed," she said, calling on the international community to "maintain diplomatic pressure."

The Taliban, who promised a softer rule after retaking power in August 2021, have imposed sweeping restrictions on women, banning them from universities, public parks, gyms and beauty salons. Measures the UN has labelled "gender apartheid".

Russia not named in the statement is the only country to have recognised the Taliban government since it seized power in 2021 following the withdrawal of foreign troops.



Message His Excellency Mehrzaad Tabatabaei Charge d'Affaires, Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran



I extend my heartfelt and deepest felicitations to the people and leadership of the brotherly country, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on their glorious 78th Independence Day. Pakistan and Iran are brothers, neighbors, and friends, and their friendship is

historical and eternal. Iran gives great importance to its relations with Pakistan and is thankful for its support for us on our principled stand against the Zionist regime and our basic right to defend our homeland against any invasion and foreign interference. Iran wants and promotes peace, equality, dialogue, and an honorable solution for conflicts. Together with our brother country, Pakistan, we will continue our efforts to bring stability in the region. I pray to Almighty Allah for the progress, prosperity, and integrity of Pakistan.

PAKISTAN-IRAN FRIENDSHIP ZINDABAD

We Stand with the people of KPK in this time of natural disaster and is deeply saddened by loss of life and property there: Sharjeel Memon



KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon said he stands with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in this time of natural disaster and is deeply saddened by the loss of life and property there.

In a statement, he said that during this difficult time, the Pakistan Peoples Party stands with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is always ready to provide unconditional support. He added that they pray for the government and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to face this ordeal with courage and unity and to overcome it soon.

Sharjeel Inam Memon further stated that the Sindh government is always ready to help its brothers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and will provide all possible assistance if needed.

The Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that supporting each other in difficult times is the true identity of the Pakistani nation, and the PPP fully upholds this spirit.

An Interview with His Excellency Eng. Sami Abdullah Al-Khanjari, Consul General of the Sultanate of Oman



His Excellency Engineer Sami Abdullah Al-Khanjari is one of the most popular Consul Generals in Karachi. He is highly liked and admired by Pakistanis. A down-to-earth, soft-spoken, pleasant personality, having a beautiful smile with traditional and warm hospitality when meeting you, attracts your heart and mind in a way you will never forget him and would like to meet him again and again. He can fluently speak Urdu, English, and Arabic, and possesses excellent communication skills. He holds a bachelor's degree in Electronics and Electrical Engineering, alongside a qualification in Telecom Engineering from Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. He completed his Ph.D. from Indus University, Karachi. The News Lark Team, including Mr. Jawed Ahmed Mali, Chief Editor of the News Lark, Dr. Syed Mehboob, Senior Research Editor, Brig (R) Syed Karar Shah, regular columnist of the News Lark, visited the Omani Consulate on 13th August 2025. His Excellency Engr. Sami Abdullah Alkhanjari gave a warm welcome to the News Lark team and appreciated its role in promoting Pakistan-Omani friendship. Here is an excerpt of his interview taken on the occasion.

The News Lark (TNL): His Excellency, how do you see Pakistan-Oman relations - current and future prospects?

H.E. Engr Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari (H.E. SAAK):

Pakistan and Oman share longstanding, brotherly relations rooted in shared history, culture, and values. Our ties have grown stronger over the years through close cooperation in trade, diplomacy, security, and people-to-people exchanges. I see immense potential in expanding these relations further in areas such as education, technology, and renewable energy. The future of Oman-Pakistan relations is very promising, and both sides are committed to deeper collaboration for mutual prosperity.

The News Lark (TNL): The Pakistani diaspora is serving its Omani brethren. How do you describe their role in Oman's development?

H.E. SAAK: The Pakistani diaspora plays a vital and commendable role in Oman's progress. Their contributions across sectors - from healthcare and education to construction, business, and engineering - are deeply valued. They represent a bridge of friendship and goodwill between our two nations. Their dedication, professionalism, and respect for Omani culture have made them an integral part of our society.

The News Lark (TNL): Pakistani youth who are getting higher education and technical skills would like to serve Oman. What prospects do you see for Pakistani human resources in Oman?

welcomes skilled and educated youth

from Pakistan, particularly in fields such as IT, engi-

H.E. SAAK: Oman

neering, medicine, and technical services. We appreciate the talent, discipline, and commitment of Pakistani professionals. There are many opportunities for young Pakistanis to contribute positively to Oman's Vision 2040 initiatives, and we look forward to facilitating greater integration of qualified individuals into our workforce.

The News Lark (TNL): Your Excellency, you have been in Pakistan for many years. You are one of the most popular diplomats and are highly liked by the Pakistani people. How did you find Pakistan and its people?

H.E. SAAK: It has been a great honour and privilege to serve in Pakistan. The warmth, hospitality, and sincerity of the Pakistani people are truly remarkable. I have always felt at home here. Pakistan is a country rich in heritage, diversity, and resilience. The strong bonds between our peoples are a reflection of deep mutual respect and affection that continue to grow with time. ---

The News Lark (TNL): His Excellency, the News Lark is dedicated and committed to promoting Pakistan-Oman friendship, and it has published many research-based articles on Oman. How do you see its role in promoting both countries' relations?

H.E. SAAK: Media outlets like The News Lark play an instrumental role in strengthening bilateral relations. Their balanced, research-based coverage fosters better understanding and mutual respect between the people of Oman and Pakistan. We appreciate their continued efforts in highlighting positive developments and promoting cultural and diplomatic ties. Such platforms are essential in today's interconnected world.

The News Lark (TNL): His Excellency, on this auspicious occasion of the 78th Independence anniversary of Pakistan, would you like to give a message to the people of Pakistan to share your sentiments with them?

H. E. SAAK: On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - may Allah protect him - I extend heartfelt congratulations to the people and leadership of Pakistan on their 78th Independence Day. May Pakistan continue to prosper in peace, unity, and stability. The Sultanate of Oman values its deep-rooted friendship with Pakistan and looks forward to a future of shared success and brotherhood.

PAKISTAN ZINDABAD! OMAN-PAKISTAN FRIENDSHIP ZINDABAD!

