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Editor: Omer Rizwan

Talks Between Putin and Trump's Envoys Conclude in Moscow

- Meeting outcome: Closed-door Kremlin talks between Putin and Trump's envoys (Witkoff and Kushner) lasted about three hours; neither side issued a public statement afterward.
- Purpose: Envoys are carrying what Trump called "a proposal to end the war" to both Moscow and Kyiv; with a Kyiv meeting with Zelensky expected next.
- Attendees: Presidential aide Yuri Ushakov and RDIF chief Kirill Dmitriev also sat in on the opening, press-accessible portion of the meeting.
- Putin's opening remarks: Thanked Trump for continuing diplomatic efforts despite facing a "difficult situation," said all aspects of the conflict would be discussed.

MOSCOW (Agencies) - US President Donald Trump's envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, have left the Kremlin following talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, in the latest in a long running series of meetings aimed at ending the war in Ukraine. The closed-door meeting lasted about three hours, with neither side making any public statement in its immediate aftermath. The two envoys arrived in Moscow earlier on Saturday, met on landing by Russian presidential envoy Kirill Dmitriev, who posted "Welcome to Moscow Peacemakers" on social media as their motorcade left Vnukovo International Airport for the city. Ahead of the visit, Trump described the pair as "great negotiators" and said they were bringing with them a proposal to end the war, adding there "may be a good chance we will do it." Witkoff and Kushner are expected to travel on to Kyiv shortly to present the same proposal to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who said Saturday he was ready for a substantive conversation. Before the closed-door portion of the meeting began, journalists were briefly allowed into the room, which was also attended by presidential aide Yuri Ushakov and Kirill Dmitriev, chief executive of

the Russian Direct Investment Fund. In his opening remarks, Putin thanked his American counterpart for continuing to engage in the diplomatic effort to settle the conflict, saying Trump was facing a difficult situation but had not stopped his efforts to contribute to a resolution, and that the two sides would discuss all components and aspects of the settlement that day. The Kremlin struck a notably more cautious tone than Washington ahead of the meeting. Spokesman Dmitry Peskov, asked whether the American negotiators were bringing new ideas, pointed out that Trump himself had said a day earlier there was no talk of new proposals. A source close to the Kremlin said separately that Putin remained intent on securing further territorial gains, and that no agreement on the front line was likely until Russia completed its campaign to take the remainder of the Donetsk region. Bloomberg reported that the Kremlin does not expect a breakthrough from this round of talks. As a gesture tied to the visit, Putin ordered a three-day halt to strikes on Kyiv specifically, beginning at midnight Saturday, which Peskov said was connected to the preparation for and conduct of



the American delegation's contacts in the Ukrainian capital. The pause applies only to Kyiv rather than the rest of the country. Zelensky said Ukraine would similarly refrain from airstrikes against Russia for the period required for the talks and related logistics, and called on Moscow to provide a broader reciprocal pause in its own air campaign. The diplomatic effort unfolded against a

backdrop of continued Russian attacks elsewhere. A Russian drone strike hit the headquarters of Ukraine's SBU security service in central Kyiv on Friday, and Zelensky said missiles struck two airports near the capital, including Boryspil, once the country's main international gateway. He suggested the strikes on airport infrastructure were a reaction to discussions about the Amer-

ican delegation potentially arriving in Ukraine by aircraft, a mode of entry not used by foreign leaders since the war began, who have instead typically travelled by rail from Poland. Russia's defence ministry reported 53 Ukrainian drones intercepted in its airspace on Saturday, notably fewer than the average recorded in recent months, a lull that coincided with Moscow's City Day celebrations, which drew hundreds of thousands of people to open-air festivities across the Russian capital. Saturday's meeting extends a long-running, on-and-off diplomatic track between Washington and Moscow that has produced repeated rounds of talks without a final settlement. Witkoff has now met Putin numerous times over the past year, including sessions in April, August, November and December of 2025 and January of 2026, with Kushner joining several of the more recent rounds. Each has been followed by descriptions from Kremlin officials ranging from "constructive" and "useful" to claims of narrowing gaps on issues such as territorial control, yet a comprehensive agreement has continued to elude both sides amid Russia's hardline demands and Ukraine's insistence on security guarantees.

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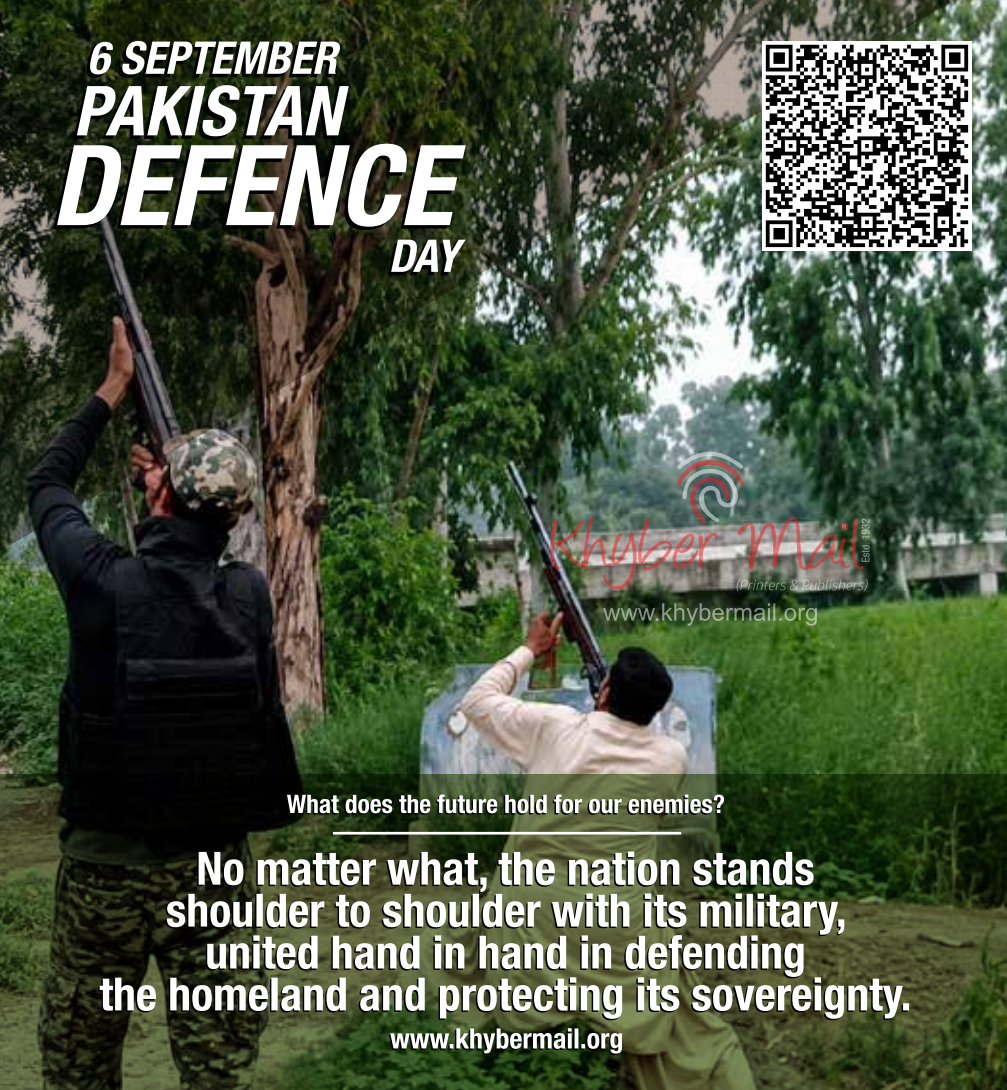
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6 SEPTEMBER
PAKISTAN
DEFENCE
DAY



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About Khyber Mail — Khyber Mail is an English-language newspaper that was first published in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1932 by the renowned journalist Sheikh Sana Ullah. From 1932 to 1989, it remained one of the leading English newspapers in the region, continued by his sons Sheikh Zaka Ullah, Sheikh Inayat Ullah, and Sheikh Saleem Ullah, who carried forward the family legacy of journalism. The publication was discontinued in 1989 due to various circumstances. Today, the legacy has been revived by Rizwan Inayat, the grandson of Sheikh Sana Ullah and son of Sheikh Inayat Ullah. In its renewed form, Khyber Mail blends its historic heritage with modern digital journalism, providing readers with timely global and local news, accessible anytime and anywhere, while keeping them updated with the fast pace of the contemporary world.

Khyber Mail Welcomes Xerox PrimeLink C9200 Digital Press to Its Printing Family

The machine is the first of its kind in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and only the third of its kind in Pakistan, placing Khyber Mail at the forefront of the province's commercial printing industry. Its advanced capabilities will further strengthen the organization's competitive edge while enabling it to offer end-to-end, vertically integrated printing solutions to customers, from digital production and customized printing to finishing and final delivery.

PESHAWAR: Khyber Mail Printers and Publishers has expanded its digital printing operations with the installation of a Xerox PrimeLink C9200 Digital Production Press, adding advanced colour production capabilities and greater flexibility to its commercial printing services. The investment represents another step in the long-standing evolution of Khyber Mail, an organization with roots in Peshawar's journalism and printing industry dating back to 1932. Managed by Rizwan Inayat, Khyber Mail has continued to adapt to changing technologies while maintaining its presence in the region's printing and publishing sector.

The addition of the new digital production press is aimed at meeting the increasing demand for high-quality colour printing, particularly for short and medium print runs where customers require professional output, quick turnaround and flexibility in quantities and media. According to Khyber Mail, the Xerox PrimeLink C9200 is the first machine of its kind to be installed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and among only a limited number of such presses operating in Pakistan.

The installation adds to the region's commercial printing infrastructure and provides local customers with access to advanced digital production technology.

The Xerox PrimeLink C9200 is designed for professional colour production and is capable of handling a broad range of commercial printing applications. Its capabilities include high-resolution colour output, flexible media handling and compatibility with a variety of production and finishing requirements.

The press can be used to produce a wide range of printed materials, including business cards, brochures, flyers, certificates, invitations, booklets, catalogues, reports, promotional materials, presentation documents and customized print products.



— Greater flexibility for customers

One of the key advantages of digital production printing is the ability to efficiently produce smaller quantities without requiring customers to commit to very large print runs. For businesses and organizations, this can be particularly useful when printing marketing materials, corporate stationery, event literature, certificates, product information and other documents whose quantities may change according to demand.

Customers can also have greater flexibility in selecting paper stocks, sizes, quantities and finishing requirements.

This allows printed materials to be produced according to the specific requirements of each project rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all production approach. The new press can also support customized and on-demand printing, allowing customers to produce only the quantity they require.

This can be beneficial for materials that are frequently updated, personalized or needed for specific events and campaigns.

— Faster turnaround for urgent requirements

The installation is also expected to improve turnaround times for digital printing orders. Shorter production cycles can be particularly important for customers requiring time-sensitive materials such as invitations, certificates, business documents, promotional literature, event materials and institutional publications. By expanding its in-house digital production capability, Khyber Mail can handle more stages of the printing process within its own operation. This can reduce the need to outsource individual production stages and help streamline the movement of a job from preparation and printing through finishing and delivery.

— Quality and consistency

The Xerox PrimeLink C9200 is also intended to provide professional colour output with consistent reproduction across print jobs. For commercial customers, colour consistency is important for corporate branding, promotional material, logos, photographs, graphics and other colour-sensitive applications.

The ability to reproduce jobs digitally also provides customers with greater convenience when repeat orders are required. Businesses and institutions that regularly require the same stationery, brochures, certificates, forms or promotional materials can place additional orders without having to maintain large inventories.

— Applications across different sectors

The expanded digital printing capability is expected to serve a broad range of customers, including businesses, educational institutions, government and private organizations, professional offices, event organizers and individual customers. For educational institutions, applications can include certificates, prospectuses, brochures, booklets, reports, examination-related materials and event publications.

Businesses can use the service for business cards, marketing brochures, flyers, catalogues, presentation materials, corporate documents and promotional campaigns. For individuals and event organizers, the technology can support invitations, customized cards, certificates, pro-

grammes and other personalized print requirements.

— Printing and finishing under one roof

The investment also supports Khyber Mail's objective of providing more comprehensive printing services from a single location. By combining digital production with printing, customization and finishing capabilities, the organization aims to offer customers an integrated workflow from order and production through finishing and final delivery. Such an approach can make the process more convenient for customers, particularly those handling larger or more complex projects that require multiple production stages.

— Combining experience with modern technology

The investment in the Xerox PrimeLink C9200 reflects Khyber Mail's strategy of combining its decades-long experience in printing and publishing with modern production technology. Since its establishment in 1932, the organization has witnessed major changes in the printing industry, from traditional printing processes to increasingly sophisticated digital production systems. The latest addition represents another stage in that technological transition, allowing Khyber Mail to expand beyond conventional printing requirements and respond to the growing demand for digitally produced, customized and on-demand print materials. The company said the new press will strengthen its ability to provide professional printing services with greater speed, flexibility and convenience while expanding the range of products available to customers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. With the installation of the Xerox PrimeLink C9200, Khyber Mail aims to further develop its position as a modern commercial printing service provider, offering customers a combination of established printing experience and contemporary digital production capabilities.

For details Contact: 0300-9195757

UoP Symposium Calls for Reoriented Pak-Afghan Relations

PESHAWAR, (Khyber Mail) — A symposium titled "Beyond Pakistan Afghanistan Conflict: Advancing Regional Peace and Mutual Understanding" was held at the Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar, with experts calling for greater understanding and policy efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. Organized by Advocacy for Sustainable Policy and Implementation Reforms (ASPIRE-KP) in collaboration with the Area Study Centre (Russia, China and Central Asia), University of Peshawar, the symposium brought together academics, former government officials, business representatives, journalists and humanitarian experts to discuss major challenges affecting Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. University of Peshawar Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr.

Johar Ali delivered the welcome address, while former Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chairman ASPIRE-KP Mohammad Shahzad Arbab gave the opening remarks. The programme also featured screening of the documentary "Grand Pak-Afghan Aman Jirga." The speakers examined the impact of border closures on the lives and livelihoods of communities in border areas, while discussions also focused on the collapse of transit and bilateral trade and its consequences for the business community. Shahid Hussain, Chairman of the Standing Committee on SCCI Pak-Afghan and Central Asia Bilateral Trade Promotion, discussed the impact of declining trade, while CEO Homex Paints Waqas Mughal presented perspectives from Punjab and Sindh. Security, terrorism

and instability along the Pak-Afghan border were also discussed. Ihsanullah Tipu Mehsud, Co-Founder and Director News of The Khorasan Diary, addressed the security dimension of bilateral relations. The humanitarian aspect of Afghan refugee repatriation was discussed by Imran Zeb Khan, Senior Advisor UNHCR for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Former federal minister for information and broadcasting Mushahid Hussain Syed spoke on reorienting Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and pathways to mutual understanding and regional peace, highlighting the need to look beyond conflict and explore avenues for a more stable regional relationship. The symposium also featured an open forum in which participants raised questions and discussed issues related to Paki-

stan-Afghanistan relations. The event concluded with remarks by Hifz-Ur-Rahman, former secretary of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and

member of the ASPIRE-KP Executive Board, followed by a vote of thanks by Dr. Salman Bangash, Director of the Area Study Centre.

Peshawar BRT to Get 50 New Electric Buses as Passenger Numbers Rise

PESHAWAR (Agencies) - The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to add 50 new electric buses to the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit system, citing the growing number of passengers and increasing pressure on the existing fleet. According to the Transport and Mass Transit Department, the project has been included in the Annual Development Programme at an estimated cost of Rs4.989 billion. The project is expected to be completed within 22 months following administrative approval. Under the plan, 50 battery-electric buses, each 12 metres long, will be purchased along with 15 chargers, Intelligent Transport System equipment and other necessary accessories. The new buses will operate on five new or extended BRT routes covering a combined distance of around 31 kilometres. The proposed routes include Mall of Hayatabad to Jamrud, Pishtakhara to Bara Bazaar via Bara Road, Gulbahar to Dabgari Gardens, and Shah Alam Bridge to Naguman,



along with an extension of the existing Kohat Adda route. All 50 electric buses have been earmarked for deployment across these five routes. The Transport Department estimates the electric buses will save approximately Rs198 million annually in fuel costs and a further Rs70 million in maintenance expenses, bringing total estimated annual savings to around Rs268 million. Officials expect the addition of

new electric buses to provide citizens with improved public transport facilities while helping reduce the number of private vehicles on Peshawar's roads. According to the project plan, the expanded BRT service could help remove around 80,000 private vehicles from the roads each day, while also easing pressure on the existing BRT fleet and improving transport facilities on the new and extended routes.

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6 SEPTEMBER
Pakistan Defence Day

The Battle of Chawinda — September 1965
The Battle of Chawinda was one of the largest armoured engagements of the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War. Indian forces advanced toward Chawinda in the Sialkot sector, where Pakistani army mounted a strong defence. **120 Indian tanks were lost** during the battle. After intense fighting, the Indian advance was halted, making Chawinda a significant defensive success for Pakistan.

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Defence Day: Remembering the Past, Building the Future

Every year on 6 September, Pakistan observes Defence Day to remember the sacrifices made during the 1965 war and to honour those who defended the country. More than six decades later, the day continues to hold significance. However, its meaning should extend beyond military victories and patriotic ceremonies. Defence Day should encourage Pakistanis to reflect on national unity, responsibility, peace, and the future of the country. The events of 1965 remain an important part of Pakistan's history. Soldiers faced difficult circumstances while defending the country, and many made the ultimate sacrifice. Remembering them is not simply an act of patriotism; it is also a reminder that national security comes with a heavy human cost. Their sacrifices should encourage citizens to value the peace and stability that they helped protect. Yet Defence Day should not be understood as a celebration of war. War brings death, destruction, displacement, and suffering on all sides. The greatest lesson that can be drawn from the history of conflict is therefore the importance of peace. A strong nation is not one that seeks conflict, but one that has the wisdom and capability to defend itself while working for peaceful solutions. The relevance of Defence Day today also goes beyond the armed forces. National defence is a collective responsibility. Pakistan's strength depends not only on its military but also on educated citizens, a stable economy, strong institutions, scientific progress, social harmony, and responsible leadership. Teachers, doctors, engineers, farmers, entrepreneurs, journalists, and students all contribute to the strength of the country in their own ways. For the younger generation, Defence Day should therefore be an opportunity to ask an important question: What can we do to make Pakistan stronger? Patriotism should not be limited to waving a flag or singing national songs. It should be demonstrated through honesty, hard work, respect for others, rejection of corruption, and a commitment to improving society. As Pakistan observes Defence Day, the country should remember its martyrs with dignity while looking toward the future with hope. The sacrifices of the past should inspire a commitment to building a peaceful, prosperous, educated, and united Pakistan. Defence Day is ultimately not only about remembering how a nation defended itself in the past. It is about asking how every citizen can help strengthen that nation today.

Pakistan Air Force Vs Indian Air Force — By Ibn-e-Taha Email: Khan_adnan040@yahoo.com

Pakistan Air Force is a national culture of values, human resource and ingenuity. Its' personnel are groomed to be the best amongst the international air forces. PAF pilots are trained to master the flying machines with SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of own as well as other air forces of the world. They are aware about parameters like rate of climb, manoeuvrability, radius of turn, rate of turn, ceiling, acceleration, drag produced, aerodynamics efficiency, thrust vs energy and speed limit of own and other aircraft. They also know unbeatable aircraft performance is dependent upon giving 100% with full commitment. Though IAF and PAF inherited pilots who were trained together, yet the will to fight was greater in PAF pilots even in 1947. On 4 Nov, 1948 one of the PAF air dropping Dakotas was challenged by Indian Tempests over Chilas valley. The Indian Tempests first asked the PAF Dakota to land at nearest Indian airfield, however captain of the flight Flying Officer Mukhtar Dogar refused. Indians opened fire wounding Naik Mohammad Din (Pak Army) and injuring under training navigator Flying Officer Alfred Jagjivan. Despite their shelling, Flg Off Dogar managed to land back in Pakistan and did not surrender to IAF pilots. On Eid-ul-Fiter of 10 April, 1959, PAF radar operator Pilot Officer Rab Nawaz, intercepted an Bharati intruder—a Canberra reconnaissance aircraft—over Gujar Khan. He asked Flt Lt Younus of No 15 squadron at Peshawar to scramble. On seeing the PAF F-86 in pursuit, Canberra tried to evade and run back but Flight Lieutenant Younus opened the account for PAF by having the first kill in air. Bharati pilot Sqn Ldr Sen JC Gupta and navigator Flt Lt SN Rampal of No 106 Sqn of IAF ejected and were taken a POW. Both were later repatriated to India by Govt of Pakistan. Well before the start of the war in 1965, PAF pilots knew the merits and de-merits of Indian aircraft inventory. Indian Gnat had an advantage being difficult to sight because of its small size, but it could not carry heavy loads. HF-24 Marut had teething problems, much like their Tejas has experienced in more recent times. The HF-24 was planned to be made ineffective against PAF attacking aircraft by several tactics. The Indian MiG-21 had a complicated delta-wing design that caused a high drag rise during turns. The Mystère was considered a capable fighter, and was to be neutralized owing to its' limitations. Su-7's heavily loaded wings resulted in poor manoeuvrability. The Vampire's poor thrust-to-weight ratio and low-speed performance were grave liabilities. On 24 June 1965, an Indian Ouragan fighter aircraft, while on an armed reconnaissance mission near Badin, was forced to land in Pakistan by PAF Indian pilot, Flight Lieutenant Rana L C Sidda, was taken prisoner but was later repatriated to India on 14 August 1965 as a goodwill gesture. On 1 September 1965, a formation of four Vampires from Pathankot Air Base, led by Squadron Leader Dahar, was tasked with attacking Pakistan Army positions in the Chamb area. However, it bombed their own troops. Indian Major General Sandhu recounts the incident in his book History of Indian Cavalry, by stating "They destroyed three AMX-13 tanks of India's own Lancers... the only recovery vehicles and only ammunition vehicle available.... Second formation attacked Indian infantry and gun positions, blowing up several ammunition vehicles." One Vampire was also hit by friendly fire. PAF, on the other hand, avoided attacking its own troops through careful assessment of the air situation and 100% confirmation of friend and foe, even when doing so placed the pilot at a considerable risk. On the same date, Squadron Leader Sarfraz Rafiqi and Flight Lieutenant Imtiaz Bhatti opened the PAF's shooting account by downing four Vampires. The effect was so significant that India withdrew all of its Vampires from the battlefield. At the same time, same day, Air Marshal Nur Khan, PAF Commander-in-Chief, despite the risk to his life, decided to obtain a first-hand assessment of the area while flying in a slow-moving Army L-19 aircraft. He observed that Pakistan Army troops, tanks, guns, and vehicles were dangerously exposed and presented tempting targets that the IAF would be unlikely to ignore for long. Indian senior commanders, on the other hand, were occupied with planning in their command rooms. On 3 September 1965, a formation of six Gnats attempted to penetrate Pakistani air space. On encountering the PAF fighters, the six Gnats panicked and broke off the engagement, retreating toward India. PAF pilot Squadron Leader Hakimullah, (who later became Chief of Air Staff, PAF), forced Indian pilot Squadron Leader Brijpal Singh to surrender and land at Pasrur airfield. Two days before the war, while flying a reconnaissance mission over Jammu, Flight Lieutenant M

M Alam's aircraft canopy was shattered by ground fire. Undaunted, the fearless Alam continued the mission and subsequently destroyed Indian heavy artillery in the Sialkot sector with his canopy open. On 7 September 1965, the IAF planned a mass raid on Sargodha Air Base involving twelve aircraft of No 1 Squadron, led by Wing Commander O P Taneja, and an eight-aircraft formation from No 8 Squadron, led by Squadron Leader Mickey Jattar. The twelve formation of No 1 Sqn proved a futile exercise and Eight-aircraft formation strafed Bhagtanwala, short of Sargodha, where the Indian aircraft expended their ammunition over the landing strip. The formation's principal achievement was its safe withdrawal from the area. The evading Mystères were chased by a PAF Star-fighter flown by Flight Lieutenant Amjad, who fired upon one of the escaping aircraft. In the ensuing high-speed engagement, he collided with the debris of the downed Mystère, damaging his own F-104 aircraft and forcing him to eject. The body of the Indian pilot, Squadron Leader Aijamada Bopayya Devayya, was found near the village of Nakka and was buried by local villagers. In April 1988, India declared Indian pilot Squadron Leader Devayya a war hero who had allegedly shot down the PAF F-104. He was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra by the Government of India for this feat. Same day, six Indian Mystères slipped through Pakistan's air defences and suddenly appeared over Sargodha Air Base. Had they pulled up to gain altitude and acquire their targets—which were plentiful—they could have inflicted extensive damage. From their attack pattern, however, it was apparent that their hearts and minds were not fully committed to the mission they had been assigned. Their objective was to reach Sargodha Air Base, which they succeeded in doing, but their weapons delivery was totally unprofessional. They sprayed bullets indiscriminately during a single high-speed pass. They missed the F-86s positioned on the Operational Readiness Platform (ORP), apparently due to sheer panic, and left Sargodha base unscathed. PAF pilots knew that the Indian Hunter was superior in the fighter role, but they believed it could be subdued through better tactics. Squadron Leader M M Alam had also flown the aircraft during one of his training courses in the UK. Knowing that he might face these Hunters in combat, he devised strategies during training sorties in the UK for shooting down a Hunter. He shared his plans with other pilots on how to overcome the superior Hunter. In later day on 7 September, he put his strategy into practice when he chased two different formations of Hunters and shot down five out of them within two minutes over Sargodha, an achievement widely described as a world record. Alam is also credited with nine confirmed aerial kills and two probable victories during the 1965 India-Pakistan War.



After suffering severe blows during the first two days, the IAF stopped conducting daytime raids against PAF airfields. IAF pilots became reluctant to engage PAF pilots in aerial combat, thereby leaving the battle area virtually under PAF control. The IAF subsequently resorted to night bombing and employed its Canberras for this task. For bombing missions, IAF had 80 Canberra bombers, compared to PAF's 17 Martin B-57 bombers. Indian bombers struck areas around airfields but often failed to hit the actual runways. At Sargodha, they dropped approximately 90 tons of ordnance, but only about 1,000 pounds landed within 100 feet of the runway intersection, causing no significant damage during their offensives. Lack of results was attributed to a lack of determination on the part of some IAF pilots, who appeared more intent on releasing their loads somewhere around the airfields than on striking critical targets. IAF pilots generally opted to release their payloads from higher altitudes, keeping clear of anti-aircraft fire. PAF pilots, on the other hand, preferred to release their bombs from lower altitudes, placing themselves at greater risk of being hit but achieving greater accuracy. Decades later, Indian accounts acknowledged losses of aircraft on the ground, with 13 reportedly credited to Pakistani B-57 raids. PAF's

Flt Lt Altaf Sheikh and his navigator Flt Lt Bashir Chodhry attacked Adampur airfield in India for bombing on 14/15 Sep, 1965. During the first attack the automatic bomb release system malfunctioned bombs were not released. Altaf switched over to manual release system and went into second attack facing flakes of Indian heavy ack ack fire. This time the four internal bombs got released and hit the target, but the four external bombs remained stuck. He and navigator again went through a hail of fire for the third time. Nothing happened and they both could still see bombs hanging with the wings. They both decided to jettison the bombs on the enemy's airfield in any case. Unfortunately during the fourth attempt the B-57 got hit, both ejected, landed in enemy's territory and were taken Prisoners of war. Putting in four attacks in a single mission is a testimony of PAF pilots who make the difference between victory and defeat. In another mission in September 1965, Squadron Leader M Akhtar Bokhari flew over India in a B-57 to test its night-interception capability. It was a daring mission, knowing that the aircraft would likely be detected by Indian radars and that India possessed fighter aircraft such as the Hunter and MiG-21. Nevertheless, he undertook the mission with the attitude, "Shoot if you can." He successfully completed the task and landed safely without being challenged. Another war hero Flt Lt Shamsuddin was a bomber pilot on B-57 aircraft. During the war days of 1965 he developed a kidney pain but did not let his officer commanding know about it, he instead volunteered for the bombing mission against Halwara accompanied by navigator Sqn Ldr Shaoib Alam Khan. During the bombing mission he developed an unbearable pain, preventing him to fly and land back. Flt Lt Shamsuddin persisted dropping the eight bombs over Halwara airfield. After the cease fire Flt Lt Shamsuddin was admitted to hospital where 28 stones were found in his lacerated kidney, which were removed. B-57 had a limited payload capacity of only eight bombs. In an ingenious adaptation, the PAF converted one of its C-130 transport aircraft for the bomber role, informally referred to as the B-130. On 12 September 1965, the PAF conducted its first bombing mission using the C-130, targeting a bridge at Kathua. During the daring mission, the PAF C-130 encountered an Indian fighter heading toward it but did not turn back. The Indian fighter failed to intercept the transport. After completing the bombing run, the C-130 was chased by another fighter aircraft, but the C-130 pilot, Wing Commander Zahid Butt, executed tight manoeuvres and successfully evaded the Indian fighter. The C-130 had not yet cleared the area when the anti-aircraft guns of Pathankot Air Base opened fire. The captain nevertheless managed to make a safe exit toward Pakistan. The following day, All India Radio reported that the PAF was using a four-engine bomber of Chinese origin—a mistaken identification apparently made by the IAF fighter crew. Later, while searching for PAF C-130s, Indian pilots reportedly shot down one of their own AN-12 aircraft. On the night of 13/14 September, an Indian Canberra penetrated the airspace over Peshawar and released its bombs near the runway, but on the bitumen shoulder rather than directly on the target. Had the Indian pilot released the approximately 4,000-pound bomb load more accurately, the PAF could potentially have suffered significant losses, including a substantial proportion of the F-86s of No. 19 Squadron and B-57 aircraft in the inventory. All India Radio, however, reportedly claimed the destruction of 40 PAF aircraft during the raid. Why the Indians did not launch more effective attacks against Pakistani airfields at the beginning of the 1965 war remains a question best known to the Indian High Command. They failed to strike the PAF at a point where it could have suffered its most damaging losses. In addition to fighter aircraft, PAF also employed its T-33, a slow-moving trainer; for reconnaissance and bombing missions against enemy. During one such mission, an unarmed, slow-moving, obsolescent, and vulnerable T-33 identified Indian Hunters over Halwara. Despite the Pakistani aircraft's vulnerability, the Indian pilots reportedly did not engage it. On 9 September 1965, Flight Lieutenant Aftab Alam Khan viisted Halwara Airfield three times during daylight hours for a photographic reconnaissance mission, but he was not challenged by any Indian aircraft. The rear seat of the aircraft was occupied by Squadron Leader Middlecoat, who held a camera in his hands to take photographs. This innovative reconnaissance technique proved highly successful for the PAF in identifying terrain features and determining the positions of enemy aircraft at the Indian airbase. Flight Lieutenant Aftab Alam Khan also refused any war decorations. Accord-

ing to him, he had simply been trained to perform this job.



Flt Lt Aftab Alam Khan and Sqn Ldr Middlecoat busy on a photographic reconnaissance mission over Halwara.

In the Eastern Wing, India launched aerial attacks on 7 September 1965, targeting airfields at Chittagong, Jessore, Lalmonirhat, Shibganj, Thakurgaon, and Kurmitola, as well as the Pakistan Army headquarters at Rangpur. However, they failed to locate the PAF's Dhaka airfield, from where F-86s were operating. The PAF struck Kalai-kunda Air Base the same day at 0630 hours under the command of Squadron Leader Shabbir H. Syed, the Officer Commanding No. 14 Squadron. The other four pilots were Flight Lieutenant Tariq Habib, Flight Lieutenant Baseer Khan, Flight Lieutenant Abdul Haleem, and Flying Officer Afzal Khan. The strike claimed the destruction of 10 aircraft and damage to several other aircraft and installations. Not content with the results of the first strike, the squadron commander decided to conduct another attack at 1030 hours under the command of Flight Lieutenant Tariq Habib. The formation encountered Indian aircraft in the air but reportedly managed to shoot down four to six Canberras. The day was considered a major success for the PAF, with claims of 14-16 Indian aircraft destroyed and another 6-8 damaged. No. 14 Squadron earned the nickname "Tail Choppers" because of its claimed success in striking and destroying IAF aircraft in the Eastern Wing. PAF bomber squad again proved equal to the task in the war of 1971. On 3 Dec, 1971, Flt Lt Abdul Basit along-with a team of another three B-57 bombers were detailed to drop 8000 lbs bombs over Jammu airfield which was heavily defended. The four ship formation approached the Jammu runway and dropped the load of 8000 lbs each. On turning back, he was informed by the navigator that two of the bombs have failed to be released from his aircraft. Other formation members have successfully delivered the payload. Basit pulled up orbited over the target and had another attempt by dodging the enemys' ack ack guns. He ensured dropping of the hung bombs in another attack and then successfully exited safe. On 5 Dec, 1971, Flt Lt Israr Ahmed was tasked to attack Indian army troops in the Chamb area with his slow moving aircraft T-6G trainer aircraft having slow speed of 145 miles per hour. He carried out the dangerous mission with full zeal even he was fired upon by the Indian ground fire hitting his right arm. On landing back, it was revealed his right arm bone got shattered badly but he persisted along with the mission and landed back safe. On 4 December 1971, a pair of Hunters attacked Mianwali (MM Alam) Air Base. Flight Lieutenant Ehsan and Flight Lieutenant Qazi Javed intercepted the intruders, and Qazi shot down one Hunter. The Indian pilot, Flying Officer Vidyadhar Chati, ejected and was taken prisoner of war. During interrogation, he revealed that the aircraft belonged to No. 27 Squadron of the IAF, which had been declared the "Top Guns" of the IAF's Western Air Command during a gunnery meet held before the war. On 7 December 1971, PAF radar controller Squadron Leader Farooq Haider noticed an Indian Gnat approaching Tam Taran, near Amritsar. Fortunately, Farooq Haider managed to establish radio contact with the Indian pilot and suddenly developed a unique idea. He warned the Indian pilot about PAF aircraft operating in the vicinity and asked him to continue listening without acknowledging the transmission. Squadron Leader Farooq Haider then continued calling the Indian Gnat pilot with simulated guilds about approaching PAF interceptors. He eventually transmitted a panic call of "Break," instructing the pilot to take immediate evasive action. The Indian pilot, Flight Lieutenant Mohan, reacted as a fighter pilot normally would, pulling into a very tight turn in an attempt to shake off his supposed pursuers. The aircraft subsequently crashed. On 8th Dec, 1971, Sqn Ldr Ifthikhar Naqvi and his navigator Flt Lt M Irfan carried out bombing over Sirsa airfield. The base remained unusable for two days as confirmed by an Indian pilot shot and taken POW. According to him, Officer Commanding Flying Wing Sirsa base, took them to the damaged runway and remarked "This is how an attack should be". During one of the nights of the 1971 war, a C-130 was flying back from the Chor area to Chaklala (Nur Khan) Air Base. The PAF Command and Operations Centre (COF)

detected an enemy MiG-21 night fighter moving toward the C-130. Immediate calls were transmitted to the C-130 crew instructing them to take evasive action, but contact could not be established. Strangely enough, the MiG-21 kept groping in the darkness, manoeuvring up and down behind the C-130 and attempting to obtain a radar lock, but it could not do so. Eventually, losing hope, the MiG-21 broke away. During the later stages of the 1971 war, two PAF Mirages were engaged in a photographic reconnaissance mission when two Indian MiG-21s suddenly appeared from Pathankot Air Base. The No. 2 Indian pilot fired at one of the PAF Mirages and exclaimed, "Splash," indicating that he believed he had shot down a PAF Mirage. He continued transmitting, "I saw him exploding... Leader, Leader, this is No. 2... Come on, Lead," but received no response. After landing, he discovered that he had mistakenly shot down his own formation leader (No. 1) rather than the PAF Mirage. The PAF knew that its F-86s were subsonic aircraft operating against India's supersonic Su-7s and MiG-21s. Nevertheless, PAF pilots were prepared to counter this technological disparity through appropriate tactics. On 11 December 1971, Wing Commander Ali Imam Bukhari, Officer Commanding No. 18 Squadron, while leading a formation of three F-86s, conducted a strafing attack against a cluster of vehicles near Nainakot. On their return, the formation encountered a group of supersonic Indian Su-7s. Wing Commander Bukhari kept his composure and shot down one Su-7, flown by Flight Lieutenant K. K. Mohan of No. 26 Squadron, based at Ambala. Again, on 17 December 1971, PAF pilot Flight Lieutenant Maqsood Amir shot down a MiG-21 over Pasrur while flying a subsonic F-86. The Indian pilot, Flight Lieutenant Tejwant Singh, was taken prisoner of war. The PAF was also able to mount Combat Air Patrols (CAPs) over the battlefronts to prevent the IAF from providing meaningful support to the Indian Army in both the wars of 1965 and 1971. PAF pilots not only shot down IAF aircraft providing close air support to Indian army bur also destroyed Indian advancing tanks, guns, mortars, vehicles and troops over the borders. The 1971 war resulted in a ceasefire on 16 December 1971. Nevertheless, on 17 December, the IAF attacked the unmanned airfield at Skardu. A Canberra and an An-12 attacked the runway, but the raid caused no significant loss to the PAF. During both the wars, PAF pilots saw the Indian troops jumping out of their tanks and vehicles on seeing PAF aircraft in air. PAF airmen on the other hand came out of their trenches and shelters to fire at the Indian planes. On 7 Sep, 1965, Corporal Technician Sher Muhammad opened fire on six intruding Indian Mysteres aircraft attacking with their lethal canons and rockets fire. The approaching Mystere got a direct hit from his rifle fire and crashed nearby. On 8 Dec, 1971, Leading Aircraftsman, Azam Nasir opened fire from his G-3 rifle on the attacking Indian aircraft. A bomb fell hardly a few yards from him and made a huge crater. His colleagues in the trench got buried under the rubble and Azam Nasir removed the gravel, showel after showel, saving his comrades. He again started firing at the low level flying Indian jets. This time a bomb dropped by enemy aircraft exploded near him and he embraced shahadat. On the same day(8 Dec, 1971) Senior technician Asghar Ali fired at an Indian Mystere over his check post at Bhawalnagar border. Asghar also ordered his under command men to open fire as well. They were lucky with their precise and accurate fire got the Mystere a direct hit. The Pakistani nation feels proud of its Air Force, which has repeatedly defended the country against aerial attacks, including during the events of 27 February 2019. On that occasion, the Pakistani Officer Commanding of No. 9 Squadron led from the front and shot down an Indian aircraft over Pakistani territory. The mass raid of 7 May 2025, involving approximately 80 Indian aircraft, including Rafales, Mirage 2000s, Su-30s, and MiG-29s, was also professionally countered, with Pakistan claiming a score of 8-0. Hats off to brave leadership from Air Marshal Asghar Khan till Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Sidhu. Ahmed Faraz, while visiting India, was asked by his hosts to write a ghazal similar to: "Ranjish hi sahi, dil ne dukhane ke liye aa." Faraz responded spontaneously, "I will write a hundred ghazals like this for you people, but where will you find Mehdi Hassan to sing them?" These Pakistani sentiment can be summarized in one line: India may acquire Hunters, Mirage 2000s, Su-30s, or Rafales from around the world, but where from will it find the courage, determination, and professionalism required to apply their capabilities?

Pakistan Weighs Referendum on Carving Four Provinces Into a Dozen or More, But No Vote Yet Confirmed

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Pakistan's decades-old debate over redrawing its provincial map has resurfaced with fresh intensity, amid reports that the country's establishment intends to push through the creation of new provinces via a nationwide referendum that would bypass the constitutional requirement for approval from the concerned provincial assemblies, though no such vote has been officially announced. According to sources, the establishment has decided to proceed with dividing the existing four provinces into 12 or more new administrative units, even if certain political parties oppose the move. Under the plan described by sources, a referendum would be put directly to citizens nationwide, sidestepping a constitutional provision that currently requires a two-thirds majority in the assembly of any province being divided, alongside two-thirds majorities in both the Senate and National Assembly. Legal experts have separately floated the possibility that the government could instead pursue an amendment to Article 239 of the Constitution to strip out the provincial-assembly consent requirement altogether, a move one Pakistan Bar Council member said appeared politically unfeasible given the strength of public sentiment on the issue. The debate was reignited in July when Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who is widely regarded as close to the military establishment, told the Pakistan Economic Summit that the country's decades-old governance system had "collapsed" and called for a national consensus on creating smaller administrative units to bring government closer to citizens. Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal has proposed carving out 12 to 15 new

provinces and urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to form a committee to review the country's administrative structure. Estimates of how many provinces could ultimately be created vary widely across political circles, ranging from as few as seven to as many as 27, with some proposals going even further. Minister of State for Law and Justice Aqeel Malik has confirmed the government's intention to create new provinces, though he said all political parties would first be taken on board, a position that appears at odds with any plan to bypass provincial assemblies entirely. Coalition partners have offered mixed signals. The Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Privatization Minister Abdul Aleem Khan have publicly backed dividing each of the four existing provinces into three administrative regions, with Khan arguing the move would spare citizens the "long, exhausting and humiliating journeys" many currently face to reach distant provincial capitals. The ruling PML-N, however, has been notably reticent, with adviser Rana Sanaullah calling the debate premature and stressing that any referendum on provinces would first have to go through parliament. Opposition to the plan has been sharp and specific. The Sindh Assembly passed a resolution rejecting any division of the province, alteration of its boundaries, or creation of new administrative units, a vote that came amid a boycott by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, a PML-N coalition partner at the centre. Pakistan Peoples Party lawmakers, whose party draws much of its electoral strength from Sindh, have firmly opposed the move, with Sindh provincial minister Saeed Ghani saying any boundary change requires two-thirds approval in the affected assembly and

that there was "no benefit" to the proposal. PPP spokesperson Shazia Marri argued that provinces were not created according to anyone's individual wishes or along linguistic lines, noting that the first resolution for the creation of Pakistan itself had been passed by the Sindh Assembly. In Balochistan, the ethnic Baloch population has broadly opposed dividing the province along ethnic lines. Critics of the process, including opposition politicians and independent analysts, have suggested the province debate serves as a convenient distraction from unrest in Balochistan and in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, where protests erupted in June over the reservation of legislative seats in the region. Others have framed the push as an indirect attempt to roll back the 18th Constitutional Amendment of 2010, which devolved significant powers from the federal government to the provinces. Governance experts have separately argued that Pakistan's administrative difficulties stem less from the size of its provinces than from weak, underfunded and frequently delayed local government institutions, suggesting that empowering municipal and district bodies could bring government closer to citizens without redrawing the provincial map at all. The matter has not yet been formally debated in parliament, which observers say suggests the government is first attempting to gauge public opinion before committing to a specific legislative or constitutional path. Legal commentators note that any of the routes under discussion, whether a referendum, a constitutional amendment to Article 239, or the standard process requiring provincial assembly consent, would still ultimately require a two-thirds majority in both houses of the National Assembly.

SBP Rejects Misleading Reports Linking Raast to Money Laundering After FATF Report

- Central bank says Financial Action Task Force report neither identifies instant payment system as a laundering mechanism nor raises concerns over its integrity, though Raast was named in a specific Oman-Pakistan hawala case study

KARACHI (Agencies) - The State Bank of Pakistan has rejected what it called a misleading headline circulating on social media suggesting that the Financial Action Task Force had identified the country's Raast instant payment system as a channel for money laundering. In a statement issued on X, the central bank said the Financial Action Task Force report, published a day earlier, neither identifies Raast as a money-laundering mechanism nor raises any specific concern regarding the integrity of the Raast payment infrastructure, adding that any portrayal suggesting otherwise misrepresents the context and findings of the report. The State Bank said the report instead discusses the potential misuse of formal banking and payment channels by underground banking and hawala networks across various countries and jurisdictions, and that Raast is mentioned only as the legitimate domestic payment channel used for domestic payments and transfers. The central bank reiterated that Raast does not currently facilitate cross-border transfers and remains committed to maintaining the integrity of Pakistan's

payment systems, saying it would continue monitoring and strengthening safeguards in line with international standards. The clarification followed the release of a global report by the Financial Action Task Force, co-led by Germany and Saudi Arabia in co-operation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, examining how professional money launderers and underground banking or hawala networks exploit legitimate financial infrastructure. The report found that more than 80 percent of reporting jurisdictions identified underground banking systems as among the principal channels used for professional money laundering worldwide. Within the report, a case study does name Raast in connection with a hawala network uncovered by the Central Bank of Oman. According to the report, a reporting entity in Oman detected a sudden drop in remittances through a specific corridor, which led investigators to a WhatsApp group used to coordinate an unlicensed cross-border remittance operation. The report said suspected hawaladars offered ex-

change rates below the formal market rate to customers in Oman wishing to send money to Pakistan, collected payment in Omani currency in cash or through mobile transfers, and then settled the Pakistan side of the transaction using fee-free transfers through channels including Raast, along with exchange rate differentials offered by some digital wallet providers. Omani authorities identified six suspected individuals believed to form the network, with transaction flows of approximately 72,293 dollars recorded over a one-year period. The distinction between the two claims is significant. The report does not describe any technical flaw, security weakness or systemic vulnerability in Raast itself, nor does it list the platform as a laundering mechanism in its own right. It does, however, name Raast as one of the low-cost channels a hawala network used on the receiving end of an already-illicit remittance scheme, a citation some commentary on the report has said is accurately reflected in parts of the domestic press but understated in the central bank's own framing of the episode.

Pakistan to Set Up Maritime Facilitation Centre Offering Port Services Under One Roof

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Pakistan is set to establish a Maritime Facilitation Centre offering port-related services to importers and exporters under one roof, as the government moves to cut delays and streamline trade procedures at the country's seaports. Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry proposed establishing the Maritime Business Facilitation Centre while chairing a meeting to review progress on port-related projects. The centre would bring representatives of relevant organisations together at a single location, allowing businesses to access multiple port services without visiting different offices, the minister said. A dedicated focal person from each participating organisation would assist businesses directly, while an integrated system linked to each organisation's main office would allow applications and cases to be processed and tracked from one place. Chaudhry said the initiative could reduce costs related to trucking, containers, storage, demurrage, vessel delays and administrative procedures, benefiting all enterprises engaged in trade, par-

ticularly first-time users of port services who are often least familiar with navigating multiple agencies. He added that standardising procedures could also improve fee collection and reduce revenue leakages, while faster processing and higher trade volumes could generate additional revenue from port services, cargo handling, customs-related activity and associated logistics. The proposed centre is intended to improve coordination among maritime-sector organisations, reduce procedural bottlenecks and make port services more accessible to businesses engaged in international trade. Chaudhry has called a meeting of government departments and maritime-sector stakeholders to seek their input on the centre's structure and operations, with officials directed to consult all relevant parties and incorporate their recommendations into the final proposal. The meeting is expected to include representatives from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Karachi Port, Port Qasim, Gwadar Port, the Marine Fisheries Department and Korangi Fish Harbour, along with banks, shipping lines, clear-

ing and forwarding agents, fisheries associations and other private-sector stakeholders. The proposal follows a related move a day earlier, when Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the establishment of a Trade Facilitation Board and directed that transportation, clearance and other procedures for importers and exporters at ports be simplified, with maximum possible facilitation extended to the business community. That meeting was told ongoing reforms had already reduced port charges, leading to a significant improvement in port utilisation, suggesting the proposed facilitation centre forms part of a broader push on trade reform rather than a standalone initiative. The centre could also complement Pakistan's existing digital trade infrastructure, including the Pakistan Single Window, a platform launched in 2017 and rolled out from 2022 that digitises cross-border trade documentation and has registered more than 70,000 users, along with its associated Port Community System, which is separately working to modernise the country's maritime and logistics services.

Direct Tashkent-Karachi Flights Launched, Boosting Uzbekistan-Pakistan Connectivity



ISLAMABAD, (Adnan Hameed): Starting from September 3, direct flights between Tashkent and Karachi have been launched by Centrum Air. On the same day, at 4:20 a.m. local time, the airline's Airbus A320 aircraft arrived in Karachi from Tashkent. In accordance with tradition, the aircraft received a ceremonial water-cannon salute upon arrival at Karachi Airport. The welcoming ceremony was attended by representatives of the Sindh provincial administration and local government authorities, members of the diplomat-

ic corps in Karachi, representatives of the Sindh Tourism Development Corporation, airlines, tour operators, and the media. Speaking at the ceremony, representatives of the Sindh provincial government described the launch of the flight as another practical step by Uzbekistan towards bringing the two brotherly peoples closer together, increasing tourist flows, and supporting business diplomacy, says press note. Thus, the number of direct flights between Uzbekistan and Pakistan has reached eight per week.

Yunnan Normal University Professor Praises China Window's Role in Promoting Chinese Culture



PESHAWAR (Khyber Mail): Professor Zhang Naiwen of Yunnan Normal University visited China Window, the Chinese cultural and information centre in Peshawar, and highly appreciated its role in promoting Chinese culture, strengthening Pakistan-China friendship and enhancing people-to-people contacts between the two countries. During his visit, Professor Zhang toured the different galleries of China Window, where he was briefed about the centre's cultural, educational and public diplomacy activities. He took keen interest in the photographs, displays and exhibits depicting China's history, culture, development, tourism, traditions and the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China. He appreciated the systematic presentation of Chinese culture and said such initiatives provide Pakistani visitors with an opportunity to better understand China and its people. Sharing his impressions, Professor Zhang

said: "This is our first visit to China Window in Peshawar. We all feel that Chinese culture has been presented here in a very systematic and impressive way. As Chinese people, we are deeply moved to see, here in Pakistan, a local person putting so much dedication and effort into showcasing and promoting Chinese culture. We sincerely hope that China Window will continue to develop and become even better in the future." On the occasion, Professor Zhang also interviewed Administrator China Window Amjad Aziz Malik about the establishment of the centre, the idea behind its creation and the various activities undertaken since its inception. During the interaction, he was briefed about China Window's efforts to promote cultural understanding, Chinese language education, educational exchanges, youth engagement and greater interaction between the peoples of Pakistan and China.



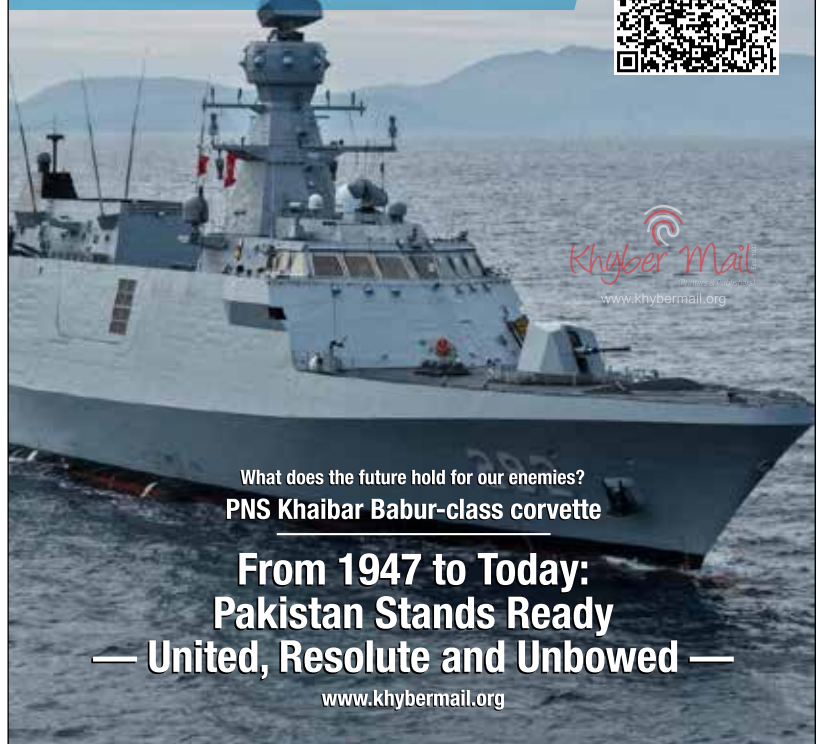
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Pakistan Showcases Rich Literary and Cultural Heritage at Guangzhou Book Fair 2026

BEIJING (Khyber Mail): The Pakistan National Pavilion officially opened at the 2026 South China Book Fair held at the China Import and Export Fair Complex in Guangzhou. The exhibition featured a range of cultural exhibits and literary works, marking Pakistan's further expansion of its participation in the South China Book Fair, one of China's largest and most influential book fairs, and highlighting the deep cultural and people-to-people ties between the two countries. Founded in 1993, the South China Book Fair is a comprehensive book and cultural exhibition that adheres to the principles of public welfare, accessibility, mass participation, and high-quality curation. This year's book fair covers an exhibition area of approximately 40,000 square meters and features 31 specialized pavilions. According to media reports, more than 300 publishing institutions from home and abroad showcased over 500,000 publications and cultural and creative



products, as well as nearly 30,000 original foreign language books. At the opening ceremony of the Eurasia Pavilion, Pakistan's Consul General in Guangzhou, Sardar Muhammad, emphasized that books are an eternal bridge connecting different languages, ethnicities, and civilizations. The Eurasia Pavilion hosted a themed photography exhibition commemorating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between

China and Pakistan. Three Pakistani companies and a leading publishing house from the country participated, bringing a rich variety of literary and cultural works. Among the exhibitors, Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., a Pakistani publisher whose history dates back to 1894, brought authoritative Pakistani books and literary works, covering themes such as history, philosophy, contemporary novels and poetry, for exhibitors to display and exchange.

Pakistan Built Its Crypto Regulatory Framework for Just \$200,000,

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Pakistan built a functioning regulatory framework for virtual assets in under six months while spending only around 200,000 dollars, roughly 8 percent of its approved budget, according to Minister of State and Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority Chairman Bilal Bin Saqib, with the remaining 92 percent returned to the government. In under half a year, the country moved from primary legislation to formally notified regulations and a functioning licensing framework, creating a legal pathway for businesses seeking to operate in Pakistan's virtual asset market. The regime now covers a broad range of activities including virtual asset exchanges, custody, brokerage, lending, derivatives, asset management, token issuance, mining-related services, and settlement. Saqib also pointed to future regulatory priorities beyond conventional crypto trading, citing tokenised markets, programmable payments, stablecoins, machine-to-machine commerce and transactions conducted by artificial intelligence agents as areas the authority expects to address

as the sector evolves. The framework took shape rapidly. President Asif Ali Zardari signed the Virtual Assets Ordinance 2025 in July last year, establishing PVARA as a statutory authority responsible for licensing, regulating and supervising virtual asset activity in the country. The Virtual Assets Act 2026 then came into force on March 5, giving Pakistan its first comprehensive legal framework for the sector and granting firms already operating in the country transitional status, along with a window to formally register. A month later, the State Bank of Pakistan issued a circular authorising regulated banks to open accounts for PVARA-licensed virtual asset service providers, ending a blanket ban on crypto-related banking access that had been in place since 2018. Under the new rules, banks may only serve properly licensed firms, must hold client funds in segregated, rupee-denominated accounts kept separate from other assets, and remain barred from trading or holding virtual assets using their own funds or customer deposits. That transitional registration

window closes today. Every virtual asset service provider already operating in Pakistan is required to file a formal No-Objection Certificate with PVARA by the end of the day, or cease all covered services immediately under the law. Saqib told the Senate on September 1 that Binance and HTX, the only firms publicly confirmed to hold earlier NOCs issued in December 2025, had been given until today to complete their full registration. Firms that continue serving Pakistani users without a filed NOC after the deadline would be committing a criminal offence under Section 70 of the Virtual Assets Act, which carries penalties of up to 50 million rupees, roughly 179,000 dollars, and up to five years in prison for unlicensed operation. The scale of what is being regulated is considerable. Saqib has estimated Pakistan's virtual asset market at around 250 billion dollars, with roughly 40 million crypto-linked accounts nationwide, placing the country third globally for crypto adoption behind only India and the United States, according to the Chainalysis Global Crypto Adoption Index.

Bajaur Youth Set to Test Fly Self-Built Helicopter on September 6

BAJAUR (Agencies) - A young man from Bajaur has built a helicopter entirely on his own using limited financial resources and six years of tireless effort, with a test demonstration scheduled at the Bajaur Sports Complex on September 6. Subhanullah's family members, speaking to media on Thursday, said

his technical skills and unique effort since childhood pushed him to attempt something out of the ordinary. The government has indicated that a test demonstration of the helicopter will be held on September 6, and if the trial is successful, permission may be granted for the helicopter to fly. Describing his

passion for the project, Subhanullah said he had worked continuously for six years using whatever resources were available to him, and is now preparing to take the helicopter to the testing stage. He said the government had given him the opportunity to demonstrate the aircraft and had assured him that permission to fly could be considered if the trial proves successful. Subhanullah comes from a working-class family. During the seasonal period he earns a living selling traditional footwear in Punjab, while for the rest of the year he works as a daily-wage labourer to meet his expenses. He developed an interest in machines from an early age, and after learning motorcycle mechanics, his fascination with machinery and mechanical equipment grew further. While building the helicopter, he faced several challenges and had to travel to different cities, including Lahore, Timergara and Peshawar, to obtain the parts and materials he needed. His six years of hard work is now set for a practical test, with the trial demonstration expected to take place at the Bajaur Sports Complex on September 6.

COAS Visits Quetta Garrison, Receives Briefing on Security Situation



QUETTA (Agencies) - Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir visited Quetta Garrison on Friday, where he interacted with commanders and commanding officers of the field formations. During the visit, the COAS was given a comprehensive briefing on the prevailing security environment, operational preparedness and ongoing measures aimed at maintaining peace and stability across Balochistan, according to a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations. Matters related to institutional coordination and support to the socio-economic development of the province were also reviewed. The Chief of Defence Forces appreciated the high standards of professionalism, operational readiness and selfless commitment displayed by troops,

and underscored the importance of continued coordination among law enforcement agencies and other state institutions to consolidate peace and maintain an environment conducive to sustained economic activity and development. The Field Marshal reaffirmed that the peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of Balochistan remain central to the efforts of the state, adding that a stable and secure environment would continue to facilitate development initiatives, economic opportunities and improved prospects for the people of the province, the news release said. The COAS paid rich tribute to the sacrifices of the martyrs and lauded the steadfast dedication of officers and troops in the discharge of their duties. Upon arrival at Quetta, he was received by the Commander of Quetta Corps.

Uzbekistan's Independence Day reception highlights centuries-old cultural and historic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan



ISLAMABAD, (Adnan Hameed): The Republic of Uzbekistan celebrated its "35th Independence Day in Islamabad" with a vibrant reception highlighting the country's historic heritage, remarkable development and growing strategic partnership with Pakistan. Federal Minister for Energy, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, Advisor to Prime Minister on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas among the notable attendees. Addressing the gathering here in a local hotel, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev welcomed federal ministers, diplomats, parliamentarians, business leaders and distinguished guests, describing their presence as a reflection of the "friendship, respect and strong partnership" between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991 following the determination of its people, but its statehood and civilization, the ambassador noted, stretch back more than 3,000 years. The country takes particular pride in its contribution to world civilization through renowned scholars and thinkers including Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Ahmad al-Fergani, Abu

Rayhan al-Biruni, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Mirzo Ulugbek and Alisher Navoi, while the legacy of Amir Temur remains an important symbol of statehood and development. The ambassador said Uzbekistan was building on this rich heritage while pursuing an open, modern and prosperous future. Over the past decade, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the country has undertaken wide-ranging reforms focused on human dignity, economic development and social welfare, he said. According to the figures presented, Uzbekistan's poverty rate has declined from 35 per cent in 2017 to around 4 per cent today, while more than 650,000 families have gained modern homes. He said that expansion of preschool and higher education has also been a major priority, with the number of university students reaching 1.6 million. The country is simultaneously investing in science, innovation and modern technology while promoting its Islamic and cultural heritage. The envoy said the Centre of Islamic Civilization in Tashkent and renovated memorial complexes dedicated to eminent Islamic scholars are being developed as centres for research and for highlighting Islam's peaceful and humanistic values.

Shaheryar Memon Felicitates Viet Nam on 81st National Day, Highlights Growing Bilateral Cooperation

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Prime Minister's Youth Programme Focal Person for Overseas Affairs and Business and Trade Linkages Muhammad Shaheryar Memon has felicitated the government and people of Viet Nam on the 81st anniversary of the National Day of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Memon expressed his views while attending a ceremony hosted by the Embassy of Viet Nam in Islamabad to mark the occasion. The event was attended by ambassadors, diplomats, senior government officials, business representatives and other distinguished guests. Memon, who participated in the cake-cutting ceremony as guest of honour alongside the Vietnamese ambassador and other senior diplomats, congratulated the Vietnamese leadership and people and praised the country's remarkable

progress since independence. He said Viet Nam's transformation into a dynamic and rapidly developing economy reflected the resilience, determination and sacrifices of generations of its people. He noted that the country had made significant strides in economic development, trade, investment and human resource development. Memon expressed confidence that Pakistan and Viet Nam would further strengthen their longstanding friendship and expand cooperation in areas of mutual interest. He particularly stressed the need to enhance business-to-business contacts, trade and investment linkages, as well as youth exchanges. He said young people in both countries could play an important role in strengthening economic and people-to-people ties through entrepreneurship, technology, education and in-



novation. Memon also appreciated the efforts of the Vietnamese Embassy in Islamabad to promote closer relations and greater understanding between the two countries, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to exploring new avenues of mutually beneficial cooperation. The ceremony concluded with the cake-cutting and interactions among diplomats, government representatives and other guests, who conveyed their warm wishes to the Vietnamese people on their National Day.



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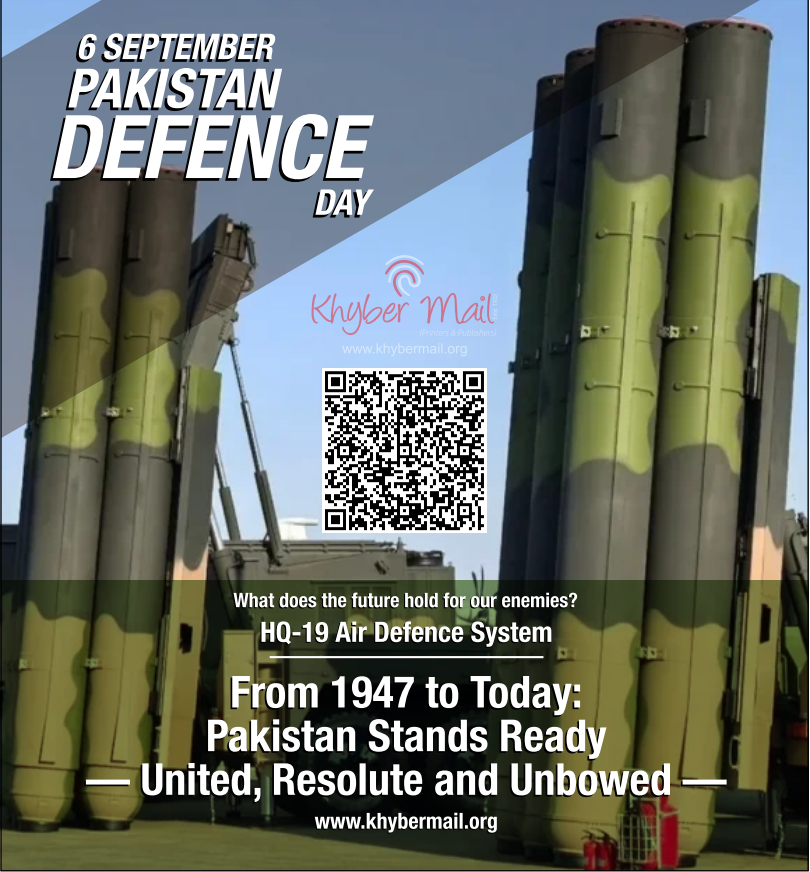
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Saudi Arabia's data center race: Can the Kingdom become the Middle East's cloud hub?

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia is investing billions of dollars in data centers as it seeks to position itself as the Middle East's leading cloud and AI infrastructure hub, betting that the rapid rise of artificial intelligence will make computing capacity one of the world's most valuable economic assets. Backed by Vision 2030 and sovereign investment, the Kingdom is rapidly expanding its digital infrastructure while attracting commitments from global technology com-



panies. As demand for AI computing accelerates worldwide, Saudi Arabia is seeking to establish itself as a regional destination for cloud services

and next-generation digital infrastructure. The expansion has gathered pace in recent years. Investments in Saudi Arabia's data center sector have exceeded SR16 billion (\$4.26 billion) since the launch of Vision 2030, according to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. The Kingdom now hosts more than 60 operational data centers, while installed capacity has grown from 68 megawatts in 2021 to around 440 MW in 2025.

Japan Slow to Embrace AI Despite Labour Shortages

TOKYO: (Agencies) Japan is struggling to keep pace with the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in workplaces despite facing severe labour shortages, an ageing population and persistent productivity challenges. Compared with countries such as the United States and Britain, Japanese companies remain cautious about incorporating AI into their daily operations, raising concerns about the country's ability to use the technology to address its growing economic challenges. According to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), only 8.4 per cent of Japanese workers



were using AI as part of their jobs at the end of last year. The figure is significantly lower than the reported 50 per cent in the United States and 32 per cent in Britain. Singapore has recorded an even higher adoption rate, with 56 per cent of workers reportedly using AI multiple times a week.

Experts say Japan's slow progress is largely linked to a conservative and risk-averse corporate culture. Austin Xu, co-founder of US-based AI start-up Kuse AI, said Japanese companies tend to be cautious about adopting new technologies. Kuse AI recently established an office in Japan to market its AI systems to Japanese businesses, highlighting growing efforts by technology companies to tap into the country's potentially large but cautious market. The slow adoption has become a growing concern as Japan seeks ways to improve productivity and compensate for a shrinking workforce through technology.

Women Often Outperform Men in Investing, Despite Smaller Participation

LONDON: (Agencies) Women who invest their money tend to achieve slightly higher long-term returns than men, according to new analysis, even though significantly fewer women invest in the UK. Data shows that only about 26 per cent of UK women invest, compared with 41 per cent of men. Among people under 45, the proportion falls to 23 per cent for women, while around 40 per cent of men in the same age group invest. The figures highlight a significant gender gap in investment participation, despite evidence suggesting women can be highly successful investors over the long term. One example is Teleri Evans,



who began investing at the age of 25 by saving into a Help to Buy ISA before moving into a stocks and shares Lifetime ISA. By the age of 33, Evans had accumulated £40,000, including around £8,000 generated through investment returns. The Cardiff-based civil servant said she saved aggressively and lived with her mother for

part of the period to maximise her annual Lifetime ISA contributions. She later used the savings towards a house deposit with her partner. Experts say differences in investment behaviour may help explain why women can achieve stronger long-term returns. Women are often more cautious and less likely to make frequent investment decisions, which can help them avoid costly mistakes and remain focused on long-term growth. Despite this, the relatively low proportion of women investing remains a concern, with financial experts urging more women to consider investing as part of their long-term financial planning.

Saudi Arabia's consumer spending jumps 11.5% to \$4.21bn as food and beverage sales surge

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's consumer spending rose 11.5 per cent to SR15.80 billion (\$4.21 billion) in the week ending Aug. 29, driven by a sharp increase in food and beverage purchases and continued back-to-school spending. The number of point-of-sale transactions rose 7.6 percent to 255.38 million, according to figures released by the Saudi Central Bank, known as SAMA. The rebound followed a softer week ending Aug. 22 and was led by stronger household spending, alongside gains in leisure, telecommunications and stationery. Economist Talat Hafiz told Arab News that the latest figures were encouraging, particularly against the backdrop of the



Kingdom's relatively contained inflation. Saudi Arabia's annual inflation rate stood at around 1.8 percent in July, according to GASTAT. "With POS transactions rising 7.6 percent and their total value increasing 11.5 percent, the implied increase in the average transaction value is around 3.6 percent. I would therefore be

cautious about attributing the entire increase to inflation," he said. While higher prices in some categories, particularly food and other frequently purchased items, may have contributed, the figures also suggest consumers are spending more per transaction, potentially reflecting larger baskets, greater consumption or a shift toward higher-value goods and services, Hafiz said. "The data appears to point more toward a combination of stronger consumer activity and higher spending per transaction, rather than inflation being the dominant explanation," he added, noting that relatively contained inflation makes the distinction particularly important.

New Yorkers Turn to Unconventional Living Arrangements as Rents Soar

NEW YORK (Agencies): Skyrocketing rents are forcing some New York City residents to turn to unconventional housing arrangements, including sharing homes with much older roommates, as they struggle to afford accommodation in the expensive city. Among them is 25-year-old Charles Jones III, who needed an affordable place to live after his internship-provided housing in Manhattan ended. With rental prices, security deposits and additional fees putting most apartments beyond his budget, Jones chose an unexpected solution — moving into the home of a woman around 50 years older than him. Young people continue to move to New York in search of jobs and career oppor-



tunities, but the city's housing costs are increasingly becoming a major obstacle. The median asking rent in New York City reached \$4,200 in July 2026, representing a 30 per cent increase from July 2019, according to real estate listings website StreetEasy. In Manhattan, the median asking rent climbed to \$4,995. By comparison, the national median rent stood at \$1,388 per month in July

2026, according to apartment search platform Apartment List. New York has long been among the most expensive US cities to live in, but rising living costs, slower wage growth and a severe housing shortage have made conditions particularly difficult for renters. As a result, some young workers and other residents are exploring creative alternatives to traditional apartments, including sharing homes with elderly residents, living with religious communities and other unconventional arrangements to reduce their housing expenses. The trend reflects the growing pressure on New Yorkers to find affordable accommodation in a city where housing demand continues to outpace supply.

Anthropic said to be shifting IPO launch to mid-October

NEW YORK (Agencies): Anthropic is expected to begin marketing its initial public offering in mid-October at the earliest and complete the listing days before the US midterm elections in November, people familiar with the matter said on Friday. The artificial intelligence company had been expected to make its IPO prospectus public as early as next week, two of the people said, a crucial step that would kick off the final stages of the offering. Now that is not expected until late September, the people added, cautioning



that the plans, including the timing, are subject to change. The shift pushes back what some investors have said could be a US\$2 trillion listing, one of the largest IPOs ever attempted and a major test of

public-market appetite for the rapidly growing artificial intelligence industry. Companies frequently adjust their IPO schedules as they work through market conditions, regulatory reviews and other preparations, so such changes are not unusual. As part of the IPO process, Anthropic is looking to finalise a US\$15 billion revolving credit facility, after which analysts, including those at banks involved in the financing, are expected to meet with the company, one of the people said.

Why Wait? Young MBA Graduates Buy Firms to Become CEOs

NEW YORK: (Agencies) A growing number of young US business graduates are taking an unconventional route to becoming chief executives by borrowing hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy established companies and immediately take charge, instead of climbing the corporate ladder or launching start-ups. The trend is illustrated by Ania Aliev, who was 27 and a recent MBA graduate from Dartmouth College's prestigious Tuck School of Business when she negotiated the purchase of a Massachusetts-based medical equipment company. In late 2023, Aliev was finalising the deal from her hospital bed while waiting for her baby to be induced. She gave birth to a boy, and just three months later became the owner and CEO of Life Support Systems. Traditionally, US business graduates have tended to join major corporations and work their way toward senior positions, or establish their own start-ups. However, some young graduates are now opting to purchase existing businesses, giving them immediate access to the top job. The ap-



proach can also bring challenges, particularly when a young executive with limited management experience takes charge of an established workforce. Aliev, who had previously worked in finance, said she was conscious that employees might initially view her as a young woman with a Wall Street background suddenly arriving to tell experienced workers what to do. She said she was determined not to create that impression and instead focused on building a positive relationship with her team. The trend highlights a changing approach to entrepreneurship among young MBA graduates, who are increasingly seeking ownership and leadership of established businesses rather than waiting years to reach the CEO position.

Nokia's 'Made in Saudi' technology grows with new R&D center

RIYADH (Agencies): Nokia is turning to the Kingdom as not only a hub but a base for technology with global export potential, as the company expands its presence in Saudi Arabia with the launch of its first R&D center in Riyadh. Announced during LEAP 2026, the new center will focus on AI-powered network automation and orchestration software, bringing together Nokia's global expertise with Saudi talent as the company looks to develop technology locally for use both within the Kingdom and on an international scale. Speaking to Arab News on the sidelines of LEAP, Mikko Lavanti, president of Nokia Middle East and Africa, said the company sees the knowledge and expertise being developed locally as having great potential that can be extended past the Saudi market



and into global avenues. "We believe that the know-how, and knowledge and the experience that's done here will have a global market, so that will fit into the 'Made in Saudi,'" Lavanti said. The new center will specialize in areas including Service Management and Orchestration, Self-Organizing Networks, Autopilot and rApps, with a focus on enabling networks to operate more autonomously while improving performance and energy efficiency.

AI Boom Sends San Francisco House Prices Soaring

SAN FRANCISCO: (Agencies) The rapid expansion of the artificial intelligence industry is driving a sharp rise in San Francisco property prices, as highly paid AI workers flood the housing market with cash and company shares. In the affluent Duboce Triangle neighbourhood, a renovated three-bedroom Edwardian apartment was listed for nearly \$3 million, with the seller reportedly willing to consider shares in AI giants OpenAI or Anthropic as an alternative to cash. A young OpenAI employee who viewed the property said he was interested in purchasing it and planned to discuss the possibility of transferring company shares with his employer. San Francisco has become a major centre of the global AI industry, with thousands of highly paid technology workers employed by companies including OpenAI and Anthropic. Their growing wealth has helped push demand for housing sharply higher. Daryl Fairweather, chief economist at real estate company Redfin, described San Francisco property prices as "astronomical", saying many buyers were flush with



cash and ready to purchase homes. In March, San Francisco regained its position as the most expensive US city for homebuyers, overtaking San Jose. The median home price rose 19 per cent year-on-year that month, followed by increases of 14.5 per cent in April and 14.1 per cent in May. By May 2026, the median sale price in San Francisco had reached a record \$1.76 million, compared with nearly \$400,000 across the United States. National home prices rose only about 1.4 per cent in March and 2 per cent in both April and May. The sharp divergence highlights the growing impact of the AI boom on San Francisco's economy and housing market, with wealthy technology workers driving property demand to unprecedented levels.

US National Debt Surpasses Record \$40 Trillion

WASHINGTON: (Agencies) The United States national debt has crossed the unprecedented \$40 trillion mark, highlighting the country's growing fiscal challenges as persistent budget deficits and rising interest costs continue to push borrowing higher. The debt is increasing at a rapid pace, with the total reportedly rising by nearly \$7 billion every day, according to the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, a fiscal watchdog group. The enormous figure is difficult to comprehend in everyday terms. Forty trillion dollars is equivalent to 40,000 billion dollars or 40 million million dollars. If the United States were to pay off \$1 billion of its debt every day, it would take nearly 110 years to eliminate the entire amount. Paying down \$1 million a day would take almost 110,000 years. The debt burden is also enormous when measured against the country's population.



With the US population estimated at around 343 million, the \$40 trillion debt amounts to approximately \$117,000 for every American. The milestone has renewed concerns over the sustainability of US government finances, particularly as interest payments consume an increasing share of federal resources. Economists and fiscal watchdogs have warned that continued deficits and rapidly accumulating debt could place greater pressure on future generations and limit the government's ability to respond to economic challenges.

Alcaraz, Sabalenka into US Open last 16 as Williams sisters lose on return

NEW YORK (Agencies): Defending singles champions Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka sailed into the last 16 of the US Open on Friday as tennis icons Serena and Venus Williams suffered an agonizing defeat on their long-awaited return to Grand Slam doubles. Alcaraz, coming off a four-month injury absence, beat China's Wu Yibing 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 to book his place in the fourth round while Sabalenka was similarly dominant in a 6-3, 6-4 defeat of Kamilla Rakhimova. Alcaraz will face 20th-seeded American Tommy Paul for a place in the quarter-finals



after Paul beat 15th-seeded Alexander Bublik 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (4/7), 6-1, 6-3. "The way he plays is unbelievable, the rhythm he has on every shot — forehand, backhand," Alcaraz said of Wu. "His balls skid a lot on the court and,

for me, it's really difficult to control sometimes. "But I think I stayed there. I played aggressive. I played smart in the toughest moments." Wu recovered an early break in each of the first two sets, but Alcaraz pocketed both with breaks in the final games and after saving a pair of break points in the first game of the third the Spaniard rolled home. "I think my level is really good," he said. "I've got into the rhythm of the competition. I'm getting there." World number one Sabalenka didn't face a break point in her dismissal of Rakhimova, firing 29 winners with 10 aces.

Former World Champion Andy Ruiz Jr Loses Comeback Fight

NEWARK: (Agencies): Former heavyweight world champion Andy Ruiz Jr suffered a setback in his comeback as Poland's Damian Knyba defeated him by unanimous decision at the Prudential Center in New Jersey. The 36-year-old Ruiz, who stunned the boxing world in 2019 by defeating Britain's Anthony Joshua to capture his world titles, struggled throughout the bout and appeared far from his best. Ruiz was knocked down in the seventh round and was saved by the bell after scrambling back to his feet. Knyba controlled much of the contest before securing victory on the judges' scorecards, 117-



110, 114-113 and 114-113. The victory improved Knyba's professional record to 18 wins and one defeat, while Ruiz suffered another disappointment after a lengthy period affected by injuries and inactivity. The fight was only Ruiz's fourth since his December 2019 re-

match defeat by Joshua. His previous bout was a draw against American Jarrell Miller in August 2024. Despite the loss, Ruiz insisted he wants to continue his career and called for a rematch with Knyba. He blamed his performance partly on his long layoff and said Knyba's tactics prevented him from effectively unleashing his combinations. Ruiz, who recently signed with British promoter Eddie Hearn, said he had deliberately chosen a difficult opponent rather than taking an easier comeback fight. "I've still got it in me," Ruiz said, expressing his desire to remain active and return to the ring.

Hesson Hopes Pakistan Can Overcome 'Chaos' Against England

BIRMINGHAM (Agencies): Pakistan interim head coach Mike Hesson believes his revamped squad can overcome the turmoil surrounding the team and produce a much-improved performance against England in the third and final Test at Edgbaston. Pakistan suffered heavy defeats in the first two Tests, losing the opening match at Headingley by an innings and 103 runs before going down by 194 runs at Lord's. England consequently secured an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. In response, the Pakistan Cricket Board made sweeping changes, sending seven players home, calling up seven replacements and appointing Hes-



son as interim Test coach following the dismissal of Sarfaraz Ahmed. Among those dropped were senior players Imam-ul-Haq and Salman Ali Agha, while left-arm spinner Ali Usman and fast bowler Khurram Shahzad were also sent home. Of the seven new additions, only batsmen

Saim Ayub and Abdullah Fazal have previous Test experience. Hesson, who already serves as Pakistan's white-ball head coach, said the squad had experienced a difficult few days but was now focused on rebuilding and preparing for the final Test, which begins on September 9. "The last couple of days have been challenging," Hesson said, referring to players arriving and leaving the team hotel. He added that Pakistan's players were probably more accustomed to a little "chaos" than he was. Despite the upheaval, Hesson said the players had responded positively and were determined to move forward after their disappointing results.

College Football Moves From Courtroom Drama Back to the Field

INDIANA (Agencies): After an offseason dominated by legal disputes, injunctions and controversy surrounding college football, the sport has finally returned to where it belongs — on the field. The 2026 college football season officially got underway on Thursday following the unusual Week 0 schedule last weekend, bringing an end to an exhausting offseason filled with courtroom battles, player movement and debates over the rapidly changing landscape of college sports. The return to action has shifted attention away from temporary restraining orders and legal challenges and back toward touchdowns, interceptions and competition between teams. College football once



again promises the unpredictability that has made it one of the most popular sports in the United States. Last season provided plenty of surprises, including Bill Belichick's struggles, Vanderbilt's unexpected success and Indiana's stunning victory over Alabama. Lane Kiffin's controversial departure from Ole Miss also set the stage for a

dramatic playoff quarter-final clash between Ole Miss and Georgia, while continued controversy surrounding name, image and likeness (NIL) rules was overshadowed by the emergence of Fernando Mendoza. Indiana, a team with little previous championship history, produced one of the biggest shocks of the season by defeating powerhouse Alabama. The campaign eventually ended with jubilant Indiana supporters celebrating their team's remarkable turnaround. With the new season now underway, fans and players can finally turn their attention from the legal and administrative battles of the offseason to the unpredictable drama of college football itself.

Amy Hunt Continues Strong Season with Third Place in Brussels

BRUSSELS (Agencies): Britain's Amy Hunt continued her impressive late-season form by clocking a season-best 22.16 seconds to finish third in the women's 200 metres at the Diamond League final in Brussels. Hunt's time was just eight hundredths of a second outside her personal best, underlining her strong performance in the prestigious season finale. St Lucia's Julien Alfred, the fastest woman over 200m this year, won the race in 21.79 seconds, while American Kayla White finished second in 22.00. Hunt, who won four gold medals at last month's European Championships in Birmingham, said she was particularly pleased



with her performance around the bend. "I'm really, really proud of that one," Hunt said. "That was probably one of the best bends I've ever done, if not the best." The 23-year-old added that the demands of a long season began to affect her during the final 20 metres of the race. Hunt's third-place finish

marks another step forward in her Diamond League campaign. She finished sixth in the 2024 final and improved to fifth in 2025 before securing third this year. She will also compete in the 100m event on Saturday, where she has been drawn alongside American Olympic silver medallist Sha'Carri Richardson. Hunt plans to compete in both sprint events again at the inaugural Ultimate Championships in Budapest, beginning on September 11. Among the other British athletes competing in Brussels, Matt Hudson-Smith finished fifth in the 400m, while Jake Hayward, representing Wales, placed eighth in an exciting 1500m race.

Sumo makes UAE debut as Space42 Arena brings another sporting first to Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI (Agencies): The All-Star Sumo Competition, on Sept. 26 at Abu Dhabi's Space42 Arena, marks the UAE's first international professional competition in one of Japan's oldest and most distinctive sporting traditions. Nine elite rikishi from Japan, Mongolia and Egypt will compete across 36 bouts, bringing together athletes with world championship titles, Emperor's Cup honors and decades of professional competition. The event is hosted by the Department of Culture and Tourism — Abu Dhabi. For spectators, the event will extend beyond the bouts themselves, with a formal ring-entering proces-



sion and traditional pre-bout rituals, ensuring guests experience elements of sumo's centuries-old traditions alongside the competition. "Bringing professional sumo to the UAE for the first time is an exciting addition to

Abu Dhabi's sporting calendar and an opportunity to introduce audiences to a sport with a rich history and deeply rooted traditions," said Mohamed Yehya, General Manager of Space42 Arena. "The event will give fans a unique opportunity to experience sumo up close and discover the traditions and atmosphere that make the sport so distinctive." Ichi of Japan headlines the field as a winner of the Emperor's Cup, the highest honor in Japanese professional sumo, alongside compatriot Hiroki, among the largest active competitors in the sport. The field also reflects sumo's reach beyond Japan.

Isak Finally Arrives as Liverpool Begin Season with Victory

IPSWICH (Agencies): Alexander Isak finally showed the form expected of a record signing as Liverpool defeated Ipswich Town 2-0, with the Swedish striker scoring twice in the opening nine minutes to secure the club's first Premier League victory of the season. Isak's impressive display provided a major boost for Liverpool manager Andoni Iraola, who also celebrated his first victory since taking charge following the dismissal of Arne Slot. The £125 million striker had endured a difficult first season at Liverpool after his controversial move from Newcastle United. He arrived out of condition after pushing to secure the transfer and was subsequently hampered by injuries. Isak made 22 appearances last season, playing 1,033 minutes and scoring only four goals. In the Premier League, he featured in 14 matches, scoring three times in 703 minutes. His two goals against Ipswich have already matched his entire league tally from last season and offered renewed hope that Liverpool can finally unlock the potential of their expensive attacking signing.



Cody Gakpo also impressed with a standout performance, reinforcing his importance to Liverpool's attack, while new signing Bradley Barcola provided flashes of his explosive pace during a 26-minute debut following his £123 million move from Paris St-Germain. Although Ipswich had shown plenty of determination, their defensive vulnerabilities were exposed after conceding five goals against Manchester United the previous week. For Liverpool, however, the night was significant beyond the comfortable victory. Isak's sharp finishing, improved confidence and positive demeanour suggested that the striker may finally be ready to justify the enormous fee paid for his services.

Japan makes history as Spain downs hosts Germany in Women's Basketball World Cup opener

BERLIN (Agencies): Saki Hayashi and Japan set records for three-pointers on the first day of the Women's Basketball World Cup while Caitlin Clark also starred on her tournament debut for the United States on Friday. Hayashi scored nine three-pointers to beat the previous record of eight as she helped Japan to a 102-97 win over Mali. Altogether, Japan scored 20 to beat its shared team record from 1994. Mali led for most of the game before Mai Yamamoto brought Japan level for the first time at 79-79 with 6:30 left in the final quarter. Kokoro Tanaka completed the scoring with a free throw. Aminata Sangare contributed 22 points for Mali. Her team had been looking for its second-ever World Cup win after beating Senegal in overtime in the 2010 tournament. Mali lost all five games at the last World Cup in Australia. Clark had 14 points and 11 assists to help the US beat China, which was led by 7-foot-3 Zhang Ziyu, 94-61 in its opener at the Max-Schmelling-Halle. It was the same Berlin venue where the US defeated Russia in the final for the 1998 title, the country's sixth.



Rhyn Howard also scored 14 points and Jackie Young added 12 for the Americans, who have won 31 consecutive World Cup games dating to a loss in the 2006 semifinals. They next turn attention to Italy on Saturday as they bid for a fifth consecutive title. France lived up to its billing as one of the favorites with a comprehensive 99-53 win over Hungary. Dominique Malonga, Gabby Williams and Marine Johannes each scored 17 points for the Olympic silver medalist. Awa Fam led Spain to another win over Germany, contributing 17 points in a dominant 83-53 victory. Despite vocal support from home fans in the 14,000-seat Berlin Arena, Germany did not lead at any stage and has failed to beat Spain in eight competitive meetups.

DAILY HOROSCOPE: SEPTEMBER 06, 2026



and wonderful for you in some aspect of your life.

- **VIRGO**: Your family needs you to convene a gathering of some kind—maybe you all need to eat dinner together, or maybe you need a full-scale family reunion. Your ambition is the only thing limiting the possibilities.

- **LIBRA**: You've got too much swirling around in your head today, so make sure that you can get some down time to relax and work through it all. If your emotions are all scrambled, take the day off!

- **SCORPIO**: Your deep subconscious mind is making a break for it—so chase after it and see where it leads! Your hunches should be impeccable and your mind-reading skills remarkable. Make the most of them!

- **SAGITTARIUS**: You and your partner (romantic, business, academic, or other) are swimming in different streams today and you just can't seem to connect. That's fine. Just make sure you're ready when you do meet up.

- **CAPRICORN**: There's no real mystery about what to do today—just take care of the issues that are obviously crying out for attention. You can probe more deeply some other time if you feel like it.

- **ACQUARIUS**: A seemingly simple task turns out to be much harder than you had anticipated—so see if you can peel it back into its component parts and tackle them one at a time. Things are sure to pick up soon!

- **PISCES**: You're having fun and chilling with your best people today—go with it and let your energy be your guide. It's a good time for you to step up and show someone new how it's done!

KP to Introduce First Comprehensive Transport Policy

PESHAWAR: (Agencies): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to introduce a comprehensive transport policy for the first time in the province, with the Draft Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transport Policy 2026 to be formally implemented after approval by the provincial cabinet. A consultative session on the draft policy was held at a local hotel in Peshawar on Friday, bringing together officials and representatives from various government departments and institutions. Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Transport and Mass Transit Samiullah Khan attended the session as chief guest. Secretary Transport Muhammad Zubair, Managing Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority Iftikhar Ahmad, Chief Executive Officer TransPeshawar Dr Syed Murtaza Asghar Bukhari and other senior officials also participated. During the session, the policy's lead consultant, Dr Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, briefed participants on its objectives and key features. Stakeholders also presented suggestions and recommendations for improving the draft. Samiullah Khan described the policy as a major milestone for the province's transport sector and said further projects would be developed through consultation with the public and stakeholders. He said the govern-



ment was pursuing several new transport initiatives, including a Circular Railway Project under an MoU signed with the Federal Ministry of Railways and an electric bikes project aimed at facilitating women and female students in travelling to educational institutions and other destinations. Preparations for the initial launch of the electric bikes project in Peshawar have been completed, while the initiative is planned to be expanded to other parts of the province. The government is also working to promote green transport, prepare a Transport Master Plan for Peshawar and include green-energy bus projects in feasibility studies for divisional headquarters. Secretary Transport Muhammad Zubair said the policy would provide a roadmap for achieving defined objectives and noted that work would also begin on an Electric Vehicles Policy following directions

from the Chief Minister. According to the draft, the main objective is to establish a safe, accessible, efficient and sustainable transport system, improving the movement of people and goods across the province. The policy focuses on reducing road accidents, providing affordable and inclusive public transport, and addressing the mobility needs of women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. It also seeks to improve connectivity between different modes of transport. Modern infrastructure, stronger institutional coordination, improved regulation and regional trade corridors are proposed to enhance freight transportation, logistics and commercial activity. The draft further calls for greater use of digital systems, transparent governance and effective monitoring mechanisms to strengthen transport institutions and improve service delivery.

Ulema, Health Experts Call for Mandatory Warning Labels on Unhealthy Foods

ISLAMABAD: (Adnan Hameed): Religious scholars (Ulema), health experts and representatives of the Pakistan National Heart Association (PANA) have urged the government to introduce mandatory Front-of-Pack Warning Labels (FOPWLs) on ultra-processed food and beverage products to help protect public health. The demand was made at a conference organised by PANA at a hotel in Islamabad, where participants highlighted concerns over unhealthy dietary choices and the rising burden of non-communicable diseases, particularly among children and young people. PANA President Maj Gen (retd) Masud Ur Rehman Kiani said national and international research had demonstrated the importance of clear and easily understandable warning labels in helping consumers identify products containing high levels of sugar, salt, unhealthy fats and calories. He noted that countries including Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Peru and Uruguay had introduced mandatory front-of-pack warning systems, with evidence indicating that such measures can influence consumer purchasing decisions and encourage



food manufacturers to reformulate products. PANA General Secretary Sana Ullah Ghuman said Ulema had an important role in raising awareness about healthy lifestyles because of their influence within communities. He urged religious scholars to support the introduction of mandatory warning labels and use Friday sermons and community engagements to educate people about healthier food choices. The participating Ulema expressed support for measures aimed at protecting public health and stressed that safeguarding human life and preventing harm were important social responsibilities. The participants called on the government to expedite legislation

and introduce mandatory FOPWL regulations for ultra-processed foods and beverages without further delay. They also urged authorities to ensure that warning labels are prominent, simple, clear and based on scientific evidence. They emphasised that effective warning labels would enable consumers to quickly identify products high in critical nutrients and make more informed choices. The participants reaffirmed that protecting public health was a shared responsibility and called for coordinated efforts by the government, religious leadership, civil society and communities to promote healthier food environments, particularly for children and families.

ITP Facilitation Vans Serve Over 7,000 Citizens This Year

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) facilitation vans have provided driving licence-related services to more than 7,000 citizens this year, bringing learner permits, licence renewals and other facilities closer to residents across the federal capital. According to an ITP official, more

than 2,900 citizens obtained learner permits through the mobile vans, while over 2,000 renewed their driving licences. More than 200 duplicate licences were also issued. The vans further provided over 1,700 driving test forms and assisted more than 200 citizens with duplicate licence and test-form related services. Chief

Traffic Officer Kainat Azhar Khan urged citizens to obtain valid driving licences, stressing that driving without a licence was an offence under the law. She said ITP was committed to providing timely, transparent and convenient licence services at citizens' doorsteps through its mobile facilitation initiative.

PM&DC Makes Fire Safety Training Mandatory for House Officers

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — The Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC) has made comprehensive fire safety education and training mandatory for house officers in all medical and dental colleges. PM&DC President Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj said the training would be incorporated into the house job and cover fire prevention, emergency drills, patient safety and evacuation procedures. The programme will

include regular fire drills, identification of fire hazards, proper use of fire extinguishers, evacuation routes and effective emergency communication. Prof. Rizwan Taj said the decision followed a review of existing fire safety protocols and was aimed at addressing gaps in emergency preparedness at medical colleges and teaching hospitals. He stressed that healthcare institutions must ensure effective fire safety

arrangements to protect patients, students, house officers, doctors and other staff, particularly vulnerable patients who require immediate assistance during emergencies. The PM&DC president said the council also intended to expand the programme to medical students, postgraduates and eventually all healthcare professionals, describing fire safety as an essential skill for healthcare workers.

184th IBCC Forum Concludes with Major Changes to Examination System

MURREE (Agencies) — The 184th meeting of the Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) Forum concluded in Murree with key decisions to standardise examination practices, promote conceptual learning and improve the transparency and recognition of Pakistani qualifications. The two-day forum, attended by heads of examination and technical education boards from across Pakistan, approved measures for greater uniformity in assessment in line with the Prime Minister's directives. The forum was informed that several boards, including those in Sindh, the Federal Board, AJK, KIU, Aga Khan and Ziauddin, had adopted the

revised grading policy, raising minimum passing marks to 40 per cent. Awareness sessions will be held nationwide to support its implementation. It also approved the inclusion of B-Form/CNIC numbers on SSC and HSSC certificates to improve verification of academic records, along with scholarships and overseas exposure opportunities for board toppers. IBCC will also organise winter and summer camps for high-achieving students. The forum recommended 12 additional Deeni Madaris for equivalence of their qualifications with SSC and HSSC, taking the total to 26. It also agreed to grant Science Group equivalence to foreign-board students who

have passed at least two science subjects. A uniform calendar for theory and practical examinations and common guidelines for practical assessments were also approved to ensure greater consistency and transparency. IBCC Executive Director Dr Ghulam Ali Mallah said the reforms aimed to shift examinations from rote learning towards conceptual assessment, embrace technology and enhance the national and international credibility of Pakistani qualifications. The forum reaffirmed its commitment to developing a transparent, technology-enabled, student-friendly and internationally comparable examination system.

Major General Faisal Naseer Appointed NACTA National Coordinator in Surprise Reshuffle

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Major General Faisal Naseer has been appointed National Coordinator of the National Counter Terrorism Authority for three years, according to a notification issued by the Establishment Division on Friday, in what officials and analysts described as a surprise move within Pakistan's security and intelligence apparatus.

The appointment was made with the approval of the federal government under Section 9(1) of the NACTA Act, 2013, on a secondment basis, with immediate effect and until further orders, on standard terms and conditions contained in JSI-4/85. The notification is to be published in the next issue of the Gazette of Pakistan, Part-I, and was circulated to the Prime Minister's Office, the President's Secretariat, the Cabinet Division, the Interior Division, the chief secretaries of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Sindh, and the Accountant General of Pakistan. Naseer has been directed to submit a charge assumption report to the relevant section officer once he takes over.

Naseer had been serving as Director General (C) at the Inter-Services Intelligence, a post commonly but inaccurately described as heading the agency's counter-intelligence wing. The office in fact heads the ISI's Internal Wing, which deals with domestic security and political matters and, given the nature of the

assignment, frequently engages with the country's principal power centres, making it considered virtually the second most important position in the ISI after the director general himself. Naseer had held the post since shortly after his promotion to major general in 2022. He was commissioned into the Pakistan Army in 1992 through the Pakistan Military Academy's 85th Long Course, into the Corps of Military Intelligence, and holds the military honours Hilal-i-Imtiyaz, Tamgha-i-Basalat and Hilal-e-Shujaat with Bar.

His transfer is being read as particularly significant because it comes just ahead of the army's upcoming lieutenant general promotions board. Naseer had been considered a strong candidate for elevation to lieutenant general, and in the military's conventional career progression, being moved out of an active military assignment is generally seen as reducing prospects for further promotion, though analysts note exceptions have occurred. The government has not explained its rationale for the move, which one report described as bringing an officer with senior counter-intelligence experience into the national counter-terrorism coordination mechanism, while another officer with field command experience is expected to take his place in the ISI's Internal Wing, though no successor has yet been publicly named.

IMSciences Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for Newly Acquired 19-Kanal Land



PESHAWAR: (Agencies): The Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences), Peshawar, held a groundbreaking ceremony on Friday for its newly acquired 19-kanal land, marking another milestone in the institute's ongoing expansion and development. The ceremony was attended by directors, faculty members and staff of IMSciences. Prayers were offered for the continued progress, prosperity and success of the institute, followed by remarks highlighting the importance of the new acquisition. Director IMSciences Prof Dr Usman Ghani congratulated

the faculty and staff on the occasion and shared his vision for the institute's continued growth. He appreciated the dedication, commitment and sense of ownership demonstrated by the IMSciences community toward the institution. The newly acquired land is expected to provide additional space for infrastructure development and support the institute's future academic and institutional expansion. The development marks an important step in IMSciences' efforts to strengthen its infrastructure and create greater opportunities for academic growth and improved facilities.



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USS Abraham Lincoln Docks in Thailand, Ending Record 286-Day Deployment as Crew Takes First Shore Leave

LAEM CHABANG (Agencies) - The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln docked at Laem Chabang Port in Thailand's Chonburi province, marking its first full port stop after 286 consecutive days at sea, one of the longest deployments in modern US Navy history. Fuel trucks have been observed delivering aviation fuel to the carrier since it docked, with between 20 and 30 trucks entering and leaving daily. The fuel supplies Carrier Air Wing Nine, whose nine squadrons fly the F-35C Lightning II, F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, EA-18G Growler, E-2D Advanced Hawkeye and MH-60 Seahawk. The air wing, nicknamed the Shoguns, flew more than 10,000 sorties and dropped over 1.5 million pounds of ordnance during the deployment's combat operations in the Middle East, according to the Navy. The Lincoln's time at sea, which began when it departed San Diego in November 2025,

broke the modern Navy record of 206 straight days previously set by USS Dwight D. Eisenhower during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the deployment supported the US-Israeli war with Iran, including Operation Epic Fury and subsequent blockade enforcement. The strain was visible on the hull, streaked with rust and algae, which commanding officer Capt. Dan Keeler called normal for a long deployment. The deployment had drawn scrutiny in Washington over crew mental health and reported supply shortages. The carrier arrived alongside its escorts, the destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. at nearby Sriracha and the cruiser USS Robert Smalls at Map Ta Phut. Rear Adm. Robert E. Loughran, commander of Carrier Strike Group 3, said the stop gave sailors and Marines a well-deserved chance to rest and recharge. For the roughly 5,000 personnel aboard, the stop means their first time on dry



land in more than nine months. Groups arrived by bus at the Hard Rock Hotel in Pattaya, the main coordination centre for the five-day shore leave, with

shuttle buses running from 5 am to 2 am. Pattaya's mayor, Poramase Ngampiches, said sailors were arriving with pockets full after months without a

chance to spend money, estimating the visit could bring around 100 million baht into the local economy. Personnel are spending their break at hotels and along the beaches and bars of Pattaya, a rest-and-recreation destination for US servicemembers since the Vietnam War era. Defence analyst Bryan Clark of the Hudson Institute said a port call's change of scenery can bring real relief even without extended flight operations. The Navy has deployed Shore Patrol alongside Thai police for the visit. The Lincoln is due to remain in Thailand through September 6 before continuing home to San Diego. No official arrival date has been announced, but the transit is typically expected to take three to four weeks, putting a likely arrival in the late September to early October window. The carrier's return was made possible after USS George Washington arrived in the Middle East in mid-August to take over its duties.

Grand Mosque advances toward landmark status

RIYADH (Agencies): The ongoing digital initiatives are accelerating operations and boosting service efficiency, steering the Grand Mosque toward becoming one of the world's smartest sites by 2030, SPA reported. The deputy CEO for Digital Transformation at the General Authority for the Care of the Affairs of The Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque, Dr. Mohammed Al-Saqr, stated that the authority's smart mobility platform has automated

transit services and integrated electronic booking and payment, reducing pilgrim waiting times from around two hours three years ago to roughly nine minutes during the most recent Hajj season. Digital transformation has also modernized the Grand Mosque's iftar meal operations, which distribute over 38 million meals with transaction values nearing SR500 million. Through automation, integration with the national Ehsan charity platform, and

third-party oversight, administrative clearance times have dropped from eight days to about eight minutes. Furthermore, the "Rafed" platform connects 18 government entities to address field reports, while an interactive digital mapping system handles roughly 600,000 cases annually, catering to nearly 10 percent of the six million annual visitors as the authority expands smart technology adoption across both holy mosques.

American Airlines Passenger Duct-Taped to Seat After Mid-Air Outburst, Flight Diverted to Baltimore



BALTIMORE (Agencies) - An American Airlines flight from Dallas to Newark was diverted to Baltimore on Thursday night after a passenger allegedly became disruptive and violent, prompting crew members and fellow travellers to restrain him to his seat with duct tape and zip ties. Flight AA618 departed Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and was diverted to Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport at around 10:15 pm, according to the FAA, which is investigating alongside the FBI's Baltimore field office. The passenger, Arthur Lundeen, 67, of Tucson, Arizona, was seated two rows behind fellow passengers Juan Mejia, a former law enforcement officer, and his friend Richard Olenick. Mejia told ABC News that Lundeen began directing racial slurs and vulgar language at crew members, other passengers and women on board, before growing belligerent and turning physical. Once Lundeen allegedly became physical, Mejia and Olenick moved to intervene. "He got up right away and jumped in the seat right next to the passenger and began working on restraining him in order to keep the situation contained," Olenick told ABC. Crew members and passengers restrained Lundeen to his seat with duct tape, while his hands were secured with zip ties. Video obtained by TMZ showed tape wound from his head down his torso, with visible cuts on his arms. "We

weren't looking to hurt this individual; we were looking more to restrain him and control him, so it didn't escalate to go any further," Mejia said. Lundeen remained restrained for about 15 minutes before landing. Maryland Transportation Authority Police met the aircraft and took Lundeen into custody. Officers found an open wound on his arm, and he was treated by paramedics before being arrested. He faces state charges of second-degree assault and disorderly conduct, with a trial scheduled for October 19 in Glen Burnie. He was released on bail, and attempts to reach him for comment were unsuccessful. Authorities have not detailed the full disruption that occurred in the air, and the FBI is consulting with the US Attorney's Office on possible federal charges. American Airlines said the safety and security of its customers and team members remains its top priority and that it does not tolerate violence, thanking crew for their professionalism and passengers for their understanding. Law enforcement met the aircraft and assisted with deplaning Lundeen before the flight continued to Newark. Restraining unruly passengers with tape and zip ties is a recognised emergency protocol on US flights when de-escalation fails. The incident adds to a broader pattern this year: the FAA has logged 1,160 unruly passenger incidents in 2026, with penalties for interfering with crew reaching as high as 43,000 dollars.

China, Singapore to hold 'Maritime Cooperation-2026' joint drill with live-fire, replenishment, search and rescue

BEIJING (Agencies) - The Chinese and Singaporean navies will hold the "Maritime Cooperation-2026" joint exercise in the sea and airspace near Zhanjiang, South China's Guangdong Province in early September, according to China's Ministry of National Defense on Thursday. The drills will include live-fire shooting, underway replenishment and joint search and rescue op-

erations. The exercise aims to further enhance mutual trust between the two sides, promote practical cooperation and strengthen their ability to jointly safeguard regional peace and stability. Prior to this, China and Singapore have held four "Maritime Cooperation" joint naval exercises. In 2015, the two countries conducted their first bilateral naval exercise under the name

"Maritime Cooperation-2015." Since then, the two navies have established a routine mechanism of alternating hosts, with the scale and influence of the exercises steadily growing. The China-Singapore Exercise Cooperation-2025 joint maritime exercise is being held in the Changi Naval Base and in the waters and airspace to the east of Singapore from May 9 to 16 in 2025, according to China's Ministry of National Defense. The exercise consisted of three phases: in-port exchanges, at-sea drills and a closing ceremony. The at-sea phase focused on joint surface strikes, underway replenishment, joint search and rescue, and boarding and inspection operations, said the Xinhua News Agency. The guided-missile frigate PLAN Xuchang and the mine countermeasure vessel PLAN Chishui, together with the RSS (Republic of Singapore Ship) Steadfast-class frigate and the RSS Bedok-class mine countermeasure vessel, participated in the 2025 exercise. Commenting on the announced drills for the "Maritime Cooperation-2026" exercise, Zhang Junshe, a military affairs expert, told the Global Times on Thursday that joint search and rescue holds significant practical importance. The South China Sea is a critical international shipping artery where sea lanes converge and maritime traffic is dense. The area's complex hydrometeorological conditions make natural disasters and maritime emergencies a recurring reality. Under the search and rescue responsibility zones designated by the International Maritime Organization, both China and Singapore have maritime rescue obligations in relevant areas of the South China Sea, and their naval forces accordingly bear these responsibilities, Zhang said. Live-fire shooting and underway replenishment focus on enhancing each navy's operational capabilities: live-fire drills help vessels hone their actual weapons employment skills, while underway replenishment tests and improves sustained support capabilities for far-sea operations, said Zhang.

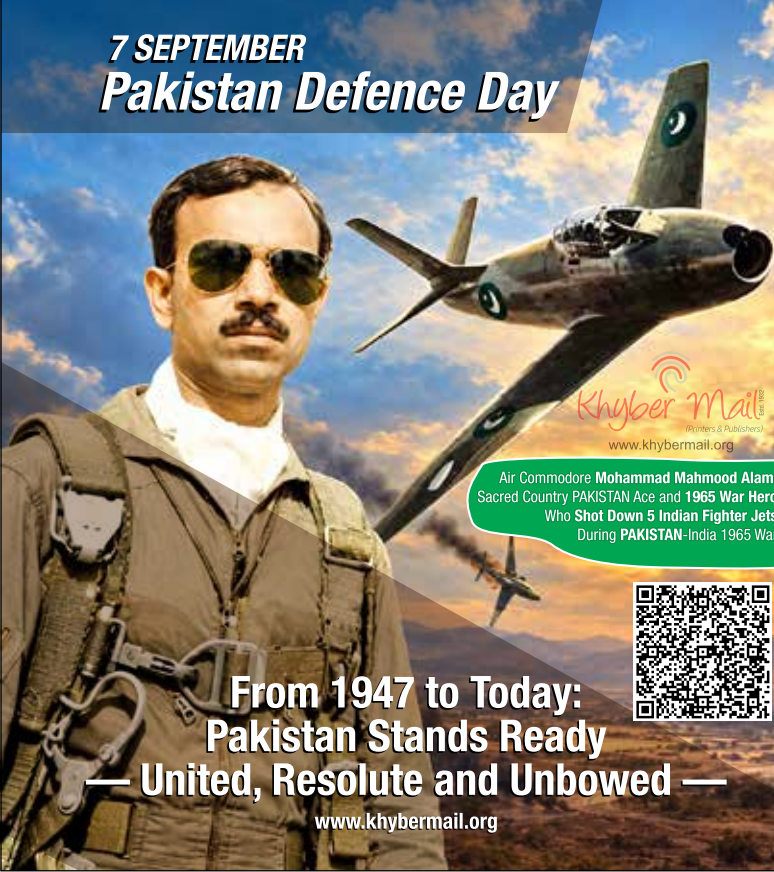
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Ukrainians in Indian jail involved in drone attack on Myanmar passenger plane – report

NEW DELHI: (Agencies): India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) has told a Delhi court that six Ukrainian nationals and an American citizen detained in India were allegedly involved in a drone attack on a civilian aircraft in neighboring Myanmar. The seven foreign nationals, who were arrested in March, are currently in custody in India. The NIA made the allegation while seeking permission to interrogate Ukrainian national Viktor Kaminskyi and American citizen Matthew VanDyke inside Tihar Jail. A Delhi court subsequently granted permission for the questioning. According to the NIA, the Indian government had received what it described as "credible information"

indicating that some Ukrainian and US nationals were involved in a drone attack on a civilian aircraft in Myanmar. The agency alleged that as many as 14 Ukrainians had entered India on tourist visas on different dates before traveling to Guwahati in Assam and then proceeding toward Mizoram. Some allegedly entered Myanmar without the required permits to participate in pre-scheduled training involving drone warfare, drone operations, drone assembly and jamming technology for ethnic armed groups fighting Myanmar's military government. Myanmar media previously reported that a drone struck a Myanmar National Airlines ATR-72-600 passenger aircraft at

Myitkyina Airport on February 20 as it was preparing to fly to Mandalay. The aircraft, which was carrying passengers, reportedly sustained damage to its nose, mid-fuselage and tail. However, it remains unclear whether the incident cited by the NIA is the same drone attack referred to in reports of the aircraft being damaged. The drone was reportedly an FPV, or first-person-view, model, a type widely used in the Ukraine conflict. The seven foreign nationals were arrested on March 13 after allegedly crossing back into India. The NIA has alleged that ethnic armed groups operating in Myanmar have links with certain banned insurgent organizations in northeastern India and have

provided weapons, military equipment and training to such groups. Investigators have also claimed that several consignments of drones from Europe were delivered to individuals and groups in Mizoram. The agency said data extracted from electronic devices seized from the suspects contained images, videos and voice recordings that investigators believe require further corroboration through direct questioning. The NIA told the court that questioning Kaminskyi and VanDyke was necessary to confront them with witness statements, establish the alleged wider conspiracy, identify other suspects and determine the possible masterminds behind the operation. Ukraine

has previously rejected suggestions that its government was involved in supporting terrorist activities and called for the release of its nationals. VanDyke, the American detainee, is the founder of Sons of Liberty International, an organization that provides military training and security-related services in conflict zones. He has reportedly participated in foreign conflicts, including Libya's civil war. The investigation remains ongoing as Indian authorities examine the alleged cross-border movement of the suspects, their contacts with armed groups and the possible role of drone technology in the Myanmar aircraft attack.

Russian Diplomat Suggests Rival Ukrainian Agency May Have Hit SBU Headquarters

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A Russian diplomat has suggested that a drone strike on the headquarters of Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) in Kyiv may have resulted from an internal rivalry between Ukrainian intelligence agencies rather than a Russian attack. Rodion Miroshnik, a senior Russian diplomat, made the remarks after a drone struck the central SBU building in Kyiv on Friday, causing a major explosion. Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky blamed Moscow for the attack and said the drone had targeted the office of SBU acting head Aleksandr Poklad, who was unharmed. Zelensky said he had instructed Poklad to prepare an "adequate, noticeable and, if possible, mirror response" following the strike. Miroshnik, however, questioned Kyiv's account, pointing to an earlier confrontation between the SBU and Ukraine's military intelligence agency, the HUR. He suggested that the incident could have been connected to tensions between the two agencies. The reported dispute centers on Stepan Kaplunov, described in the supplied account as a white supremacist and senior figure in the Russian Volunteer Corps (RDK), a paramilitary formation operating under the patronage of Ukraine's military intelligence. The SBU had alleged that Kaplunov was involved in a Moscow-backed plot to assassinate a Russian opposition figure on Ukraine's Independence Day. The RDK, meanwhile, accused the SBU of kidnapping Kaplunov and holding him at a secret detention site for more than a week.

Controversial \$6 Million Banana Exposes Long History of Provocative Art

MIAMI: (Agencies): Maurizio Cattelan's controversial artwork Comedian, consisting of a banana taped to a wall with silver duct tape, has become one of contemporary art's most famous and debated works. The artwork debuted at Art Basel Miami Beach in December 2019, attracting attention from visitors, journalists and celebrities including Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael Bay and Travis Scott. Two editions initially sold for \$120,000 each, while the third was later purchased for \$150,000. Buyers did not simply receive a banana. They received a certificate of authenticity and instructions for displaying the artwork, including replacing the banana when necessary. The installation quickly went viral, generating widespread amusement, criticism and countless online imitations. Critics questioned whether a banana and duct tape could genuinely qualify as art, while supporters argued that the work challenged conventional ideas about



artistic value. The controversy helped make Comedian internationally famous. In 2024, one of its three editions was resold at auction for \$6.24 million, reigniting debate over the extraordinary price. The banana itself is replaceable; the value lies in Cattelan's concept, its authentication and the cultural attention surrounding it. The work has also become an example of how provocation, publicity and controversy can influence the modern art market. Beyond its humor and simplicity, Comedian continues a long tradition of artists challenging conventional definitions of art and forcing audiences to question who determines an artwork's value.

Iran Strikes Disrupt US Navy Logistics, Forcing Longer Supply Routes

WASHINGTON, (Agencies) — Iranian strikes on U.S. military infrastructure in the Gulf have severely disrupted the American Navy's regional logistics network, forcing warships operating in the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman to depend on supply routes stretching thousands of miles, according to a New York Times investigation. About 20 U.S. Navy ships, including two aircraft carriers, 12 destroyers and three amphibious ships, are operating in the region with roughly 20,000 sailors and Marines aboard. The force requires more than 420,000 meals and about eight million gallons of fuel every week to sustain operations. The logistical difficulties began after an Iranian attack on February 28 heavily damaged

the U.S. Navy's longstanding logistics hub at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, which had supported American naval operations in the Gulf for decades. The damage affected facilities including the Fifth Fleet headquarters, warehouses, barracks and other support infrastructure. With Bahrain no longer available as a major logistics hub and other regional ports considered vulnerable to Iranian missiles and drones, the Navy has shifted much of its support activity to Diego Garcia, a remote U.S.-British military facility in the Indian Ocean. Diego Garcia is approximately 2,200 miles from U.S. warships operating in the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea. Another potential supply route extends to Singapore, about 3,700 miles away, requiring vessels to transit the busy Strait of Malacca. The increased distances have forced American supply ships to conduct more frequent replenishment-at-sea operations, reportedly about every five or six days. During these operations, supply vessels and combat ships must maintain the same course and speed while transferring fuel, food, ammunition and other material, creating additional operational risks. The disruption has also created problems with planning and resupply. Military Times reported that ships using Diego Garcia have faced difficulties because some food orders have had to be placed as much as 30 days in advance, while the unpredictable tempo of combat operations makes forecasting requirements difficult. Sailors have consequently relied heavily on underway replenishment vessels for supplies. The extended logistics chain is occurring alongside unusually long deployments. The USS Abraham Lincoln spent more than seven months without an official port visit and ultimately remained at sea for roughly nine months before reaching Thailand, according to recent reporting. The prolonged deployment has generated concerns among sailors, families and lawmakers about fatigue, morale and crew welfare. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Daryl Caudle said the Navy would not return to the damaged Bahrain facility "anytime soon," underscoring the continuing disruption to the service's traditional support network. Vice Adm. Curt Renshaw, commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, acknowledged that the Navy has been dealing with unusually complex logistical problems as the conflict has continued. The logistical challenge illustrates the importance of shore-based infrastructure to sustained naval operations.

Rare Microalgae Bloom Disrupts Most of Israel's Desalination Plants

JERUSALEM: (Agencies): An unusually large microalgae bloom in the Mediterranean Sea has temporarily disrupted operations at most of Israel's major desalination plants, raising concerns over the country's main source of drinking water. Five of Israel's six coastal desalination plants shut down on Sunday, according to Mekorot, the national water company. Some facilities have since partially resumed operations, but only one was running at full capacity by Thursday. Mekorot spokesperson Lior Gutman described the incident as an "extremely rare event" and said the country had so far avoided a significant drinking water shortage. The disruption is particularly concerning because desalination supplies at least 65 percent of Israel's drinking water. Most of the country's desalination facilities are located along the Mediterranean coast. Scientists said the bloom, stretching for more than a dozen miles, consists of microscopic algae that can multiply rapidly under favorable

conditions. Researchers believe it originated near the Nile Delta and was carried northward along Israel's coastline by sea currents. The algae can interfere with the reverse-osmosis systems used by desalination plants. The process relies on membranes to remove salt, bacteria and other contaminants from seawater, but excessive organic material can clog or damage the membranes and overwhelm treatment systems. Israeli authorities have responded by increasing supplies from the Sea of Galilee, activating groundwater wells and using national water reserves to compensate for the reduced desalination capacity. Some cities introduced temporary restrictions on activities such as garden irrigation and filling swimming pools. Farmers relying on drinking-quality water for irrigation have faced the greatest impact. The incident occurred during the summer, when water demand in Israel is typically at its highest, adding to the pressure on the national water system.

Heavy Rain Floods Delhi Airport, Disrupts Hundreds of Flights as Red Alert Issued

NEW DELHI (Agencies) - Heavy rain and thunderstorms battered Delhi-NCR on Friday, triggering severe waterlogging at Indira Gandhi International Airport and disrupting flight operations as authorities issued a red weather alert for the capital. Water accumulated around the airport's approach roads and forecourt areas, particularly near Terminal 3, turning what is normally a busy passenger zone into a flooded stretch. Videos showed travellers rolling up their trousers and dragging luggage through ankle-deep water to reach the terminal gates. One passenger told ANI she had been waiting for the water level to recede before heading toward the arrival gates. Between roughly 3:30 pm and 5 pm, between nine and eleven incoming flights were diverted, mostly to Jaipur and Lucknow, with one each to Ahmedabad and Chandigarh. More than 550 flights were delayed at IGI Airport, according to FlightRadar24 data cited by the Times of India, though other outlets put the delay count above 400. Airlines advised passengers to check flight status and allow extra travel time. The India Meteorological Department issued a red alert for Delhi as the storm intensified, with orange warnings for neighbouring Noida and Ghaziabad. Delhi Airport's operator said water had accumulated only in limited forecourt and approach areas and that pumping operations cleared most of it shortly after the rain eased, though the disruption coincided with the start of the busy evening travel period. Waterlogging was also reported on stretches connecting the airport to



central Delhi and Gurugram. The sudden intensity of the downpour, rather than a prolonged spell of rain, appears to have overwhelmed surface drainage. The scenes at one of the country's busiest airports drew sharp criticism online, with users contrasting the flooding against India's recent economic growth figures and mocking claims of world-class infrastructure. Delhi-NCR is forecast to remain wet into Saturday, with the IMD predicting light to moderate rain and thunderstorms in spells through the day. The alert has since been downgraded to yellow, though authorities warn that renewed waterlogging and flight delays remain possible if intense showers return. Latest conditions in New Delhi show light rain continuing, with a temperature of around 80°F and a 75 percent chance of further rain today; Saturday's high is expected near 81°F. The wet pattern should ease into early next week, with rain chances dropping to 55 percent Sunday and temperatures climbing into the low-to-mid 90s by midweek, before another spell of heavy rain is forecast around Saturday, September 12.

Gold Prices Fall by Rs3,600 per Tola



KARACHI (Agencies) — Gold prices declined in the local market on Saturday, with the price of 24-karat gold falling by Rs3,600 per tola to Rs465,536, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs3,086 to Rs399,122, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold fell by Rs2,829 to Rs365,875. In the international market, gold prices dropped by \$36 to \$4,430 per ounce. Silver prices also declined, with the price per tola falling by Rs63 to Rs7,098 and 10 grams decreasing by Rs54 to Rs6,085. International silver prices fell by \$0.63 to \$66.19 per ounce.

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