



Islamabad POST

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Pak economic future 'inextricably linked' to maritime security

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Angela Merkel defends ties with Russia

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Carlos named Qalandars' captain

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Information Minister claims

'Nation rejects politics of 'chaos and anarchy'

The minister said the people of Pakistan wanted the politics of progress and welfare which is manifested by the people-friendly initiatives of the government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

ANSAR M BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday called out the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf for pursuing the politics of "chaos and anarchy", citing its violent conspiracy of May 9 arson. Talking to the media at the Nur Khan Airbase, the minister said the people of Pakistan wanted the politics of progress and welfare which is manifested by the people-friendly initiatives of the government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He said the national economy is taking off with the Pakistan Stock Exchange crossing the historical milestone of 100,000 points, and inflation plummeting to 6.9 per cent from 32 per cent, while foreign exchange reserves are swelling with a significant increase in exports, and also remittances that jumped to \$8.8 billion in the first quarter. He said two major commodities including electricity and petrol are cheaper than previous years, while interest rate and KIBOR stood at 15 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. "This shows the economy is progressing and attracting foreign investment," he added. The minister said a high-level delegation from Belarus has already arrived in Pakistan the other day, while its President Alexander Lukashenko has just arrived in Islamabad. He said this is a historical visit for the bilateral relations of the two countries that enjoyed three decades of diplomatic ties. Tarar called the two countries' friendship and partnership "exemplary" while lauding

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Negotiations underway between government, PTI

Sources suggest that negotiations taking place at the Speaker's residence in the Minister's Enclave

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Negotiations between leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the government committee regarding the location for sit-in are underway. The government's committee, which includes National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Amir Maqam, and Rana Sanaullah, is in talks with PTI representatives, including Asad Qaiser and Shibli Faraz. Sources suggest that the negotiations are taking place at the Speaker's residence in the Minister's Enclave. However, Shibli Faraz clarified

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ISLAMABAD: President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has arrived in Islamabad on a 3-day official visit. On arrival in Islamabad. He was received by PM Shehbaz Sharif, DPM/FM Muhammad Ishaq Dar along with other ministers. - DNA

Belarus President arrives in Islamabad

President will hold extensive talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko on Monday arrived in Islamabad on his three-day official visit to Pakistan on the request of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The Belarus President arrived at the Nur Khan Airbase, Rawalpindi where he was received by Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior, Senator Mohsin

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With eyes on D-Chowk PTI convoy enters Islamabad amid clashes with police

A police constable died from severe injuries, and over 70 officers injured during violent clashes with PTI protesters

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: PTI convoys led by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Opposition Leader, Omar Ayub, entered Islamabad on the call of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan. The convoys, originating from the Hazara Interchange, are heading towards D-Chowk in Islamabad. As the convoys advanced, they encountered heavy resistance from the police at the Ghazi Brotha Bridge, where intense shelling was reported.

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Gohar meets Imran 'There is no looking back'

Sheikh Waqas Akram denies conflict between Gandapur and Bushra Bibi

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar

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Briefs

Social media faces disruptions in Pakistan

"It's super frustrating," says a social media platform user as disruptions persist

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With the government employing measures to stop PTI march to Islamabad, social media users across the country are facing hindrances while accessing the platforms. Although hours have passed, the cause of the outage remains unknown, and no official notification has been issued, raising questions about its timing. The government had confirmed that they planned on disrupting internet services in areas with security concerns, but there was no comment about social media platforms. Downtime.com - which tracks real-time overview of issues and outages of websites and social platforms - showed that users of Pakistan were facing disruptions in accessing WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and other sites.

ECP delist all cases

All the cases were earlier scheduled for today (Tuesday)

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The ECP on Monday delisted all the cases already scheduled for hearing. All the cases were earlier scheduled for today (Tuesday). The hearing of cases were delisted due to the closure of roads in Islamabad in the wake of PTI's protest call. The hearing on the statement of accounts of PTI was earlier scheduled for today. Earlier, PTI's main convoy from Peshawar, led by Bushra Bibi, wife of Imran Khan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, reached Hazro Interchange on Sunday night en route to Islamabad for protest.

'May 9 Part-II'

Policeman killed by PTI protesters: Azma

Government won't let PTI protesters to storm Islamabad, vows Punjab information minister

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is planning to stage May 9-like violent protests in the country, as its supporters clashed with "unarmed" policemen performing security duties during their much-hyped "final call" protest. The PTI supporters are rallying towards the federal capital on the call of their jailed party founder Imran Khan to gather at D-Chowk in the capital and stay there until their demands are met. The release of jailed ex-premier among other issues is what the party seeks. "They want May 9 Part-II," said the provincial minister addressing a hurriedly-called presser in Lahore on Monday. She added that a police constable lost his life in clashes with the PTI protesters, whereas, nearly 70 others were wounded including five cops in critical condition. She alleged that PTI's "Youth Force" was involved in firing at policemen. There were reports of several other

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Bushra urges PTI protesters to continue march

"I will stand firm until my last breath. You must stand with me," says former first lady to boost supporters' morale

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi has urged the supporters to continue their march on Islamabad until the release of the former prime minister, who remains incarcerated at Adiala jail. The PTI supporters are rallying towards the federal capital on the call of their leader, Khan, to gather at D-Chowk in the capital and stay

Continued on Page 06

Education institutions in twin cities to remain closed

Many institutions postponed exams scheduled for today and tomorrow

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Educational institutions in Islamabad and Rawalpindi will remain closed today (Tuesday) as well due to protests organised by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The decision to close the schools and universities was made in

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JCP names 9 judges for SHC's constitutional benches

Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha nominated as head of constitutional benches; Justice Mansoor, Justice Munid and SHC Chief justice oppose

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Monday named nine judges for the constitutional benches in the Sindh High Court (SHC) by a majority of eleven to four. The third meeting of the JCP under the 26th Constitutional Amendment was held with Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi in the chair at the top court in Islamabad. The sole agenda of the meeting was formation of constitutional benches with the SHC. "Following an extensive and thoughtful exchange of views, the commission considered the formation of constitutional benches in SHC and approved names of 9 judges with a majority of 11 to 4 for the period of two months," read a statement issued by the Supreme Court. SHC Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha was nominated as head of the constitutional benches. He was picked as the chairman of the three-member constitutional committee. The committee would be responsible for constituting constitutional benches in the SHC. SC senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar and SHC Chief Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui opposed the majority decision. CJP Afridi, however, did not vote on the matter.

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LHC dismisses petition against 26th constitutional amend

CJ LHC stated that the matter was already under consideration in the Supreme Court

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has dismissed a petition seeking the annulment of the 26th constitutional amendment. LHC Chief Justice Aaliya Neelum heard the petition filed by citizen, Nazir Ahmad, naming the federal government and others as respondents. The Registrar of LHC raised an objection, stating that the matter was already under consideration in the Supreme Court, and thus

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Punjab govt eases restrictions

The new guidelines also include changes to traffic regulations. Heavy vehicles will be allowed to enter the designated districts from Monday to Thursday but will face restrictions on Friday to Sunday during which they will be prohibited from entering

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government announced relaxation in smog-related restrictions, allowing construction activities in the city and three other districts. The new measures, which aim to balance air quality concerns with economic and developmental needs, were outlined in a notification issued by Dr Imran Hamid Sheikh, the Director General of Environment, here on Monday. Under the updated rules, construction work is now permitted in Lahore, Gujranwala, Multan and Faisalabad. Brick kilns

that use zig-zag technology will also be allowed to operate. Additionally, both public and private offices will now be allowed to function with 100% staff attendance. The new guidelines also include changes to traffic regulations. Heavy vehicles will be allowed to enter the designated districts from Monday to Thursday but will face restrictions on Friday to Sunday during which they will be prohibited from entering. Other existing restrictions remain in place, including the mandatory closure of shops, markets and shopping malls by 8:00pm. However, restaurants can continue offering both indoor and outdoor dining until 10:00pm. Furthermore, the notifica-

tion specifies that barbecue activities will not be allowed unless equipped with proper hood systems. Meanwhile, six shops and six restaurants have been sealed in the provincial capital for violating official business operating hours as part of the ongoing efforts to combat smog, here on Monday. The district administration Lahore remained active until late at night to enforce the orders for markets to close at 8 pm and restaurants to close at 10 pm. The crackdown continues across all tehsils without discrimination. As per details, in Shalimar Tehsil, Assistant Commissioner (AC), Dr. Anam Fatima sealed four shops for violating the operating hours.

Govt committed to safeguarding women's rights, says Maryam

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the protection of women is a top priority for the Punjab government, which remains fully committed to safeguarding their rights and ensuring their well-being. In her message on International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women being celebrated on Monday, the CM said the honor of mothers, sisters and daughters is a part of our social traditions and religious values. "Women are my red line, violence or cruelty against them is absolutely not tolerable" she said. The CM said that Islam gave orders to give women complete respect and rights, adding that the honor and respect of women, including daughters and sisters, is the Sunnah of our beloved Holy Prophet (PBUH). In the Holy Quran and Sunnah, it is not only forbidden to raise hand on women but also to be gentle towards them. The chief minister said that those who commit violence against women are cowards and criminals and they will be dealt with an iron hand, adding that Punjab has the honor of establishing a virtual women's police station for the first time. She said women in trouble can file complaints with the virtual police station. She underscored that women can get immediate police help in an emergency by pressing the panic button. CM Maryam Nawaz said that the police helpline for women is also fully functional, adding that a violence-free, safe and equal society for women guarantees progress.—APP

Commissioner chairs Astor Peace Committee's meeting

ASTORE: Commissioner Damer Division, Khurshid Aalam on Monday chaired a meeting of Astor Peace Committee. Deputy Commissioner, Astor, Muhammad Tariq, SP Astor, Wazir Naik Aalam, Assistant Commissioner Astor, Ahsan ul Haq, Assistant Commissioner Shounter, Tanveer Ahmed and other members of the committee attended the meeting. The commissioner said the committee played vital role in establishing peace in the region. He pointed out that development of any areas depended on peaceful condition and the committee would play its due role in that regard. The commissioner informed that divisional heads of departments would stay in Astor for 10 days in a month for early resolutions of problems related to far flung areas of the division. Khurshid Aalam said he would also ensure his presence in the town. The members of the committee briefed the commissioner about the problems of the area.—APP

Maritime security workshop evolves into event of national significance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: It is a matter of great satisfaction for me to observe the evolution of Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW) from its humble beginning in 2017 to an event of national significance with the organization of 7th edition of MARSEW at Pakistan Navy War College. The Workshop has provided a shared platform to maritime stakeholders for raising awareness about maritime potential of Pakistan and dilate upon ways and means to harness this untapped domain. The Workshop also brings together some of the most insightful minds from the govt, military, academia, media and industry, with a common goal: to deepen our understanding of maritime security in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. As the global maritime landscape evolves, our immediate neighborhood, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is facing unprecedented



challenges including geo-political contestation and nuclearization. The growth of international trade, the rise of transnational threats and the rapid pace of technological advancements have created both opportunities and risks in the IOR. In this background, securing our maritime domain is not merely a national priority but a necessity, requiring cooperation, innovation, and vigilance. Besides security challenges in the maritime domain, our rich maritime resources offer great potential for economic prosperity. The country's economic future is inextricably linked to

the sea which serves as mankind's last reservoir for sustenance. Despite the fact that oceans and seas are regarded as the common heritage of mankind, claims and counter claims over seas resources are spawning friction as never witnessed before. The ongoing developments within the IOR have a direct bearing on Pakistan's maritime security. In this context, exploitation of Blue Economy for socio-economic prosperity enabled by secure maritime environment necessitates our focused attention. I am confident that this Workshop will inspire new perspectives and lead to actionable drive that reinforces our commitment to maritime security and related economic prosperity. Together, let us work towards a secure and stable maritime environment that benefits not only our nation but the global community at large. I wish all the MARSEW participants an insightful interaction and a pleasant stay with their host, Pakistan Navy War College.



KARACHI: Bangladesh's Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Islam during his visit to the Osaka company stall at the IDEAS 2024 exhibition, accompanied by CEO Shamim Ahmed and Moaz Shamim.

Edible prices set under price control magistrate's supervision

DNA

ABBOTTABAD: In a significant move to regulate the prices of essential food items, the district administration Abbottabad under the supervision of Price Control Magistrate and Additional Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Arshad Mahmood, has successfully set the official rates for fruits, vegetables, and poultry on Monday. The decision was made during a meeting that included the revenue staff, officials from the food department, and representatives from local trade associations. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure fair pricing and curb inflation in the local market, particularly concerning essential food items that have seen fluctuating prices in recent weeks. According to officials, the newly established rates for fruits, vegetables, and poultry are intended to protect consumers from excessive price hikes, ensuring that prices remain within reasonable limits. These rates are set to be implemented immediately, with regular monitoring by the authorities to prevent violations and ensure compliance across markets in the district.

In line with this initiative, the district administration has called on citizens to report any discrepancies or complaints related to the prices of food items. Citizens can now use multiple channels to file their complaints, including the District Control Room, Akhtiar App, Marsital App, or the Citizen Portal. These platforms are designed to allow residents to quickly report instances of overpricing or any irregularities in the market.

Sindh CM seeks date-wise projects completion deadlines

Why is this ordinate delay being faced in completing the projects when the allocated funds have been released well in time?" Sindh CM questioned the local government department

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a review meeting of three important projects of the city - Karimabad Underpass, Korangi Causeway Bridge and Malir Expressway directed the local government department to submit him a date completion plan. "Why is this ordinate delay being faced in completing the projects when the allocated funds have been released well in time?" he questioned the local government department. He directed them to submit to him date wise completion plan for the three projects. The meeting was held at CM House on Monday and was attended by Minister Local Govt Saeed Ghani, Mayor Karachi Muratza Wahab, PSCM Agha Waseef, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Projects PDs Niaz Soomro, Zulfiqar Abro, Member P&D Sikandar. The Karimabad Underpass

project has been initiated by the Sindh government through KDA. During the briefing, the CM was told that the underpass is a Rs3.8 billion project. The length of the underpass is 1080 meters of which 300 meters have been completed. Out of 212 precast Griders, 151 have been completed and overall the physical progress of the project is 35 per cent. The chief minister directed the local government department to provide a proper and effective drainage system to the underpass so that rainwater may not accumulate in it. To a question, CM Shah was told that a Roundabout in front of Meena Bazaar and Bazaar-e-Faisla was being developed to regulate the traffic movement. The chief minister directed Minister Local Government Saeed Ghani and Mayor Karachi to expedite the construction work, which was causing problems in the flow of traffic. Briefing the

CM about the construction of the Bridge at Korangi Causeway, it was disclosed that the project had been launched for Rs6.4 billion. The project is scheduled to be completed on 31 January 25, which may not be met. At this, the CM directed Minister Local Govt Saeed Ghani to personally monitor the progress of the bridge so that it could be completed in time. The CM was told that out of 400 Piles, 300 have been completed and out of 600 Girders 504 completed. The overall progress of the project is 30 per cent. The CM was told that the Malir Expressway was a 38.889 km project from Jam Sadiq to Kathore Bridge. The construction of the first segment from Jam Sadiq Bridge to Shah Faisal will be completed by December 25, 2024. At this, the CM directed the local government department to reconstruct the road from Shah Faisal to Airport.

KP governor briefed on relief activities in Kurram

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi was briefed on Monday that teams from the Red Crescent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and merged districts have been mobilized to assist the affectees of the Kurram conflict. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi issued directives for the provision of tents to the affected families in Kurram. In addition, he

has instructed the Chairman of the Red Crescent Merged Districts to ensure that tents are delivered to the affected individuals immediately. Chairman of the Red Crescent Merged Districts, Imran Wazir, has prepared an initial report on the damages and the required assistance. According to the preliminary report from the Red Crescent, 250 families from Bagan and 175

families from Alizai have been displaced due to the conflict. According to Chairman PRCS Malik Habib Orakzai, 915 TDPs have been provided with food and drinking water over the past two days. Following the Governor's instructions, a delegation from the Red Crescent Merged Districts will meet with representatives of the affected communities to assess further needs.—APP

Nasir stresses political unity for economic revival

Qureshi underscored the importance of acknowledging these sacrifices and honoring their legacy by working together for the collective betterment and prosperity of the country

ISLAMABAD: Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), once again passionately urged the leadership of all political parties to set aside their differences and egos. He called for a unified approach, stressing the urgent need for collaboration in order to find practical solutions to the country's pressing challenges. His appeal focused on the importance of a collective effort to navigate Pakistan out of its current economic turmoil and set it on a sustainable path toward long-term prosperity. Citing figures provided by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Qureshi highlighted the severe economic repercussions of frequent road closures and shutdowns across the country. According to the data, Pakistan incurs a staggering daily loss of Rs. 190 billion due to these disruptions, which are triggered by a variety of reasons. This, in turn, negatively impacts tax collections and exacerbates the already fragile export sector. Qureshi further pointed out that the country's business community is deeply concerned about the lack of a conducive environment for doing business, driven by several factors stemming from government policies. He emphasized that the ongoing shutdowns are only intensifying the difficulties faced by businesses. He urged all stakeholders to shift their mindset and commit to long-term, well-crafted economic policies that focus on the future of the nation's youth—the real stakeholders who will lead the country in the coming years. He concluded by stressing that now is the time for the nation to place its motherland above all else, recognizing that Pakistan was founded through the immense sacrifices of our forefathers. Qureshi underscored the importance of acknowledging these sacrifices and honoring their legacy by working together for the collective betterment and prosperity of the country.—APP

MARITIME SECURITY WORKSHOP (MARSEW-7)

PAKISTAN NAVY WAR COLLEGE, LAHORE

26 NOV - 5 DEC 2024

Pakistan Navy is hosting the 7th edition of Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW), a flagship event that brings together maritime stakeholders to explore Pakistan's vast maritime potential and discuss ways to harness this critical domain. In this context, the exploitation of the Blue Economy for socioeconomic prosperity, enabled by a secure maritime environment, necessitates our focused attention. The workshop underscores the importance of maritime security. Since its inception in 2017, MARSEW has become a premier event in the Pakistan Navy's calendar, fostering a shared understanding of maritime security among government, military, academia, media, and industry experts. Through knowledge sharing and expert discussions, MARSEW promotes maritime security and stability, supporting the sustainable development of Pakistan's Blue Economy.



Maritime Transport



Ship Building & Repair



Fisheries



Coastal Tourism



Offshore Exploration



National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

- Nov 01/Algeria National Day
- Nov 04/Italy Armed Forces Day
- Nov 07/Russian Federation Socialist Revolution
- Nov 09/Cambodia National Day
- Nov 11/Poland Independence Day
- Nov 14/Jordan Birthday of King Hussein
- Nov 15/Belgium Kings Day
- Nov 15/Brazil Republic Day
- Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus National Day
- Nov 18/Oman National Day
- Nov 18/Morocco Independence Day
- Nov 21/Bangladesh Armed Forces Day
- Nov 22/Lebanon Independence Day
- Nov 25/Suriname National Day
- Nov 28/Mauritania National Day
- Nov 28/Albania Flags Day

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Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.....9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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PIA Cargo.....9280979
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WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pak-Belarus trade potential needs to be enhanced: Jam

This is reflected by the high-level meetings on various forums and the visit of the honourable President of Belarus to Pakistan.

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Monday said the current trade volume between Pakistan and Belarus does not reflect the potential of the two countries' economic capability, and both countries need to diversify their trade with each other capitalizing on the potential of their strong sectors. All economic sectors are open to foreign investment and priority sectors for foreign investment include energy, infrastructure, telecommunications, manufacturing, minerals, ICT, agriculture, and many more, the minister said. Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan said this while addressing the 'Pakistan Belarus Business Forum' along with the Minister for Energy of the Republic of Belarus Mr Aleksei Kushnarenko here and a large number of business leaders participated in the forum. The minister said that eight B2B MoUs/Contracts will be signed during the Forum that reflects the complementarity of bilateral trade and these will pave the way forward for more to happen. He said that it is a great honour for me to co-chair the Pakistan-Belarus Business Forum with Mr Aleksei Kushnarenko, Minister of Energy, the Republic of Belarus. We also co-chaired the 7th Session of the Pakistan-Belarus Joint Ministerial Commission held on 25-26 September 2024 in Islamabad. And I feel happy to share that the majority of the decisions we took in the



JMC are materializing. This would not have been possible without the support and collaboration of Mr Aleksei Kushnarenko. Many decisions were taken and now we are seeing its practical way forward, he added. "I see huge potential to increase trade between Pakistan and Belarus in all sectors, particularly food, Pharma, textile, leather, logistics

and energy. To actualize this potential both sides need to work diligently to minimize tariff and non-tariff barriers along with rationalizing import requirements to offer each other meaningful market access, however, I feel that the forums and steps would help us in achieving the key milestone of growth", he said He said "I am quite hopeful that these engagements will help

us increase our trade with each other and diversify our trade baskets as well. I also hope that during the discussions and B2B meetings, both sides will dilate upon the areas of cooperation comprehensively and will come up with practical solutions to the challenges we are facing and a way forward to enhance bilateral trade, investment, and connectivity.

COMSTECH, Gourmet announces Industrial Internship Program

The objective of the COMSTECH-Gourmet Industrial Internship Program is to foster innovation and research and development (R&D) across diverse industrial sectors, including food processing, engineering, plant operations, recycling, and so forth

DNA

ISLAMABAD :The OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), in collaboration with Gourmet Industries, has announced the COMSTECH-Gourmet Industrial Internship Program for its first batch in January 2025. This program aims to promote innovation, research, and skill development across various industrial sectors, offering participants practical training and exposure to advanced technologies and industrial processes. According to COMSTECH,

the internship is open to applicants from OIC member countries holding a BS/BSc or MS/MSc in relevant fields and under the age of 40. Hosted by Gourmet Industries, the largest food processing complex in Pakistan, the program offers 10 internships lasting four weeks. The selected candidates will receive accommodation, meals, and return economy-class air travel. The objective of the COMSTECH-Gourmet Industrial Internship Program is to foster innovation and research and development (R&D) across diverse industrial sectors, including food

processing, engineering, plant operations, recycling, and so forth. This program aims to provide interns with hands-on experience and exposure to cutting-edge technologies and methodologies, thereby enhancing their practical skills and theoretical knowledge. By engaging in real-world projects, interns will contribute to the advancement of industrial processes and the development of sustainable solutions, ultimately driving technological innovation and improving operational efficiencies in the fields of human nutrition and value addi-

tion. The program focuses on key areas including food industry operations such as bakery, dairy, and beverages, plant utilities, recycling through innovative RPET methodologies, shrink-wrap production, sugar mill logistics, and media training in journalism and broadcasting. Participants will gain hands-on experience in supply chain management, production processes, and sustainability practices. This initiative underscores COMSTECH's mission to empower youth in OIC nations and advance technological development for socio-economic progress.

Pakistan, Belarus agree to cooperate for strengthening of justice system

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belarus have agreed to share experiences and cooperate for betterment of law and justice system through digitalization, capacity building for prosecutors and attorneys, legal education and awareness and legislative drafting. A meeting between Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Minister of Justice for Belarus, Kovalenko Evgeny took place on Monday. The meeting was marked by a spirit of warmth and mutual respect, as both leaders expressed their ardent desire to further fortify the existing bilateral relations between the nations. The Belarusian Minister elaborated on the purview and mandate of the Ministry of Justice in Belarus, highlighting the potential for a bilateral accord. The key discussion points included digitalization of the legal system, capacity building for prosecutors and attorneys, legal education and awareness, legislative drafting and international cooperation, exchange of Bar councils/associates, International Mediation and Arbitration Center (IMAC), and Case Assignment and Management System (CAMS). The meeting yielded significant outcomes, including an invitation extended by the Minister of Justice for Belarus to the Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Pakistan, and his team to visit Belarus, which was warmly reciprocated. The Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Pakistan, provided a comprehensive briefing on previous treaties and MOUs, laying the groundwork for future cooperation. Both Ministers expressed enthusiasm for collaboration in legal education and exchange of Bar councils/associates, and explored potential areas for future collaboration in IMAC and CAMS. The meeting concluded with a unanimous vote of thanks, as both dignitaries expressed their profound appreciation for the productive dialogue and warm hospitality.--DNA

2,353 Kashmiri women martyred, 11,265 molested by Indian troops

ISLAMABAD: The world is observing the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, today, while women in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) continue to suffer from Indian state terrorism, injustice, atrocities, fear, agony and the pain inflicted by India. According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service in connection with the day, India has weaponized draconian laws to target the sanctity and dignity of Kashmiri women. Particularly after the illegal actions of the Indian BJP government on August 5, 2019, the Indian army, paramilitary forces, police personnel, and their agencies have used legal cover to openly pursue their agenda by targeting, detaining, and passing derogatory remarks about Kashmiri women while ignoring their social, political, economic, human, and other rights. The report stated that 2,353 women have been martyred, and 11,265 molested

and disgraced by Indian troops in the occupied territory since 1989. Indian state terrorism has rendered 22,980 Kashmiri women widowed in the past 36 years. It added that over three dozen women, including 65-year-old Aasiya Andrabi, Naheeda Nasreen, Fehmeeda Sofi, Aashiya Bano, Aafreena, Nigeena, Ishrat Rasool, Munira Begum, Sarda Begum, Safeeqa Begum, Rubeeza Nazir, Nusrat Jan, Shabroza Bano, Mudifa, and Sheema Shafi Waza, have been illegally detained in infamous Tihar Jail and other prisons in India and IIOJK for more than seven years. In 2024, Indian troops arrested several women during house raids based on fabricated cases, including the wife of a nomad, Aqam Din, and Gulshan Naaz, wife of Talib Shah, in Rajouri, Poonch, Samba, and Kathua districts of the territory. The report highlighted that India is using rape as a weapon of war in IIOJK to humiliate Kashmiris. Incidents like

the Kunanposhpora mass rape, the Shopian double rape and murder, and the Kathua rape and murder remain glaring examples. Around 100 women were gang-raped by Indian troops during a cordon-and-search operation in Kunanposhpora, Kupwara district, on the night of February 23, 1991. Two women, Aasiya and Neelofar of Shopian, were abducted, gang-raped, and subsequently killed in custody on May 29, 2009. An 8-year-old Muslim girl, Aasifa Bano, was repeatedly gang-raped by Indian policemen and communal Hindus affiliated with right-wing organizations in the Kathua area of Jammu in January 2018. The report stated that Kashmiri women are mentally tortured through the killing, arrest, and enforced disappearance of their loved ones. It urged global human rights bodies to intervene and stop India from committing heinous crimes and gross human rights violations against Kashmiri women.

Call for more efforts to end discrimination against women

ISLAMABAD :Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Monday emphasised the need for collective efforts to work to create a world where women and girls are free from violence and fear. In a message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, he said that despite progress, violence against women remains a major problem, affecting millions of women around the world. Mashhood said that as individuals and as a society, "We must understand our responsibilities to end violence against women." --APP

Unemployed husband shoots dead his wife

ISLAMABAD :An unemployed husband shot dead his wife on Monday, who had passed the public service exam and became a lecturer in Matiari. According to a private news channel, the incident happened in the Bakhar Jamali area of New Saeedabad tehsil of Matiari. Police said that the woman was identified as Rabia Afshan who was a mother of three, had passed the Sindh Public Service Commission exam two months ago and was working as a lecturer. According to the police, the reason for the murder is not yet known, and the search for the accused is ongoing.--APP

GB's uplift govt's top priority:Muqam

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam said that the development and prosperity of Gilgit Baltistan was a top priority of the Federal Government and progress work on all announced projects by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently would be started very soon. Talking to the Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting here on Monday, the minister said that to maintain the law and order situation in GB, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) would be established very soon. The minister underlined that the incumbent regime was committed to launching mega projects for the promotion of tourism.--APP

Suo moto notice disposed of against Swati

Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked that the case is based on an event relating to criminal law and how the court can see tax and property affairs in it

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court disposed of a suo moto notice against Former Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Azam Swati. The notice was taken by the then Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Saqib Nisar on the basis of misuse of authority and transferring Islamabad Police Chief for not siding with the Minister's son in a personal land dispute. The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court was headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Musarrat Hilali. The Court observed that the matters of tax and property may be dealt with by the department concerned. Any party, affected by today's judgement can approach other forums for further proceedings. Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked that the case is based on an event relating to criminal law and how the court can see tax and property affairs in it. Although, Azam Swati did not perform well as a minister.--DNA

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Briefs

Exports increase by 9.57% to Rs 3 trillion in 4 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 9.57 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Exports during July-October (2024-25) totaled Rs. 3,029,329 million as against Rs. 2,764,712 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 9.57%, according to provisional figures released by PBS. On year-on-year basis, exports in October 2024 witnessed an increase of 9.91% and were recorded at Rs. 789,220 million as compared to the exports of Rs. 753,767 million during October, 2023. On month-on-month basis, the exports in October 2024 increased by 4.97 percent as compared to the exports of Rs. 789,220 million in September, 2024. The main commodities of exports during October, 2024 were knitwear (Rs. 136,359 million), ready-made garments (Rs.100,547 million), rice others (Rs. 81,544 million), bed wear (Rs. 76,281 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 43,251 million), towels (Rs.26,419 million), oil seeds, nuts & kernels (Rs.26,289 million), madeup articles (excl towels & bedwear) (Rs.20,198 million), basmati rice (Rs.19,064 million) and cotton yarn (Rs.16,433 million). On the other hand, imports during July-October, 2024 (FY2024-25) totaled Rs. 4,999,923 million as against Rs. 4,891,055 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 2.23%. Imports into Pakistan during October, 2024 amounted to Rs. 1,274,823 million as against Rs. 1,295,455 million in September, 2024 and Rs. 1,363,293 million during October, 2023 showing a decrease of 1.59% over September, 2024 and of 6.49% over October, 2023. —APP

IRSA releases 95,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 95,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 47,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1501.05 feet and was 103.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,800 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1161.95 feet, which was 111.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,900 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 55,400, 46,600, 39,000 and 5,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Constitution Avenue decorated with portraits of Pakistani Prime Minister, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko on a green belt in connection with President of Belarus visit to Pakistan.

CPEC coal-fired plant emission level at bare minimum level

These cutting-edge technologies effectively capture and remove particulate matter and sulfur dioxide from the exhaust gases, ensuring that emissions are significantly lower than the minimum standards set by Pakistan's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the World Bank, and Chinese regulations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: At a critical juncture of time when Punjab, is grappling to wriggle out of smog dilemma, Sahiwal coal-fired power plant built and operated under CPEC is keeping emission level at bare minimum level through advanced technologies such as Electrostatic Precipitators (ESP) and Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) systems. These cutting-edge technologies effectively capture and remove particulate matter and sulfur dioxide from the exhaust gases, ensuring that emissions are significantly lower than the minimum standards set by Pakistan's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the World Bank, and Chinese regulations. "Additionally, the plant has taken significant steps to reduce emissions within its own operations. One of the most effective and environmentally conscious strategies employed is the shift to electric vehicles for internal transport, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The use of electric cart vehicles has been strictly mandated for moving per-

sonnel and goods within the plant premises, eliminating the need for fuel-powered vehicles that contribute to air pollution," Sahiwal power plant media coordinator Umair Shahid said this during a research survey conducted by Institute of International Relations and Media Research (IIRMR) in collaboration with the environmentalists and university researchers. "This transition to electric carts significantly reduces the emission of greenhouse gases, particulate matter, and other air pollutants, helping to improve the overall air quality within the plant and in its immediate surroundings. The move not only addresses local pollution but also aligns with the plant's broader commitment to sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint," he replied to a question during survey. Moreover, survey revealed that the plant has embarked on an ambitious and ongoing plantation drive to increase the green cover within and around its premises. "This initiative is a vital part of the plant's anti-smog strategy, as trees and plants play a crucial role in improving air quality. The plantation drive is carried out regularly, with employees actively participating

in tree-planting activities creating a more environmentally friendly workplace. By increasing its green footprint, the Sahiwal Power Plant is contributing positively to its local ecosystem and setting a valuable example for other industrial entities to follow," IIRMR survey laid bare the facts. IIRMR research survey revealed that ensuring higher standards in maintaining best ecosystem, values of the hazardous gases of SO₂ NO_x, CO and mercury, Sahiwal coal-fired power plant which was built by Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy (Limited) Sahiwal project a joint venture of Huaneng Shandong Power Generation Company and Shandong Ruyi Group, with an investment of about \$1.8 billion, has been keeping lower than the emission values set by World Bank, Japan, EU since operation-ization of plant in 2017 till date. "It has also set up a Continuous Emission Monitoring System (CEMS) for monitoring the Particulate Matter (PM). In order to strengthen the Environmental Monitoring Protocols, Project Company has hired EPA Certified Third party Environmental

Monitoring Company to follow Environmental Monitoring Plan (EMP) and submit monthly the Environmental Reports. The Company has also installed Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station to keenly monitor the air quality and to make sure quality air in accordance to NEQS," survey said. IIRMR survey made more revelation that 1320 MW Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant, located in the heart of Punjab, Pakistan, has also recognized the critical need to save its employees from this ongoing smog threat. "One of the most significant measures introduced at the Sahiwal Power Plant is the mandatory wearing of protective masks in by all employees working within the plant premises. During the smog season, all employees wear high-quality masks that are capable of filtering out harmful particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and other pollutants that are prevalent in smog. This measure is critical because exposure to these pollutants can lead to serious respiratory issues and exacerbate pre-existing health conditions. By ensuring that all workers are equipped with the necessary protective gear, the plant is prioritizing

the health and safety of its workforce, while also setting an example for other industrial facilities in the region." Alongside these physical measures, survey added that the plant has implemented a comprehensive educational program to raise awareness about the dangers of smog among its employees. China, Pakistan stepping up IT cooperation to safeguard digital corridor Islamabad, Nov. 25 (): "As digital traffic surges along the CPEC corridor, we are working with China in the establishment of a computer emergency response team (CERT) to safeguard the growing flow of data." This was stated by Ammar Jaffri, Director General of Pakistan Center of Information Technology said in an interview with Gwadar Pro. Once put in place, it will provide a "single window" for responding to cyber incidents along the corridor, Jaffri said. "As China and Pakistan are jointly establishing technology zones, safeguarding this growing communications has become a priority. Chinese technologies, including those in AI, big data, and quantum computing, could play a transformative role in Pakistan's IT sector," Jaffri noted.

Violence against women remains significant issue: Fauzia

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman for protection against harassment of women at workplace Fauzia Waqar on Monday said that violence against women has been a significant issue in Pakistan. Talking to a private news channel, she said that cases of domestic violence, honor killings, and harassment are frequently reported in different parts of the country. She emphasized the urgency of addressing the rising cases of workplace harassment. She said that victims, often unaware of available support, can seek assistance by filing complaints in the offices of federal or provincial ombudsmen.—APP

Gilani departs for five-day visit to Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousef Raza Gilani, along with a delegation, departed for a five-day official visit to Saudi Arabia via Saudi Airlines. The visit is being undertaken at the invitation of the Chairman of Saudi Arabia's Shura Council. The primary objective of the visit is to enhance bilateral relations and institutional cooperation between the two nations said a news release. During the visit, the delegation, led by the Chairman of the Senate, is scheduled to hold high-level meetings with the Chairman of the Saudi Shura Council, the Governor of Medina, the Governor of Riyadh, and other senior officials.—APP

Renowned singer Salim Raza remembered

ISLAMABAD: The 41st death anniversary of Pakistan's famous film singer Salim Raza is being observed on Monday. He was born on March 4, 1932, in Amritsar. Noel Dias, better known as Saleem Raza, started his singing career in Lahore, Pakistan, and quickly gained popularity. Raza was a classically trained singer and was more famous for singing sad songs. He was introduced to the Pakistani film industry by veteran film director Ghulam Ahmed Chishti. Raza's first lucky break came in director Syed Ata Ullah Hashmi's 1955 film Naukar.—APP

Universal Peace Charter : for people and planet signed

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Senator Danesh Kumar, while addressing the 1st Plenary session "Advancing Global Architecture of peace, peacebuilding, reconciliation & tolerance: Synergy of governments, parliaments and civil society" in Cambodia said that our collective efforts to promote peace and harmony hold great importance in a world divided by conflict and inequality. He further said that governments, parliaments, and civil society have unique roles in building peaceful societies. Senator Danesh Kumar and Misbah

Khar Advisor to the Chairman Senate are representing Pakistan in the conference being held in Cambodia. He underscored the need to work together to effectively address common challenges. "In Pakistan, our journey toward peace and reconciliation is ongoing. Despite huge human and economic losses as a result of terrorism, Pakistan remains committed to unity and understanding. We shall continue our efforts to combat terrorism and restore social harmony" Danesh Kumar observed while highlighting Pakistan's stance. He called for an inclusive approach on the part of governments

and parliaments to advance tolerance. He remarked that education and dialogue are vital for building understanding. He observed that Pakistan believes in the power of international cooperation to overcome common challenges. He termed the session a great opportunity to reflect on shared goals and responsibilities to ensure a peaceful future for our present and future generations. Meanwhile, in a related development, Senator Danesh Kumar and Ms Misbah Khar, Advisor also signed "Universal peace charter : For people and the planet" on the occasion.

PBF welcomes Belarus President visit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) warmly welcomed the President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko expressing hope that this high-level visit will mark the beginning of a new era in bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two nations. The visit is expected to bring forth significant opportunities for strengthening trade ties, particularly in the agricultural, manufacturing, and technology sectors. Talking to APP on Monday, President of PBF, Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman, emphasized the importance of the upcoming agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that are set to be signed in

Islamabad, particularly in the area of the tractor industry. He also highlighted that the establishment of a tractor manufacturing facility in Pakistan would greatly benefit the country's farming community by providing them with access to advanced agricultural technology, thereby improving productivity and efficiency in the sector. "The development of the tractor industry in Pakistan, in collaboration with Belarus, is a step towards modernizing our agricultural sector. This will not only support our farmers but also strengthen the overall economy," said Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman. He stressed the need for direct flight connectivity between Islamabad and Minsk to facilitate business exchanges, tourism, and trade. "Direct

flights between our capitals would help in building stronger trade links and foster greater people-to-people connections," he added. Chief Organiser of PBF, Ahmad Jawad said Pakistan's exports to Belarus were valued at just US\$343.46 thousand in 2023, according to the United Nations COMTRADE database. However, he emphasized the vast untapped potential, estimating that our exports could tap \$1 billion, particularly in key sectors such as fruits and vegetables, rice, textiles, sports goods, and halal meat. Jawad noted that Pakistan, as the fourth-largest dairy producer globally, has significant potential to increase exports in this sector. He suggested that Belarus, with its advanced agricultural technology, could

collaborate with Pakistan to enhance the quality of tractors and machinery used in the country's agricultural sector. "We have a clear opportunity to work together in expanding trade in various sectors. Belarus's expertise in agriculture, coupled with Pakistan's strength in dairy production and agriculture, makes for a promising partnership," said Ahmad Jawad. He emphasized that both business-to-business (B2B) meetings and government-to-government (G2G) dialogues are crucial for increasing trade volume and deepening the economic relationship between the two countries. He encouraged stakeholders on both sides to leverage this visit to explore new opportunities and further strengthen bilateral ties.

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EU, US losing battles

AFTER the outbreak of war in Ukraine, it suddenly dawned on European leaders that they relied too much on supply chains for critical minerals from China. So they scrambled to Africa to try to invest and build independent supplies of their own. Now they are surprised that their investments and high-level contacts with key African countries have lagged far behind the Chinese. Moreover, Africans are not terribly welcoming. The Europeans wonder why. Over in South America, China has become the main trading partner and a key foreign investor with the majority of countries in Uncle Sam's own backyard. Beijing has been expanding contacts, influence and power in a region long dominated, economically, politically and militarily by the United States. Perhaps nothing is more symbolic of the changes than the red carpet being rolled out last week in Brasilia and Lima for President Xi Jinping. In Peru, Xi inaugurated the first phase of a Chinese-funded deep water port in Chancay, a US\$3.5 billion project that promises to revolutionise trans-Pacific cargo shipping. Some Peruvian pundits have such a grand view of the project and its importance for the region that they referenced a time of greatness during the Inca empire. By contrast, retiring US President Joe Biden brought with him to the Apec meeting in Peru nine Black Hawk helicopters for its war on drugs in the country, along with a donation of used trains for Lima's metro system. A promise of economic revival and even greatness or more war on drugs, American style; if you were President Dina Boluarte, which one would you choose? But what's worse is that while South American leaders were celebrating the port's opening, the incoming Donald Trump administration has already threatened to take action against it, with a suggestion of a 60 per cent tariff on all goods passing through the port. One rationale – and Mauricio Claver-Carone, an adviser to Trump, certainly doesn't mince words – is that the success of the Chancay port would embolden other South American countries to develop even closer ties with Beijing. Trump's nominated secretary of state Marco Rubio, a hardliner, is set to treat South America much like Cuba, with a big stick and few carrots. Twenty-two Latin American and Caribbean countries have signed up to Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. In Africa, 52 out of 54 countries have joined it. But what about Chinese debt trap diplomacy and neo-imperialism that the West, but especially the US, have warned them against? Perhaps those South American and African leaders are all idiots. Or else they can tell realities from Western hogwash. Who knows? Remember a video clip of an interview between Hage Geingob, the late president of Namibia, and a former president of the German parliament that went viral online last year? "What's your problem with that?" Geingob asked. "Every time a Westerner comes, it's all about the Chinese." A 2022 supply chain deal between the EU and Namibia – which is rich in many critical minerals – was billed at the time as a breakthrough, followed by similar deals with the Democratic Republic of Congo, which supplies most of the world's cobalt, copper-rich Zambia and Rwanda, which is also rich in multiple critical minerals and metals. But since then, European investment only came in dribs and drabs because, according to a European Council on Foreign Relations policy brief, EU companies are too cautious about profit viability and risks, unlike their Chinese counterparts. That may be so, but history also plays a part.



China's housing Market crisis

IN its year-ahead outlook for China's economy, Goldman Sachs said the "overarching theme" for 2025 will be how policymakers "lean against the wind" in responding to the many domestic and external challenges facing the economy. The biggest headwind by far is the protracted crisis in the housing market. Since 2022, property and property-related activities have exerted a big drag on growth, amounting to as much as minus 2.1 percentage points this year alone. More worryingly, Goldman Sachs expects the drag from residential real estate to linger until 2030. Beijing has responded to the downturn in the housing market more forcefully than many analysts expected. Even so, the stimulus measures unveiled by policymakers since late September – which included lowering interest rates on existing mortgages, reducing down-payment ratios for second homes and relaxing purchasing restrictions in many big cities – are not enough to turn around a sector that, as S&P Global Ratings notes, suffers from "too much stock, too little confidence." Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election, which is expected to unleash a wave of protectionism that could result in a global trade war, puts pressure on Chinese policymakers to lean more aggressively against the winds buffeting the economy. If Trump follows through with his pledge to impose tariffs of more than 60 per cent on all Chinese goods and end the country's "most favoured nation" trading status, the odds of a durable stabilisation of the housing market will be even slimmer than they are today. "In the event of a trade war and a much-weakened economy, we assume many buyers would delay their purchases. China's property sales would likely fall below our base case," S&P Global Ratings wrote in a report last month. Trump's election victory comes just when parts of the property market are beginning to stabilise in response to the stimulus measures. The value of new home sales from the 100 biggest developers rose last month on an annualised basis for the first time this year, with state-owned developers leading the rebound. New home prices, meanwhile, fell at their slowest monthly pace since March. Secondary prices in Tier 1 cities are falling the best, with prices in Shenzhen last month rising the most since February 2021. However, high frequency data already indicates a slowdown in the past few weeks. This is not surprising given that the fundamental problems facing China's housing market remain unresolved. While Beijing has eased demand-side policies dramatically, the outlook for prices and home delivery remains bleak. First, policymakers are conflicted. Concerns about moral hazard and financial stability continue to constrain their response. There has been insufficient progress on destocking and easing developers' funding conditions. This has perpetuated a vicious circle in which unsold and uncompleted inventories remain high, developers resort to drastic price cuts and refrain from initiating new projects, prices keep falling and prospective homebuyers put off new purchases. What Nomura calls the "first optimal solution" to the housing crisis – using central government funds to complete the vast number of pre-sold but unfinished homes – is a step too far for Beijing. This is not just because of the scale of the losses the government would have to absorb. It is also about commercial viability given the low returns on public housing and low rental yields.

The looming challenge to dollar dominance

Qamar Bashir



In the European Union (EU), trade and investment are dominated by the euro followed by the U.S. dollar, with the euro being the primary currency for exports (49%) and the dollar leading in imports (50%) as of 2022. The EU's foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows increased by \$12.3 billion in August 2024, with inward FDI stock valued at approximately \$3 trillion and outward stock at \$4.5 trillion in 2022. Additionally, foreign portfolio investments rose by \$281.4 billion in June 2024. These figures underscore the euro's prominence in EU exports and investments

EFFORTS to challenge the U.S. dollar's global dominance have historically been hindered by disparities among nations in economic strength, foreign reserves, human resource development, infrastructure, productivity, innovation, and wealth creation. However, recent advancements have enabled international and regional organizations to make significant progress in reducing reliance on the dollar for investment, trade, and reserves. Emerging economies have achieved substantial growth, enhancing their economic resilience and reducing dependence on the U.S. dollar. For instance, China's GDP has grown significantly, positioning it as a major global economic player. Countries are developing financial infrastructures that facilitate transactions in local currencies. The BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) are exploring the creation of a new reserve currency to challenge the dollar's dominance. Nations are entering agreements to conduct trade in their own currencies. For example, Russia and China have increased the use of the ruble and yuan in bilateral trade, reducing reliance on the dollar. The development of digital currencies and blockchain technology offers alternatives to traditional dollar-based transactions. China's digital yuan is a notable example, aiming to facilitate international trade without the dollar. These initiatives reflect a strategic move by various countries and blocs to enhance economic sovereignty and reduce exposure to dollar-centric financial systems. The notable example the BRICS nations—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—have increasingly utilized local currencies in their intra-group trade. In 2012, BRICS countries signed agreements to promote trade in local currencies, aiming to replace the U.S. dollar as the primary unit of trade among them. Between 2017 and 2022, intra-BRICS trade increased by 56%, reaching \$614.8 billion in 2022. At the 2023 BRICS Summit, member countries agreed to promote the accelerated use of local currencies in cross-border payments. Institutional mechanisms like the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism and BRICS Pay have been developed to facilitate these transactions. The trade among BRICS nations and local currency settlements rose to 85%, up from 26% two years prior. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has been actively promoting the use of national currencies in trade and investment among its member states. In September 2022, during the Samarkand Summit, the SCO Heads of State Council approved a roadmap aimed at gradually increasing the share

of national currencies in mutual settlements. For instance, on February 21, 2023, representatives from finance ministries, central banks, and financial organizations of member states met to share experiences and discuss the development of payment and clearing systems for mutual trade in national currencies. For example, over 70% of commercial transactions between China and Russia are conducted in the Russian Ruble and the Chinese Yuan. In the European Union (EU), trade and investment are dominated by the euro followed by the U.S. dollar, with the euro being the primary currency for exports (49%) and the dollar leading in imports (50%) as of 2022. The EU's foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows increased by \$12.3 billion in August 2024, with inward FDI stock valued at approximately \$3 trillion and outward stock at \$4.5 trillion in 2022. Additionally, foreign portfolio investments rose by \$281.4 billion in June 2024. These figures underscore the euro's prominence in EU exports and investments. Trade and investment volumes between Russia, its allies, and Eastern countries have significantly shifted toward local currencies in recent years. In 2023, Russia's total trade volume reached approximately \$844 billion, with over 80% of its trade with China settled in Rubles and Yuan. A Eastern Europe and Central Asia primarily use national currencies for regional trade, though the U.S. dollar and Euro remain prevalent for international transactions. Investment flows, including Russia's \$38 billion inward FDI and \$64 billion outward FDI in 2021, are also increasingly shifting to local currencies, reflecting a broader strategy to enhance regional economic resilience and sovereignty. African nations are actively working to reduce their reliance on the U.S. dollar in trade and investment to enhance economic sovereignty and mitigate vulnerabilities associated with currency fluctuations. A significant initiative in this direction is the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), launched by the African Union, which facilitates cross-border trade using local currencies, eliminating the need for U.S. dollar conversions. This system is projected to save the continent approximately \$5 billion annually in currency conversion costs. Additionally, countries like Nigeria and Tanzania have implemented policies to promote the use of their national currencies in international transactions. For instance, Tanzania has banned pricing in foreign currencies to strengthen the Tanzanian shilling's role in trade. Furthermore, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement encourages member states to conduct trade in local currencies, fostering

intra-African commerce and reducing dependence on external currencies. ASEAN member states are actively reducing their reliance on the U.S. dollar by promoting the use of local currencies in trade and investment. Initiatives include establishing Local Currency Settlement (LCS) frameworks among countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand to facilitate direct currency exchanges without involving the U.S. dollar. Efforts are also underway to enhance regional payment systems, integrating digital platforms and standardizing QR code payments across member nations. ASEAN finance ministers and central bank governors have expressed commitment to advancing local currency usage to strengthen financial resilience and reduce exposure to external economic shocks. Middle Eastern nations are actively reducing their reliance on the U.S. dollar by diversifying currency usage in trade, strengthening regional financial cooperation, and developing alternative payment systems. For instance, in January 2023, Saudi Arabia's Finance Minister, Mohammed Al-Jadaan, announced the kingdom's openness to trading in currencies other than the U.S. dollar, marking a significant shift in its economic policy. Additionally, countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates have joined or expressed interest in joining the BRICS group, which advocates for reducing reliance on the U.S. dollar by promoting trade in local currencies among member states. Efforts are also underway to establish payment systems that facilitate transactions in local currencies, reducing the need for dollar-based settlements. In a hypothetical world where countries have developed mechanisms to conduct trade and investment exclusively in their local currencies, the U.S. dollar would lose its status as the global reserve and trade currency, leading to a sharp decline in demand and devaluation. This would result in inflation, higher borrowing costs for the U.S. government, and reduced purchasing power for American consumers. The U.S.'s ability to impose financial sanctions and influence global financial institutions would diminish, eroding its soft power and strategic leverage. Globally, the financial system would become multipolar, with regional currencies like the euro, yuan, and rupee gaining prominence. This shift would challenge U.S. economic dominance, forcing it to diversify its economy and foster innovation.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister at Embassy
of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

The America first policy

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Trump's foreign policy record in his first term was mixed. Efforts to renegotiate trade agreements, such as the South Korea Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA (rebranded as the USMCA), yielded limited results, as did his summits with Kim Jong. A contributing factor was the internal discord within the Trump administration...

DONALD Trump's second term as President of the United States is notable for the clarity with which he secured his victory and the ensuing implications for U.S. foreign policy. Despite pre-election polls indicating a statistical deadlock and concerns about a prolonged electoral outcome, Trump was declared the winner shortly after polls closed, having secured both the popular vote and the Electoral College a marked departure from his 2016 performance. His electoral success was bolstered by significant gains across demographic groups and a strong Republican majority in the Senate, complemented by likely continued control of the House of Representatives. The global implications of this outcome are unmistakable: Trump's "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) ideology will be the defining feature of U.S. foreign policy in his second term. An analysis of Trump's first term provides insight into his foreign policy approach and anticipated changes in his second term. Three significant differences are projected: a more ideologically cohesive national security team, the evolution of global political dynamics by 2025 and the enhanced familiarity of foreign actors with Trump's leadership style. Trump is expected to engage with international affairs with increased confidence. However, whether this translates into successful implementation of his "America First" policies remains uncertain. A critical shift in U.S. foreign policy under Trump is the retreat from promoting traditional American ideals, heralding the decline of American exceptionalism. This, coupled with anticipated corruption in policy practices, risks positioning the United States as a conventional great power rather than a unique global leader. Central to Trump's worldview is the be-

lief that the U.S.-led liberal international order has disadvantaged the United States. To redress this perceived imbalance, Trump advocates restricting imports and immigration while encouraging foreign direct investment. He insists on allies contributing more to their own defense and is inclined toward deal making with authoritarian leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong to ease international tensions and prioritize domestic concerns. Trump has preferred methods include economic coercion, exemplified by sanctions and employing the "madman theory" to extract concessions through threats. His transactional approach to diplomacy was evident in his first term, as seen in his willingness to compromise on issues like Hong Kong and Xinjiang in pursuit of trade advantages with China. Trump's foreign policy record in his first term was mixed. Efforts to renegotiate trade agreements, such as the South Korea Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA (rebranded as the USMCA), yielded limited results, as did his summits with Kim Jong. A contributing factor was the internal discord within the Trump administration, where mainstream advisers often clashed with the president's unconventional methods. This friction undermined policy coherence and consistency. In his second term, however, Trump is expected to face fewer internal obstacles, having assembled a team of loyalists aligned with his vision. The legislative and judicial branches have also become more amenable to his agenda and he has expressed intentions to purge dissenters from the military and bureaucracy. Despite this consolidation of power, Trump's capacity to enhance the United States' global standing is debatable. Ongoing conflicts, such as those in Ukraine and Gaza, pose

significant challenges. Trump's criticism of his predecessor's withdrawal from Afghanistan underscores his recognition of the political costs of perceived failures in foreign policy. Yet, disentangling the United States from these conflicts may prove more difficult than his campaign rhetoric suggests. Meanwhile, the global geopolitical landscape has shifted significantly since 2017, with rival powers establishing independent coalitions and frameworks such as BRICS+, OPEC+ and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Trump's attempts to weaken these alliances are unlikely to succeed, given the entrenched mistrust among authoritarian regimes toward him. The most critical distinction between Trump's first and second terms is the predictability of his foreign policy. In 2016, his approach was enigmatic; by 2024, it is well understood. Global leaders have learned to manage Trump through symbolic gestures, minimal concessions and avoiding public confrontations. This familiarity diminishes Trump's advantage, rendering his negotiating strategies less effective. Nonetheless, his reelection signifies two enduring trends: a rise in corruption influencing U.S. foreign policy and the demise of American exceptionalism. Trump's associates are expected to exploit their positions for financial gain, further eroding ethical standards in governance. Ultimately, Trump's second term represents a paradigm shift in U.S. foreign policy, characterized by the prioritization of transactional interests over ideological commitments and a diminished emphasis on traditional American values. This transformation signals a new chapter in the United States' engagement with the world, marked by pragmatic deal making and the relinquishment of its historical role as a champion of democracy and human rights.

Briefs

Gold price
dips Rs.4,300
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased further by Rs 4,300 and was sold at Rs 278,400 on Monday against its sale at Rs 182,700, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went down by Rs.3,657 to Rs.238,683 from Rs. 242,370 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs 218,793 from Rs 222,172.

The price of per tola gold declined by Rs 50 to Rs 3,400 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs 42.87 to Rs 2,914.95.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$43 to \$2,672 from \$2,715, the Association reported.—APP

Rupee
remains
unchanged
against dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday remained unchanged against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.75. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.30 and Rs 278.80 respectively. Pakistan's cuisine The price of Euro decreased by Rs 1.08 to close at Rs 290.27 against the last day's closing of Rs 291.35, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.79, whereas a decrease of 55 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 348.81 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 349.36. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained stagnant to close at Rs 75.62 and Rs 73.97 respectively.—APP

PSX witnesses
bullish trend,
gains 281
points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 281.55 points more points, a positive change of 0.29 percent, closing at 98,079.78 points as compared to 97,798.23 points on the last trading day. Pakistan's cuisine A total of 640,258,528 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,249,092,089 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 25.623 billion against Rs.45.475 billion on the last trading day. As many as 460 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 220 of them recorded gains and 185 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 55 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 64,823,622 shares at Rs 12.35 per share, Cnergico PK with 48,065,578 shares at Rs 4.71 per share and Fauji Foods Limited with 40,919,425 shares at Rs.12.26 per share.—APP

Turkiye man
kills seven
before taking
his own life

ISTANBUL: A 33-year-old Turkish man shot dead seven people in Istanbul on Sunday, including his parents, his wife and his 10-year-old son, before taking his own life, the authorities reported on Monday.

The man, who was found dead in his car shortly after the shooting, is also accused of wounding two other family members, one of them seriously, the Istanbul governor's office said in a statement. The authorities, who had put the death toll at four on Sunday evening, announced on Monday the discovery near a lake on Istanbul's European shore of the bodies of the killer's wife and son, as well as the lifeless body of his mother-in-law. According to the Small Arms Survey (SAS), a Swiss research program, over 13.2 million firearms are in circulation in Turkey, most of them illegally, for a population of around 85 million.—APP

Iran's deterrent power evolved to
address modern maritime threats

Iran's highest-ranking military commended Iran's powerful presence in national and international waters which has been tantamount to sacred determination to boost the country's might and play an influential role in defending national rights and interests in line with the guidelines of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on maritime supremacy

TEHRAN: Iran's highest-ranking military commander says the evolved deterrent power of the Islamic Republic in addressing modern maritime threats, combined with its strength in other domains, will act as a driving force for strong ties with Muslim nations. Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri made the remarks in a message on the occasion of the Iranian Navy Day. He added that the

deterrent power of Iran will also lead to the creation of the prerequisites for shared security and lasting peace, particularly in the West Asia region. "It will disappoint the enemies who seek to sow discord in the resistance front and among the Muslim nations," he said. He commended Iran's powerful presence in national and international waters which has been tantamount to sacred determination to boost the country's might and play

an influential role in defending national rights and interests in line with the guidelines of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on maritime supremacy. Baqeri noted that the national Navy Day manifests lasting acts of bravery of the Iranian naval forces in the face of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein at one of the most sensitive junctures of the Sacred Defense. The Iranian naval forces have succeeded in

dealing heavy blows to the enemy's navy and defending the country's territorial integrity, the top general emphasized. He wished lasting success for the Iranian naval forces. Iran's Navy has in recent years achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing surface and sub-surface vessels. It has also increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers. The Iranian naval

forces have also staged military drills with different countries, including Russia, China and Pakistan, over the past years to promote their combat readiness. They have also been involved in joint efforts aimed at countering piracy and maritime terrorism, exchanging information in naval rescue and relief operations as well as sharing operational and tactical experience to enhance the security and stability of international maritime trade.

Tanveer for promoting
industrial, agricultural trade
ties with Belarus

Highlighting the trade potential, Minister Yafimua shared that Belarus imports goods worth \$17.2 billion annually, noting that Pakistan's current share in this trade is not reflective of its true export potential



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain here on Monday highlighted the importance of expanding bilateral trade relations with Belarus specially in the industrial and agricultural sectors. The minister stressed the need to explore ways and means to increase the industrial cooperation between the two countries in diverse fields. During a meeting with Belarusian delegation, which was led by Minister for Industries Aliaksandr Yafimua, Rana Tanveer said Pakistan has considerable export potential with Belarus for items

like inflatable footballs, articles of bedding and similar stuffed items, sports and outdoor games equipment, footwear, rubber, plastic and metal products, said a news release. Pakistan's cuisine During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the partnership between Pakistan and Belarus in multifaceted areas. Highlighting the trade potential, Minister Yafimua shared that Belarus imports goods worth \$17.2 billion annually, noting that Pakistan's current share in this trade is not reflective of its true export potential. He said that Pakistani products

will be given space in the Belarusian market. He identified key products that Pakistan could export to Belarus, including inflatable footballs, bedding items, sports and outdoor equipment, footwear, and rubber, plastic, and metal goods. Rana Tanveer discussed cooperation in the field of agricultural machinery and tractor manufacturing plants, following which the delegation showed keen interest in the production of agricultural machinery and establishing tractor plants besides technology transfer under Joint Ventures (JVs). The minister extended invitation to the Belarusian

counterpart to start a pilot project on agricultural productivity enhancement in Pakistan. Similarly, he said M/s Millat Group dealing with agricultural machinery wanted a JV for manufacturing agricultural equipments in Pakistan. During the meeting, both sides also deliberated on the prospects of Belarusian investment and JVs in the area of electric vehicles (EVs). Rana Tanveer said that around thirty-one companies have issued manufacturing licenses by the Engineering Development Board (EDB) enabling them to produce two/three-wheeler EVs in Pakistan.

Far-right candidate
surprises in Romania
elections, setting up
run-off with PM

BUCHAREST: Far-right candidate Calin Georgescu surged unexpectedly in Romania's presidential election, pulling slightly ahead of the pro-European prime minister and looking likely to advance to a runoff, partial results showed early Monday. Exit polls had initially showed centre-left Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu with a comfortable lead and put a centre-right candidate in second, suggesting the far-right would be shut out of the run-off next month. But with 90 percent of ballots counted, the pro-Russian Georgescu was leading with nearly 22 percent to Ciolacu's 21.1 percent in the race to take over from President Klaus Iohannis in the largely ceremonial post. In the absence of an outright winner in the first round - scoring more than 50 percent - the top two candidates go through to a second round on December 8. Whatever the outcome, "the far right is by far the big winner of this election", political scientist Cristian Pirvulescu told AFP. Nationalist candidate, George Simion, is currently running fourth, putting the far-right on track to take about a third of the vote. The result would be a political earthquake in the country of 19 million, a NATO member which has so far resisted nationalist posturing, setting itself apart from Hungary and Slovakia. Ciolacu's Social Democrat party has shaped Romania's politics for more than three decades, and as he voted Sunday he promised stability and a "decent" standard of living. But with concerns mounting over inflation and the war in neighbouring Ukraine, the far-right appeared to be gaining ground ahead of the vote. Georgescu surged in recent days with a viral TikTok campaign calling for an end to aid for Ukraine. He has also sounded a sceptical note on Romania's NATO membership. "Tonight, the Romanian people cried out for peace. And they shouted very loudly, extremely loudly", he said. Simion had also tapped into voter anger over inflation while promising more affordable housing. Looking for a new election breakthrough for European far-right parties, he had warned of possible "fraud" and "foreign interference" when voting. The stakes are high for Romania, which has a 650-kilometre (400-mile) border with Ukraine and has become more important since Russia invaded its neighbour in 2022. The Black Sea nation now plays a "vital strategic role" for NATO - as it is a base for more than 5,000 soldiers - and the transit of Ukrainian grain, the New Strategy Center think tank said. The campaign was marked by controversy and personal attacks, with Simion facing accusations of meeting with Russian spies - a claim he has denied. Ciolacu has been criticised for his use of private jets. Some observers had tipped Elena Lasconi, mayor of the small town of Campulung and head of a centre-right opposition party, as a surprise package. But she is currently running third.—dna

Russia plane
evacuated
in Turkey
as engine
catches fire

ISTANBUL: More than 90 passengers and crew were evacuated from a Russian plane Sunday after one of its engines caught fire while landing at an airport in southern Turkey, the transport ministry said. The incident involved a Sukhoi Superjet 100 (SU95) operated by Russia's Azimuth Airlines. They plane had just landed at Antalya airport on Turkey's Mediterranean coast when a fire broke out in one of its engines, a ministry statement said. "A SU95 type and RA89085-registered aircraft of Azimuth Airlines travelling from Sochi airport in Russia to Antalya airport had an engine fire during landing," it said. "Eighty nine passengers and six crew members on board were safely evacuated at 9:43 pm (18:43 GMT) and there were no injuries." All further scheduled landings at the airport would be cancelled until 3:00 am, it added, saying other planes waiting to depart would use the airport's military runway for takeoff. An airport official told Anadolu state news agency that the fire had affected its left engine but had been quickly extinguished.—APP

16 survivors
rescued after
tourist boat
sinks off
Egypt's Red
Sea coast

CAIRO: Egyptian authorities rescued 16 people after a tourist boat sank off its Red Sea coast, three security sources told Reuters on Monday, as search operations continued for the remaining passengers and crew members. The boat, Sea Story, was carrying 45 people, including 31 tourists of varying nationalities and 14 crew, on a multi-day diving trip when it went down near the coastal town of Marsa Alam, according to a statement by the Red Sea Governorate. Governor Amr Hanafi said some survivors were rescued using a helicopter and have been taken to medical care. Efforts to locate more survivors were ongoing in coordination with the Egyptian navy and army. The governorate said a distress call was received at 5:30 a.m. (03:30 GMT) and that the boat had departed from Porto Ghalib in Marsa Alam on Sunday, with plans to return to Hurghada Marina on Nov. 29. The Red Sea is a popular diving destination renowned for its coral reefs and marine life, key to Egypt's vital tourism industry.—APP

Lebanon's
Shiite
Muslims pay
high price in
war between
Israel and
Hezbollah

BEIRUT: The Lebanese civilians most devastated by the Israel-Hezbollah war are Shiite Muslims, and many of them believe they are being unfairly punished because they share a religious identity with Hezbollah militants and often live in the same areas. "This is clear," said Wael Murtada, a young Shiite man who anxiously watched paramedics search rubble after a recent Israeli airstrike destroyed his uncle's two-story home and killed 10 people. "Who else is being attacked?" Israel has concentrated its attacks on villages in southern and northeastern Lebanon and neighborhoods south of Beirut. This is where many Hezbollah militants operate from, and their families live side by side with large numbers of Shiites who aren't members of the group. Israel insists its war is with Hezbollah and not the Lebanese people - or the Shiite faith. It says it only targets members of the Iran-backed militant group to try to end their yearlong campaign of firing rockets over the border. But Israel's stated objectives mean little to people like Murtada as growing numbers of Shiite civilians also die in a war that escalated sharply in recent months. Shiites don't just measure the suffering of their community in deaths and injuries.—APP

Israel moving towards
Hezbollah ceasefire
but issues remain

JERUSALEM: Israel is moving towards a ceasefire in the war with Lebanon's Hezbollah but there are still issues to address, the government said on Monday, while the Israeli ambassador to the United States was quoted saying a deal could transpire within days. Efforts to clinch a truce appeared to be advancing last week when US mediator Amos Hochstein declared significant progress after talks in Beirut before holding meetings in Israel and then returning to Washington. Hostilities have intensified in parallel with the diplomatic movement, however: over the weekend, Israel carried out powerful airstrikes, one of which killed at least 29 people in central Beirut - while Hezbollah unleashed one of its biggest rocket salvos yet on Sunday, firing 250 missiles. "We are moving in the direction towards a deal, but there are still some issues to address," Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer said, without elaborating. Michael Herzog, the Israeli ambassador to the United States, told Israel's GLZ radio an agreement was close and "it could happen within days ... We just need to close the last corners", according to a post on X by GLZ senior anchor Efi Triger. But far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said Israel must press on with the war until "absolute victory". Addressing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on X, he said "it is not too late to stop this agreement!" The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah spiralled into full-scale war in September, when the Israeli military went on the offensive, pounding wide areas of Lebanon with airstrikes and sending troops into the south.—APP

Afghan women turn
to entrepreneurship

KABUL: When Zainab Ferozi saw Afghan women struggling to feed their families after Taliban authorities took power, she took matters into her own hands and poured her savings into starting a business. Two-and-a-half years after putting 20,000 Afghans (\$300) earned from teaching sewing classes into a carpet weaving enterprise, she now employs around a dozen women who lost their jobs or who had to abandon their education due to Taliban government rules. Through her business in the western province of Herat, the 39-year-old also "covers all the household expenses" of her family of six, she told AFP from her office where samples of brightly colour-



ed and exquisitely woven rugs and bags are displayed. Her husband, a labourer, cannot find work in one of the poorest countries in the world. Ferozi is one of many women who have launched

small businesses in the past three years to meet their own needs and support other Afghan women, whose employment sharply declined after the Taliban took power in 2021. Touba

Zahid, a 28-year-old mother-of-one, started making jams and pickles in the small basement of her home in the capital Kabul after she was forced to stop her university education.

Wildlife monitoring tech used to harass, spy on women

While this technology can be a powerful tool to conserve wildlife, "there must be clear rules for what they can and cannot be used for, and clear consequences for anyone misusing them", she added

PARIS: Camera traps, drones and other technology for monitoring wildlife like tigers and elephants are being used to intimidate, harass and even spy on women in India, researchers said on Monday. In one particularly egregious example, a photo of an autistic woman relieving herself in the forest was shared by local men on social media, prompting villagers to destroy nearby camera traps. Trishant Simlai, a researcher at the UK's Cambridge University, spent 14 months interviewing some 270 people who live near the Corbett Tiger Reserve in northern India. For women living in villages around the reserve, the forest has long been a space for "freedom and expression" away from the men in a "heavily conservative and patriarchal society", Simlai told AFP. The

women sing, talk about taboo subjects such as sex, and sometimes drink and smoke while collecting firewood and grass from the forest. But the introduction of camera traps, drones and sound recorders as part of efforts to track and protect tigers and other wildlife has extended "the male gaze of the society into the forest", Simlai said. On multiple occasions, drones were deliberately flown over the heads of women, forcing them to drop their firewood and flee for cover, according to a study led by Simlai published in the journal Environment and Planning. "We cannot walk in front of the cameras or sit in the area with our Kurtis (tunics) above our knees. We are afraid that we might get photographed or recorded in a wrong way," a local woman was

quoted in the study saying. A forest ranger told the researchers that when a camera trap took a photo of a couple engaging in "romance" in the forest, "we immediately reported it to the police". In perhaps the most troubling example, a photo of an autistic woman from a marginalised caste relieving herself in the forest was inadvertently taken by a camera trap in 2017. Young men appointed as temporary forest workers shared the photo on local Whatsapp and Facebook groups to "shame the woman", Simlai said. "We broke and set fire to every camera trap we could find after the daughter of our village was humiliated in such a brazen way," one local told the researchers. Aiming to avoid the cameras, some women have started roaming farther into the forest, which has the

highest density of tigers in the world. The women also sing less than they used to, which was used to deter animal attacks. One local woman - who spoke about fear of cameras forcing her into "unfamiliar spaces" in 2019 - was killed by a tiger earlier this year, Simlai said. "New ways to harass women" - Another woman took advantage of the constant surveillance. Whenever her husband would beat her, she would run in front of the camera so that her husband did not follow her," Simlai said. Overall, "these technologies are actually very good" and are revolutionising conservation efforts, Simlai emphasised. But he called for more consultation with local communities about the technology, as well as more transparency and oversight from forest authorities, and sensitive training for local

workers. "A lot of that can be done by conservation organisations that - in the first instance - introduced these technologies to the government," Sim added. Rosaleen Duffy, a conservation expert at Sheffield University in the UK, told AFP that "sadly" she was not surprised by this research. "What surprises me is conservationists who imagine that technologies can be introduced and used in a social, political and economic vacuum," she said. "The cases in this research are not accidental," Duffy pointed out. "They were actively using the drones to provide new ways of continuing to harass women." While this technology can be a powerful tool to conserve wildlife, "there must be clear rules for what they can and cannot be used for, and clear consequences for anyone misusing them", she added.—Agencies

Briefs

Le Pen threatens to topple French govt

PARIS: French far-right figurehead Marine Le Pen on Monday threatened to back a no confidence motion that could topple the government of Prime Minister Michel Barnier in a standoff over the budget, saying after talks both sides were entrenched in their positions. Months of political tensions since right-winger Barnier became prime minister at the helm of a minority government appointed by President Emmanuel Macron in the wake of this summer's elections are coming to a head over the budget which has yet to be approved by parliament. The opposition on all sides of the spectrum have denounced the budget, prompting Barnier to consider brandishing the weapon of article 49.3 of the constitution which allows a government to force through legislation without a vote in parliament. However, that could prompt Le Pen's far right National Rally (RN) to team up in an unholy alliance with the left-wing bloc in parliament and find enough numbers to topple the government in a confidence vote. — Agencies

ECNEC approves projects worth Rs 172.7 bn

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) on Monday approved 10 out of 11 proposed development projects costing Rs 172.7 billion. A project presented by the Ministry of Health was deferred, requiring further clarification before approval. The meeting of the ECNEC was held here under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Six of the approved projects belonged to the province of Balochistan, while the approved projects pertained to the infrastructure sector for improving connectivity in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, according to a press release issued by the Deputy Prime Minister Office. Additionally, the ECNEC also approved a World Bank funded project for developing solid waste infrastructure for Karachi costing Rs 29.2 billion.

16 dead in Indonesia flood

JAKARTA: Flash floods and a landslide swept four districts of Indonesia's Sumatra island over the weekend, killing at least 16 people, the national disaster agency said. "In total, 16 people died and seven more people are missing," the spokesman of the National Disaster Mitigation Agency or BNPB, Abdul Muhari, said in a statement Monday. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Renowned Spanish artist Sara Calero presented a mesmerizing preference in connection with Flamenco Dance celebrations, organized at Islamabad Serena hotel jointly by the Spanish embassy and Serena Hotels. — DNA

Spanish artist presents a mesmerizing performance

ISLAMABAD: The event in Islamabad, which showcased renowned Spanish artist Sara Calero's performance, was a celebration of Flamenco Dance, an expressive and captivating art form deeply rooted in Spanish culture. Held at the luxurious Serena Hotel, the event was a collaboration between the Spanish Embassy and Serena Hotels, aimed at promoting cultural exchange and appreciation between Spain and Pakistan. Sara Calero, a prominent figure in the Flamenco dance world, brought an authentic and mesmerizing experience to the stage, highlighting the deep emotional and artistic elements of Flamenco. Known for her passion and intricate choreography, Calero's performance likely captivated the audience with the intensity, rhythm, and elegance that define Flamenco, blending music, dance, and storytelling. The event not only offered a rare opportunity for Islamabad's art enthusiasts to experience a traditional Spanish cultural form but also strengthened ties between Spain and Pakistan by promoting cross-cultural understanding. Through such celebrations, the Spanish Embassy and Serena Hotels foster a platform for showcasing global art forms and encouraging international dialogue. Flamenco, with its powerful movements and soulful music, is more than just a dance; it represents a centuries-old tradition that blends influences from various cultures. This celebration at the Serena Hotel was an immersive experience that likely allowed the attendees to not only watch but also feel the profound cultural heritage of Spain through the medium of Flamenco.

Pakistan, Belarus FMs vow to enhance mutual coop

They expressed their support for a peaceful resolution of conflicts and underlined the need for a coordinated approach to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday met his Belarusian counterpart Maxim Ryzhenkov here, wherein two sides underlined the importance of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to promote mutually beneficial cooperation. In the meeting, the two foreign ministers discussed bilateral and regional issues and the agenda and the programme of the visit of President Lukashenko to Pakistan, who is scheduled to arrive here later in the day. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the momentum of bilateral exchanges and high-level visits between Pakistan and Belarus and expressed the hope that President Lukashenko's visit would further boost bilateral relations. The ministers also discussed key regional and global developments, including the situation in the Middle East. They expressed their support for a peaceful resolution of conflicts and underlined the need for a coordinated approach to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The two sides emphasized the importance of enhanced cooperation in international and regional organizations to advance mutual interest and jointly address global challenges.



Meanwhile, Pakistan and Belarus have agreed to share experiences and cooperate for betterment of law and justice system through digitalization, capacity building for prosecutors and attorneys, legal education and awareness and legislative drafting. A meeting between Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar, and

Minister of Justice for Belarus, Kovalenko-Evgeny took place on Monday. The meeting was marked by a spirit of warmth and mutual respect, as both leaders expressed their ardent desire to further fortify the existing bilateral relations between the nations. The Belarusian Minister elaborated on the purview and mandate of the Ministry of Justice in Belarus, highlighting the potential for a bilateral accord. The key discussion points included digitalization of the legal system, capacity building for prosecutors and attorneys, legal education and awareness, legislative drafting and international cooperation, exchange of Bar councils/associates, International Mediation and Arbitration Center (IMAC), and Case Assignment and Management System (CAMS). The meeting yielded significant outcomes, including an invitation extended by the Minister of Justice for Belarus to the Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Pakistan, and his team to visit Belarus, which was warmly reciprocated. The Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Pakistan, provided a comprehensive briefing on previous treaties and MOUs, laying the groundwork for future cooperation. Both Ministers expressed enthusiasm for collaboration in legal education and exchange of Bar councils/associates, and explored potential areas for future collaboration in IMAC and CAMS.

Merkel defends ties with Russia

BERLIN: Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel has told the a British news channel the gas deals she made with Russia were intended to help German firms and kept the peace with Moscow. She also insisted the war with Ukraine would have started earlier if she hadn't blocked Kyiv's entry into Nato in 2008. Angela Merkel led Germany for 16 years. She was in office during the financial crisis, the 2015 migrant crisis and, significantly, Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine. Was she too soft on Moscow? Too slow to help Kyiv? If she hadn't blocked Ukraine's Nato membership in 2008, would there be a war there now? Speaking to the channel in Berlin, Mrs Merkel is robust in her defence of her time in office. She says she believes the war in Ukraine would have started sooner and would likely have been worse, if Kyiv had begun the path to Nato membership in 2008. "We would have seen military conflict even earlier. It was completely clear to me that President Putin would not have stood idly by and watched Ukraine join Nato. "And back then, Ukraine as a country would certainly not have been as prepared as it was in February 2022." Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky disagrees. He describes Mrs Merkel's Nato decision, backed by then-French President Nicolas Sarkozy, as a clear "miscalculation" that emboldened Russia. — Agencies

Death toll from KP's dist Kurram clashes rises to 88

Earlier Barrister Saif had also announced a high-powered commission to settle land disputes between the tribes

SHAMIM SHAHID

KURRAM: The death toll from clashes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district amid tribal tensions rose to 88 on Monday, a day after the government said that a ceasefire was agreed upon in the violence-hit region. Multiple people have been killed in the area since violence erupted following Thursday's deadly attack when a convoy of around 200 vehicles came under heavy gunfire in Kurram's densely populated Bagan town, killing at least 43 people. Further 21 people were killed in separate clashes leading into the weekend as violence escalated, taking the total to 64 dead. The government travelled to Kurram on Saturday to ease tensions in the area following which, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, the information adviser to KP's chief minister, said that a ceasefire was agreed on in the area for seven days between the battling tribes, who had also decided to return each other's bodies and prisoners.

Barrister Saif had also announced a high-powered commission to settle land disputes between the tribes. However, Kurram District Health Officer Dr Qaisar Abbas told media the death toll rose to 88 people killed while 111 were injured in the violence that has continued since last week. Dr Abbas said that due to not having access to facilities, the injured were in critical condition. PPP leader Sajid Hussain Turi told media that government officials met the Shia and Sunni tribes that had agreed upon a ceasefire and efforts were underway to normalise the situation as soon as possible. However, Moin Hussain, a village councillor, told media that the situation had turned from bad to worse as fighting continued between the tribes, adding that there was no confirmation of a ceasefire. "The efforts of the delegation that came are not visible on the ground," the village official said. Education Union President Muhammad Hayat Khan told media that the exams students had today were postponed indefinitely, adding that all educational institutions in the area were shut.

VPNs to be blocked from December 1

ISLAMABAD: The PTA has commenced its second trial aimed at blocking unregistered Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) using a firewall system, The News reported. According to PTA sources, this trial will span two days, during which unregistered VPNs will be actively blocked as part of the process. The initiative follows a previously successful trial, demonstrating the authority's ability to restrict access to unregistered VPNs effectively. It should be noted that the PTA has given a deadline of November 30 for the registration of unregistered VPNs. Regular blocking of unregistered VPNs will be started from December 1. Starting from November 30, the government is set to enforce a restrictive new policy that will refrain internet users in Pakistan from accessing VPNs.

Arrest warrant not enough, Netanyahu must be executed

The Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants against Netanyahu and his ousted war minister Yoav Gallant over their war crimes related to the ongoing Gaza genocide

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has called for death sentence for Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose arrest warrant has been issued by the ICC amid the regime's genocide in Gaza and carnage in Lebanon. "The (ICC) arrest warrant is not enough, Netanyahu's death sentence must be ordered," Ayatollah Khamenei said during a meeting with members of the Iranian Basij volunteer force on Monday, on the occasion of Basij Week. The Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants against Netanyahu and his ousted war minister Yoav Gallant over their war crimes related to the on-

going Gaza genocide. Now, the pair are at risk of arrest if they step foot in any of the 124 countries that signed the Rome Statute establishing the ICC. Referring to Israel's aggression in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, Leader said the bombing of houses is not a victory but "a crime". The enemy has not won its wars on Gaza and Lebanon, and it will never be able to do so, Ayatollah Khamenei asserted. The Leader also hailed Basij as the direct opposite of hegemonic powers, which are trying to manipulate national beliefs. Ayatollah Khamenei said hegemonic powers first try to take away capabilities of nations. The Leader noted that Imam Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Revolution, created Basij volunteer force as a "bulwark" against threats. Basiji is not intimidated by the US and Israeli propaganda, he asserted, adding that some of the prominent Iranian scientists, who were assassinated by the enemy, were members of the volunteer force. Ayatollah Khamenei further said that Basij will definitely destroy the Zionist regime. Basij, he emphasized, should strengthen, expand and maintain preparedness.

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