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Russia ready to push war to Europe, warns Zelensky

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No need of foreign funds, says FinMIN

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Asad Qaisar raises issue of Shama

Detailed News On Page-01



Internal pressures

Pakistan distances itself from Trump's 20-point peace plan

Dar revealed that during his meeting with Trump, Pakistan had put forward its own suggestions for peace and stability in the region. However, the American leader chose to present his own framework,

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Minister and senior PML-N leader, Senator Ishaq Dar, has categorically distanced Pakistan from U.S. President Donald Trump's recently floated 20-point peace plan for the Middle East. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, Dar made it clear that Islamabad has no connection with the proposal and remains firmly committed to the collective stance of Muslim countries on Palestine. Dar revealed that during his meeting with Trump, Pakistan had put forward its own suggestions for peace and stability in the region. However, the American leader chose to present his own framework, which, according to Dar, diverged completely from the draft jointly prepared by Muslim nations. "The Trump plan is absolutely different from what we, along with all Muslim countries, had proposed. We cannot and will not compromise on the question of Palestine," Dar declared. He emphasized that Pakistan's policy has always been to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to an independent

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Deal with US not to affect Pakistan-China relations

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Minister and senior PML-N leader, Senator Ishaq Dar, has dismissed speculation that Pakistan's engagement with the United States could harm its long-standing strategic partnership with China. Speaking in the National Assembly, Dar said that Pakistan's foreign policy framework gives China a unique and central place, and no agreement with Washington would come at the expense of Beijing. "There are reports suggesting that any deal with the U.S. might damage Pakistan-China relations. Let me be very clear — this is not true," Dar asserted. He stressed that relations with

China are deeply rooted in history, mutual trust, and shared strategic interests, and remain an "unshakable cornerstone" of Pakistan's foreign policy. Dar underlined that Pakistan maintains close and balanced relations with multiple global powers, but its partnership with China is "exceptional and time-tested." He added that while Islamabad is open to dialogue and cooperation with Washington on areas of mutual interest, it would not allow such cooperation to undermine its deep ties with Beijing. "Pakistan's relationship with China is unique. It cannot be compared with any other. Our cooperation in CPEC, defense, trade, and diplomacy is a reflection of this bond.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a high-level meeting to review the economic situation. Field Marshal Asim Munir also in attendance. — DNA

Last Gaza flotilla boat intercepted by Israel

APP

JERUSALEM: The organisers of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla said Israel intercepted its last remaining boat on Friday, after the interceptions of its fellow vessels drew protests worldwide. The Global Sumud Flotilla set sail last month, ferrying politicians and activists including Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg towards Gaza, where the United Nations says famine is taking hold. The Israeli navy began intercepting the boats on Wednesday, and an Israeli official said the following day that boats with over 400 people on board had been prevented from reaching the Gaza Strip.

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PPP should seek pardon, says Maryam

Punjab chief minister recalls how critics mocked Punjab for not seeking international aid

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has ruled out offering an apology to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), insisting that it is her allied party's spokesperson who should seek pardon for criticising Punjab's flood relief efforts. "Why should I apologise? It is my responsibility to protect the people of Punjab, their honour, and their property. Maryam Nawaz will never apologise," she said. Her remarks came after the war of words between PML-N and PPP,

Continued on Page 06

Relief for IHC justice

SHC suspends KU's notification cancelling Justice Jahangiri's degree

Two-member bench restrains actions against IHC judge

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday suspended the University of Karachi's notification that had cancelled the law degree of Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri. A two-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro and Justice Mohammad Abdur Rahman took up the plea filed by Justice Jahangiri, who had challenged the university's decision. The court also restrained the institution from taking any further steps against the judge on the basis of the recommendations forwarded by the university's Syndicate and Fairmen's Committee. In his petition, Justice Jahangiri maintained that the cancellation of his degree was not only unlawful but also a move that could tarnish his professional standing and judicial career. He requested the SHC to declare the notification null and void, arguing that the de-

cision was made without due process. During the hearing, University of Karachi Registrar Professor Imran Siddiqui appeared before the court. He informed the bench that the university had received notice in the matter only two days earlier and, therefore, required additional time to submit a comprehensive response. Justice Kalhoro asked him to specify the duration required to file the reply. At this stage, Barrister Salahuddin, appearing on behalf of Justice Jahangiri, pointed out that the notification carried serious implications and urged the court to suspend it until the university submitted its formal response. After hearing arguments, the bench granted the registrar's request for more time but also safeguarded the petitioner's position by suspending the controversial notification. The court adjourned the matter to a later date, making it clear that the university could not proceed with any action against Justice Jahangiri until the case was fully heard.

Briefs

India set to receive Taliban FM

UNSC committee temporarily lifts travel ban on Afghan foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi

DNA

KABUL: The UN Security Council Committee has temporarily lifted a travel ban on the Afghan Taliban foreign minister, which would allow him to visit India between October 9 and 16, India's foreign ministry said on Friday. If confirmed, it would be the first visit to India by a senior leader of the Taliban-run Afghan administration since it seized power in 2021 after 20 years of US military presence. Delhi and Kabul have traditionally enjoyed close ties when the Taliban were not in power. Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi is among Afghan Taliban members who are under UN sanctions, including a travel ban and asset freeze. Temporary exemptions are sometimes granted for diplomacy. India's foreign ministry spokesperson told reporters that New Delhi had already been speaking to the Afghan administration, and noted that it had provided support after an earthquake on August 31. He did not specifically confirm that the visit would take place. Discussions during Muttaqi's trip would centre around bilateral co-operation, trade exchanges, exports of dry fruit, facilities in the health sector, consular services and various ports, said Zia Ahmad Takal, deputy spokesperson of Afghan Taliban's foreign ministry.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. — Editor

During NA session

PTI questions Shama's presence at UN Session

We cannot compromise on Palestine at any cost," Qaisar asserted

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader and former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaisar strongly criticized the government on Thursday, raising questions over the presence of social activist Shama Junejo at the recent United Nations General Assembly session in New York. Speaking on the floor of the Assembly, Qaisar asked how Junejo, who holds no official government position, was allowed to sit directly behind Defence Minister Khawaja Asif during the high-profile session. He termed it a breach of protocol and demanded clarity from the government over her inclusion in the official Pakistani delegation. Khawaja Asif, responding to the criticism, distanced himself from Junejo's presence, saying he had no role in her being seated with the delegation. Meanwhile, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar declined to comment on the controversy when pressed in the Assembly. Shama Junejo, however, clarified her

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Reserved seats case: PTI not entitled to relief

10-member bench of apex court headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan issues detailed order

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that relief could not be extended to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) by invoking the power of complete justice under Article 187 of the Constitution. A ten-member bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, issued the detailed ruling. The bench also included Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi,

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Seven India-sponsored terrorists gunned-down



ISPR says security forces conducted IBO on reported presence of terrorists belonging to Indian proxy

NEWS DESK





ISLAMABAD: Security forces have killed seven Indian sponsored terrorists in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted in Sherani district of Balochistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Friday. According to the military's media wing, the security forces conducted an IBO on the reported presence of terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij or the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). "During the operation, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, and after an intense fire exchange, seven Indian-sponsored terrorists were sent to hell," the ISPR added. "Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area," the communique further said. Sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorists found in the area, according to the military's media wing. "The security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of Indian-sponsored terrorism from the country, and reaffirm the nation's unwavering resolve

to bring the perpetrators of terrorism to justice," it added. In a statement, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the security forces for killing 7 Indian-backed terrorists in Balochistan's district of herani. "We will uproot the monster of terrorism," he said in a handout issued by the PM Office. The premier went on to say that the government and the security forces were determined to completely eliminate terrorism from the country. "We will never allow elements aiming to harm Pakistan's integrity to succeed," he added. The recent operation comes days after terrorists carried out a suicide attack near the FC headquarters in the provincial capital of Balochistan, resulting in 11 fatalities. Pakistan has witnessed an alarming 46% surge in overall violence in the third quarter (Q3) of 2025, as per the latest statistics issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). The country reported at least 901 fatalities and 599 injuries, including civilians, security personnel and the terrorists, in a total of 329 incidents of violence, which also included terror attacks and counter-terror operations. The CRSS report highlights that by Q3, the ongoing year has proven nearly as deadly as all of 2024, with 2,414 fatalities

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OGRA conducts joint inspections of LPG plants

The inspections aimed to ensure compliance with safety standards and regulations at the LPG plants. The joint team assessed the operational safety, storage facilities, and emergency preparedness of the plants

DNA

FAISALABAD :The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) Lahore Regional Office, in collaboration with the District Administration Faisalabad and Punjab Civil Defence Department, carried out joint

inspections of LPG plants in Faisalabad Division from September 29 to October 1, 2025.

The inspections aimed to ensure compliance with safety standards and regulations at the LPG plants. The joint team assessed the operational safety, storage facilities, and emergency preparedness of the

plants. The inspections were part of OGRA's efforts to promote safety and regulatory compliance in the oil and gas sector. The authority works closely with other government departments to ensure that the industry operates safely and efficiently.

Pak Suzuki donates engines to KP-TEVTA

PESHAWAR: Managing Director KP-TEVTA, Malik Mansoor Qaiser has said that the provincial government is taking strong steps to promote technical education despite limited resources. He added that KP-TEVTA is actively bridging the gap between industry and technical education by aligning curricula with market needs to create direct employment opportunities for youth. He was addressing a ceremony at Government College of Technology here, where Pak Suzuki handed over 14 engines to KP-TEVTA Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Technical Education, Tufail Anjum, was the chief guest. Speakers emphasized the need for youth to acquire modern technological skills. The event was attended by Pak Suzuki representatives, officials, principals, teachers, students, and industry experts. Qaiser said providing modern training in all districts, including Dera Ismail Khan, is a top priority so that students in southern districts can benefit equally. He praised the youth's passion for skill development, describing it as key to a successful future. He also noted that free training in various technologies is being provided with NAVTTC's support and urged students to take full advantage of such opportunities. On the occasion, Pak Suzuki also handed over a 660cc Every engine to the Government Technical and Vocational Center (Male), Dera Ismail Khan, for demonstration purposes. Principal Shujaat Ali said the equipment will enhance students' practical training and strengthen their learning potential.—APP

Dengue cases reach to 730 as 25 new cases reported

RAWALPINDI: The District Health Authority (DHA) Rawalpindi is stepping up its campaign against dengue fever as the city continues to record a steady influx of cases.

The health authority confirmed that after screening a 11,650 patients so far in 2025, a total of 730 confirmed dengue cases have been reported across the district.

During the last 24 hours alone, health data revealed 25 new confirmed cases were reported, leading to the admission of 61 patients in allied hospitals. The health department has maintained a robust prevention strategy as meticulously inspecting over 5.45 million houses for potential mosquito breeding sites, of 166,620 positive houses and 22,481 positive spots were identified where mosquito larva were found.

In a concerted effort to break the transmission cycle, health teams have successfully eliminated a significant total of 189,101 larva.

Punitive actions have been widespread, resulting in 4,358 First Information Reports (FIRs) being filed and 1,838 premises sealed for violations. Furthermore, 3,453 challans were issued, leading to over 10.7 million rupees in financial penalties.—APP

Sindh CM mulls strict action against parents refusing Polio vaccination

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah is planning to take drastic measures against parents, who refuse the polio vaccine for their children, including blocking their cell phone SIMs and suspending their national identity cards as well as passports to prevent them from accessing communication and travel facilities, as a consequence for endangering not only their own children but also others by making them susceptible to polio.

"I have no other options but to penalise those who avoid their national duty of eradicating polio, a responsibility that starts at home and affects the entire province and country," he said.

Murad Ali Shah has decided to set up a 'Polio Vaccine Refusal Cell' at the CM House. This cell will be provided with union council-wise details of parents refusing to vaccinate their children so they can be addressed through social, political and administrative means. The chief minister took these decisions while presiding over a meeting on polio eradication at CM House on Friday. The CM expressed regret over the continued reporting of polio cases, despite intensive efforts. He directed the Health Department and district administrations to work seriously towards eradicating polio.

Shah warned that negligence in the polio campaign would not be tolerated. "Any official not showing performance will no longer be part of his team. I have already removed some officers from the Health Department and administration," he said and added that further negligence in polio eradication will lead to the removal of responsible officers, he added. The purpose of today's meeting is to launch the polio campaign at the Union Council level with renewed enthusiasm, he said, adding that in the past week, two more polio cases were reported, raising the province's total to nine, which is quite painful. _APP

Commissioner vows full support to WASA for improving facilities

FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Raja Jahangir Anwar has visited Head Office of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) here on Friday and assured that all possible resources would be provided to overcome financial and operational challenges faced by the agency for improving its water supply and sewerage services. During visit, Divisional Commissioner received a detailed briefing on WASA's performance, sewerage operations, water supply, revenue recovery and foreign-funded projects from WASA Managing Director Sohail Qadir Cheema. He said that 30 million-gallon-per-day water treatment plant is being executed with the support of the Agency for French Development. Hence, work on this project should be further expedited for its early completion. He highlighted the mega project being completed with Denmark's cooperation to make treated sewerage water usable for agricultural purposes. He said that special focus should be laid on the capacity building of disposal stations to ensure quality drainage services for the citizens. He said that backup power arrangements and procurement of new machinery for disposal stations would significantly improve WASA's performance. Commending the efforts of MD WASA Sohail Qadir Cheema, the divisional commissioner said that all ongoing projects were being executed efficiently under his leadership. He assured that he would take up the case for more funds from the government for the construction of underground water tanks and other development schemes. He said that politicians, media and other stakeholders would be taken on board to enhance performance and credibility of WASA. He also directed WASA field teams to accelerate efforts to increase the number of commercial connections, thereby improving revenue recovery for the agency. Meanwhile, Managing Director WASA informed the divisional commissioner that a plan had already been finalized to desilt roadside drain lines across the city before next monsoon season.—APP

Resolution of business issues, inclusive uplift ICCI's prime focus: Tahir

Sardar Tahir Mehmood appreciated the initiative of Bahria University students and reaffirmed ICCI's fullest support for their event, terming it a positive step towards building future women leaders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) Sardar Tahir Mehmood has said that the Chamber is determined to play a proactive role in resolving the issues of the business community while also promoting women and youth empowerment for inclusive economic growth. He said ICCI is pursuing the establishment of a dedicated Industrial Zone for Islamabad, as the existing industrial areas are already over-crowded and unable to meet the growing needs of businesses. He added that the Chamber is in contact with the Punjab government for allocation of land at the nearest possible locality to facilitate the industrial sector. He emphasized that along with industrial development, empowering women entrepreneurs and youth-led startups is vital for driving innovation, creating jobs, and ensuring sustainable development. ICCI, he added, will extend full support to initiatives that strengthen women leadership and entrepreneurship. He expressed these views while talking to visiting delegations of the Computer Hardware Association of Pakistan (CHAP), the Renewable Energy Association of Pakistan (REAP), Pakistan Alternate Energy Association (PAEA), and the Bahria University Event Club. A twenty-member delegation of CHAP led by its Chairman Khawar Idrees along with others congratulated the newly elected ICCI leadership. They apprised the President about the crucial issues facing their members, especially related to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), customs duty and taxation. Similarly, a fourteen-member joint delegation

of REAP and PAEA headed by Syed Usman Ali also met ICCI President and highlighted the pressing challenges facing the renewable energy sector, particularly the discouraging raids of FBR on their setups. They also stressed the urgent need of a dedicated Industrial Estate for the Islamabad business community. In another meeting, a delegation of Bahria University Event Club headed by its President Duha Tanveer apprised Sardar Tahir Mehmood about their upcoming three-day event on

"Women Leadership" scheduled from 14 to 16 October 2025. She sought ICCI's collaboration to promote women entrepreneurship. Sardar Tahir Mehmood appreciated the initiative of Bahria University students and reaffirmed ICCI's fullest support for their event, terming it a positive step towards building future women leaders. Senior Vice President ICCI Tahir Ayub, Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry, executive members and a large number of members were also present on the occasions.



ISLAMABAD: People are taking interest in the paintings during exhibition at Tanzara Art Gallery in Federal Capital.

Safe cities reunites 430 persons with their loved ones

LAHORE: The Virtual Centre for Child Safety, established at the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), has successfully reunited missing children and special persons with their families.

According to a spokesman for the authority, by integrating welfare institutions data with the Mera Pyara database, more than 430 missing children, special persons, and abandoned citizens have so far been handed over safely to their families and guardians. Many of these individuals had been residing for years in welfare homes and shelters. Mera Pyara team of Safe Cities visited Edhi Centers, Child Protection Bureaus and other welfare institutions across the province, conducting interviews and recording video messages of the missing persons. These videos were circulated on social media, targeting specific areas.

As a result, families were able to identify their loved ones and immediately contacted the Safe Cities team. After confirmation and completion of legal procedures, the individuals were handed over to their parents and guardians. So far, complete records of over 1,400 missing and abandoned persons from different welfare institutions have been incorporated into the Mera Pyara system. _APP

Punjab launches mega health projects

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has said that the government is taking revolutionary and historic steps worth billions of rupees in the health sector in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He was presiding over a meeting on Friday at the Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Department to review the Nawaz Sharif Medical District project. The minister said that a network of new government hospitals is being established across Punjab, with the provision of state-of-the-art health facilities at people's doorsteps as the top priority of the provin-

cial government. "The Chief Minister wants to ensure that citizens face no hurdles in accessing modern healthcare services," Rafique said. During the meeting, Secretary Specialized Health Care and Medical Education Azmat Mahmood Khan assured that officers would continuously monitor the Nawaz Sharif Medical District project. Under the project, Lahore will see the establishment of Children's Hospital 2 and Institute of Genetic and Blood Diseases, Institute of Surgical, Orthopedic and Medical Rehabilitation, a Center of Excellence for Nursing Education, a Specialized Medical Hospital, a Cardiac Hospital, a Medi-


cal University, and a state-of-the-art Diagnostic Lab. The Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab (IDAP) has been directed to start work on these projects at the earliest. The meeting was attended by Special Secretary Development Benish Fatima Sahi, Chief Planning Officer Abdul Haq Bhatti, Additional Secretary Ameer Muhammad, COO IDAP Maira Ali, GM Shahzad Nazir Leghari, Chief Strategy Officer Faizan Ahmed Riaz, Additional Director LDA Khuram, CEO Punjab Public Private Partnership Authority Dr. Muhammad Zeeshan Hanif, and other senior officers.

Efforts afoot to provide affordable internet services in KP

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Science & Technology and Information Technology, Dr. Shafqat Ayaz, has said that the KP government has taken a revolutionary decision to provide affordable and quality internet services to the people of the province. He stated that in 2022, the PDM government had decided that whenever a telecommunication company undertakes underground cable-laying work, the National Highway Authority (NHA) would charge Rs. 5 per meter. Due to this additional expense, many companies were reluctant to invest in internet infrastructure in the province, which directly harmed students, freelancers, businesses, and ordinary citizens. Dr. Shafqat


Ayaz said that Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has taken a people-friendly step by abolishing this charge for the next three years. This will reduce costs for telecom companies and enable them to expand affordable and high-speed internet access to wider areas of the province. He added that the government has also made it mandatory that if, during excavation, any road or public pathway is damaged, the concerned company will repair it at its own cost. The purpose of this decision is to provide facilities without causing additional problems for the public. Dr. Shafqat Ayaz emphasized that internet is the greatest necessity of the modern era, and this step reflects the vision of "Digital Pakistan". He further stated that the greatest

beneficiaries of this policy will be the youth, who depend on internet for online education, freelancing, and employment opportunities. Likewise, the business community, banking services, hospitals, and other institutions will also benefit from modern digital access. Dr. Shafqat Ayaz clarified that some people try to create the impression that suspending or restoring internet services is a provincial government's authority. In reality, this matter falls strictly under the jurisdiction of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), which operates directly under the federal government. The provincial government, however, is committed to taking every possible measure within its domain to ensure maximum relief for the people.—APP



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EJAZ-UL-HASSAN
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National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER
Oct 01/China National Day
Oct 01/Cyprus National Day
Oct 01/Republic of Korea Armed Forces Day
Oct 01/Nigeria Armed Forces Day
Oct 02/Guinea National Day
Oct 03/Germany Unification Day
Oct 03/Republic of Korea National Foundation Day
Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day
Oct 06/Egypt Armed Forces Day
Oct 09/Uganda Independence Day
Oct 12/Spain National Day
Oct 23/Hungary National Day
October 24/United Nations United Nations Day
Oct/25/Romania Armed Forces Day
Oct 26/Austria National Day
Oct 27/Turkmenistan Independence Day
Oct 28/Czech Republic National Day
Oct 29/Turkey Republic Day



Emergency
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RGH.....9290301-7
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Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343
Water Tank
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Ethiopian ambassador leaving Pak after term completion

RCCI Hosts Special Commemoration to Honor Outgoing Ethiopian Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), on the sidelines of the Business Africa Trade Forum 2025 held in Islamabad, organized a special commemoration ceremony to honor the outgoing Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, for his remarkable services in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia. The event was graced by prominent dignitaries including Sardar Yasir Ilyas, Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism, H.E. Mr. Albert P. Khorev, Ambassador of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan, along with ambassadors, high commissioners, and senior diplomats from Algeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Speaking on the occasion, RCCI President Usman Shaukat lauded the outgoing ambassador's efforts in advancing political, economic, and people-to-people linkages between the two brotherly nations. He highlighted Dr. Jemal's notable contributions to the Green Pakistan Initiative and his proactive role in raising awareness on climate change. He further added that Dr. Jemal had been instrumental in fostering business, trade, and investment



opportunities between Pakistan and Ethiopia, thereby laying a strong foundation for long-term cooperation. The ceremony

concluded with speakers conveying their heartfelt appreciation and best wishes for the ambassador's future endeavors,

expressing full confidence that Pakistan-Ethiopia relations will continue to flourish and grow stronger in the years ahead.

Maarka-e-Haq proves Pakistan's technological superiority: Mashhood

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, said that in the "Maarka-e-Haq", Pakistan Armed forces not only dealt a decisive blow to the enemy, but also proved our superiority in technology and combat skills over India. In history, the "Maarka-e-Haq" is the victory of the Pakistani army and our nation and the emergence of Pakistan as a regional power, which was also recognized by the world. Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, said this while addressing the commemoration of Maarka-e-Haq, and dinner hosted by the focal Person to the Chairman, PM Youth Program, for Overseas Affairs and Business and Trade Linkages, Muhammad Shaheryar Memon, for paying tribute to the national heroes for their contributions in different field . Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development, Chaudhry Salik and Federal Ministers, Inran Ahmad Shah, Mubarak Zeb and Chairman Pakistan Sweet Home Zamurd Khan also grace the events. The twelve ambassadors, including the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, H.E. Atadjan Movlamov, the Vietnamese Ambassador to Pakistan is Pham Anh Tuan, Ambassador of Poland to Pakistan, Maciej Pisarski, Ambassador of Uzbekistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, Mohamed Kar-

monne, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov Ambassador Syria to Pakistan is Dr. Ramez Al-raee, Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan is H.E. Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez, Ambassador of Myanmar to Islamabad U Wunna Han, Ambassador of Admiral © Ravindra Wijegunaratne and Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Indonesia to Pakistan,Ingan Malan and diplomats from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan ,Kyrgyzstan and Middle Eastern Countries also participated in the events. Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) said that in this war, our young talents and technology experts played a significant important role, which paralyzed the enemy's war system and India became exposed before the world and after this war, world powers have recognized the importance of Pakistan. Rana Mashhood said that after the "Maarka-e-Haq", Pakistan's global identity was further highlighted and not only did "we gain military superiority, but the world also came forward in establishing economic and trade relations with Pakistan." He said that the world had witnessed Pakistan's war innovation and technological advancement during the Maarka-e-Haq, asserting that the country's defence capabilities were ahead of India's in front of the global community. The chairman said that Pakistan downed seven Indian aircraft and disabled India's S-400 defence system, leading New Delhi to seek U.S. intervention to end the conflict. The PMYP chairman further emphasized the government's commitment to youth

empowerment through skill development and innovation through world-best practices in developed economies. The Chairman said that 35 youth delegations have been sent abroad under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme to gain international exposure and experience. The future of Pakistan lies in technical and skills-based programmes that can equip the country's vast youth population for both domestic and global opportunities, and said that Pakistan's youth policy is no longer limited to conventional education alone. "We are investing not just in education but also in climate change adaptation and the green economy," he noted, emphasizing the government's commitment to align youth empowerment with emerging global trends. Rana Mashhood highlighted that the Prime Minister's Youth Programme is actively serving millions of young people, providing them with facilities, opportunities, and access to training platforms. He said youth can now register themselves online from their homes, making PMYP one of the most accessible government programmes in the region. Sharing figures, he revealed that over 7,000 companies have registered with PMYP, offering jobs, internships, and training placements for Pakistani youth. "Our young people are excelling at home and abroad, and they continue to bring pride to the nation," and referred to the recently launched National Youth Employment Policy (NYEP), which he called a "game changer" for the country.—APP

Siddiqui calls for NPC transparent investigation, accountability

ISLAMABAD: Senator Irfan Siddiqui Parliamentary Party Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) in the Senate on Friday lauded the conducting of the National Press Club (NPC) inquiry as a positive step and stressed it must go beyond symbolic gestures and deliver real accountability. In a statement shared on his official X account, Senator Siddiqui, who is also the Chairman of the Stand-

ing Committee on Foreign Affairs , emphasized that any officials found guilty of misconduct or excessive actions must be held accountable under the law. He called for a fully transparent investigation, highlighting the essential role of journalist organizations in ensuring credibility and justice. Describing press clubs as the "sacred houses of journalism," Siddiqui expressed deep regret over any vio-

lations of their sanctity. He reiterated that violence against journalists performing their professional duties is unjustifiable and condemned such acts unequivocally. Senator Siddiqui stressed the urgent need for concrete and lasting measures to prevent future incidents, underscoring the importance of safeguarding press freedom and ensuring the safety of media personnel across the country.—APP

NLPD holds 'Muqalma' with renowned Poet and Scholar

ISLAMABAD: National Language Policy Department (NLPD) organized a 'Muqalma' with the eminent poet, critic, translator, and intellectual Salman Basit late Thursday night. The session was moderated by the renowned researcher and intellectual, Mehboob Zafar, president of the literary organization "Zavia." Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Director General of the NLPD, welcomed the participants and expressed gratitude for their presence. Dr. Rashid Hameed, Executive Director of the Institute, delivered the opening remarks, calling the session a significant step forward for literature and research. He emphasized that such gatherings provide scholars an opportunity for dialogue, thereby strengthening intellectual and research traditions. Participants expressed that attending various literary sessions and dialogues allows writers, researchers, and artists to engage in meaningful discussions on important topics. They appreciated Salman Basit's

impartial and balanced approach, noting his preference for seriousness, patience, and reasoned arguments. His eloquence and moderation are widely admired. Salman Basit, a distinguished figure in Urdu literature, has a wealth of experience in moderating academic, literary, and cultural programs both nationally and internationally. His insightful and impactful presentations consistently leave audiences inspired. His writings hold significant importance among readers and literary circles, playing a vital role in shaping intellectual discourse. During the session, Salman Basit shared deep reflections on classical traditions of Urdu literature, modern trends, and the evolving demands of literature. He described literature as a broad perspective on life that allows individuals to discover both personal and collective identities. He stressed the urgent need to understand the challenges and new dimensions facing Urdu literature, highlighting its role in fostering social

consciousness and intellectual stability for future generations. Basit also spoke about his literary journey, explaining how unconscious affinity towards literary genres has influenced his work. Reflecting on his life, Salman Basit shared that his literary journey spans over six decades, nurtured by a rich intellectual heritage. Basit also expressed immense love for Urdu language and literature, underscoring the unity among Urdu literary enthusiasts. In his conclusion remarks, Basit recited a prose passage, a poem, and a ghazal from his own writings upon the audience's request. In his address, Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar reiterated the Institute's commitment to promoting scholarly and intellectual discussions. He emphasized the importance of such programs in bringing the younger generation closer to literature, culture, and the arts while highlighting the significance of language and expression.—APP

PIDCL assigned Rs 37b infrastructure projects in KP, Sindh

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has assigned a broad portfolio of around Rs 37.42 billion infrastructure projects to Pakistan Infrastructure Development Company Limited (PIDCL) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Sindh. According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, seven new PSDP schemes worth Rs 1.768 billion have been assigned to the company in KPK. Among them, the flagship initiative focused on uplifting the underdeveloped districts of Shangla, for which Rs1 billion has been allocated on a 50:50 cost-sharing basis. In addition, two significant infrastructure projects have been handed over to the company in Mansehra District. These are the construction of an RCC pre-stressed bridge at Mari Safdar Shah on Siran River and another RCC pre-stressed bridge at Shah Da Punja on the same river, costing Rs399.6 million and Rs368.35 million, respectively. In Sindh, the company will execute 11 schemes, eight in Karachi and three in Hyderabad, worth Rs 4.15 billion. Alongside PSDP projects, the company has also been tasked with implementing SAP schemes in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These included 17 projects in Sindh for the fiscal year 2024-25 with a total allocation of Rs 4.25 billion, five projects in KP in the same period worth Rs 1.11 billion, and 10 projects in the province for 2025-26, costing Rs 2.15 billion. The PIDCL will also implement the Karachi Urban Infrastructure Development Package with an estimated cost of Rs 15 billion. The PC-I of this package has already been submitted to Central Development Working Party (CDWP). The PC-I of another major scheme, titled Hyderabad Urban Infrastructure Development Package (Revamping & Rehabilitation), valuing Rs 5 billion, has also been submitted to CDWP. Additionally, the organization is planning to develop federal courts in Karachi at an estimated cost of Rs 4 billion. A revised PC-I of this project is scheduled to be submitted shortly. —APP

12 shopkeepers detained insabzi mandi for overcharging

ISLAMABAD: The district administration carried out an inspection at the city's main fruit and vegetable market on Friday, leading to the detention of 12 shopkeepers for overcharging customers and failing to display official price lists.

The visit was conducted by the Assistant Commissioner (AC) Saddar following multiple complaints from citizens about vendors selling fruits and vegetables at inflated rates.

During the inspection, several stalls were found violating official price regulations. Some shopkeepers had not displayed the daily price list issued by the administration, while others were charging higher than the fixed rates. The administration immediately shifted 12 shopkeepers to the local police lockup for legal action.

Officials said the crackdown aims to ensure that citizens are not burdened with unfair prices and that markets remain under proper regulation.

Authorities reminded citizens to always pay according to the rates specified in the official list, which is issued daily by the district administration. They urged buyers to demand the displayed list from shopkeepers and to report any violations to the control room so that strict action can be taken.

The Assistant Commissioner stated that monitoring teams will continue unannounced visits to check markets across Islamabad.

He stressed that the administration's priority is to maintain transparency in pricing and to protect the public from exploitation by profiteers.

Officials further warned vendors that any attempt to sell at higher rates or to conceal price lists will result in immediate penalties, including fines, detention, or sealing of stalls.

The administration also appealed to citizens to cooperate by lodging complaints whenever they encounter such violations.

The district administration assured that the ongoing drive will not be limited to the Sabzi Mandi but will also cover other markets in different sectors of the capital to ensure uniform compliance. APP

Dengue cases reach to 730 as 25 new cases reported

RAWALPINDI: The District Health Authority (DHA) Rawalpindi is stepping up its campaign against dengue fever as the city continues to record a steady influx of cases. The health authority confirmed that after screening a 11,650 patients so far in 2025, a total of 730 confirmed dengue cases have been reported across the district. During the last 24 hours alone, health data revealed 25 new confirmed cases were reported, leading to the admission of 61 patients in allied hospitals. The health department has maintained a robust prevention strategy as meticulously inspecting over 5.45 million houses for potential mosquito breeding sites, of 166,620 positive houses and 22,481 positive spots were identified where mosquito larva were found.

In a concerted effort to break the transmission cycle, health teams have successfully eliminated a significant total of 189,101 larva.

Punitive actions have been widespread, resulting in 4,358 First Information Reports (FIRs) being filed and 1,838 premises sealed for violations. Furthermore, 3,453 challans were issued, leading to over 10.7 million rupees in financial penalties. The Dr. Waqar Ahmad, Spokesman DHA highlighted the recent tain in Pindi could further spike the cases due the temperature moderation "Citizens should be carefully utilizing the water and monitoring the mosquito presence as the rain has favoured the dengue spread", he said. Dr. Waqar emphasized the social responsibility of following dengue SOPs, failing to which could lead to dengue fevers and financial penalties.—APP

Briefs

Pakistan, Kazakhstan to boost cultural collaboration

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kazakhstan have agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fields of arts and culture, with a special focus on fashion and music.

The understanding was reached during a meeting on Friday between Advisor to the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division Usman Shah and Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin. Kistafin said that Kazakhstan is preparing a comprehensive roadmap to expand cultural collaboration with Pakistan. "We will share the details of this roadmap with Pakistan soon," he noted, adding that both countries are committed to deepening their cultural ties. He further disclosed that senior officials from Pakistan's Ministry of National Heritage and Culture had approached Kazakhstan with a proposal for jointly producing a film showcasing shared cultural heritage.

Usman Shah emphasized Pakistan's longstanding relations with Kazakhstan and highlighted the significance of promoting people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges. He also briefed the ambassador on the Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM), which operates under the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, and shared details of Pakistan's initiatives to present its Buddhist heritage through 3D films.

He stressed that cultural and educational cooperation plays a vital role in strengthening mutual understanding between the two nations.—DNA

Light rain in ICT, distt admin monitor roads, low-lying areas

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital received light rain on Friday, bringing a pleasant change in weather. Following the rain, the district administration put precautionary measures in place to ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety. On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, assistant commissioners were deployed in the field to monitor the situation. Officials inspected major roads, intersections, and low-lying areas across the city to prevent any disruption caused by water accumulation. The administration confirmed that despite the rainfall, traffic movement remained normal on all main roads. Teams were also instructed to stay alert and respond quickly in case of waterlogging or any other inconvenience to commuters. Authorities appealed to citizens to cooperate with the administration and immediately report any untoward incident during rainfall. Contact numbers of the relevant departments have been made available for the public to lodge complaints or share information. The district administration assured that it is closely monitoring the situation and will continue field inspections until the weather clears.—APP

Drug paddlers get 23 years imprisonment

RAWALPINDI: Local courts on Friday sentenced two notorious drug dealers to a combined 23 years in prison and fines totaling Rs 1.08 million. According to details, Naveed Anwar was arrested by Naseerabad police station in March 2025 with 3.1 kg of ice, received 14 years imprisonment, and a Rs 1.0 million fine. Another court sentenced Asad for 09 years in jail and Rs. 80,000.0 penalty. Asad was nabbed by Sadiq Abad police in September 2024 by recovering 1.41 kg of hashish from his possession. The convictions were based on solid evidence and diligent follow-up by investigators. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani praised the SSP Investigation and legal teams for their outstanding work. "We are taking all possible steps to eradicate the menace of drugs from society," the CPO added.—APP

Pakistan committed to skills empowerment

The dialogue aims to foster partnerships and initiatives to boost skills development and integrate Pakistan into the global skills ecosystem

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Day One of the Two-Day International Dialogue on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the Shifting Socio-Economic Paradigm commenced in Islamabad. Spearheaded by Chairperson NAVTTC, Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, whose vision made the dialogue possible, the event was organized by NAVTTC with support from the TVET Sector Support Programme (TVET SSP), in collaboration with the European Union, GIZ, British Council, and other partners. The dialogue brought together international experts, policymakers, and industry leaders to deliberate on the future of skills development in Pakistan. The event was graced by Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and Chairman PMYP, Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, whose presence added great value. Chairperson NAVTTC, Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, and Executive Director NAVTTC, Mr. Muhammad Aamir Jan, welcomed the international delegations and stakeholders, reaffirming NAVTTC's commitment to global linkages and sustainable industry partnerships for the benefit of Pakistan's youth.

Federal Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui in his address stressed that skills are the foundation of Pakistan's economic progress and that international linkages will play a pivotal role in preparing youth for global competitiveness. Chairman PMYP, Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, emphasized that the vision of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme is to empower young Pakistanis with cutting-edge



skills that create employment as well as entrepreneurship opportunities.

Mr. Philipp Oliver Gross, Deputy Ambassador of the EU, praised Pakistan's efforts to align TVET with global best practices, highlighting the dialogue's role in fostering long-term collaboration. Chairperson NAVTTC reaffirmed commitment to reform and modernization, while Executive Director NAVTTC emphasized that industry-led programs are

equipping youth for both local and international markets.

Day one featured several key sessions, including: Policy Dialogue: Intersecting policy imperatives for youth engagement, education, skills training, and employment, Breakout Session 1: Improving Governance for a Robust TVET System, Breakout Session 2: TVET Opportunities for Gender, Marginalized Communities, and other Vulnerable Groups, Breakout

Session 3: Greening and Transforming TVET for a more Resilient and Sustainable Economy

Day One featured sessions where experts shared insights on policy reforms, modernization, women's participation, digital and green skills, and financing. The dialogue aims to foster partnerships and initiatives to boost skills development and integrate Pakistan into the global skills ecosystem.

Bahria University organizes oot on communication

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Bahria University organized the two-day 4th International Conference on Communication, Computing and Digital Systems (C-CODE'25) at E-8 Campus, Islamabad on Oct 1-2, 2025.

Conference Chair, Dean Engineering Sciences Dr. Faisal Bashir, welcomed the participants and highlighted the Bahria University commitment to research, innovation, and the role of C-CODE in fostering knowledge exchange. Rector Bahria University, Vice Admiral Asif Khaliq HI(M) (Retd), graced the ceremony as the Chief Guest. In his address, he expressed gratitude to the distinguished gathering of scholars, innovators, and professionals. He emphasized Bahria University's commitment to promoting research, innovation, and global collaboration, adding that C-CODE is a proud reflection of the University's mission to bridge theory with practice and prepare youth to become future leaders and innovators.

The International Conference featured strong global participation from Gebze University Istanbul Türkiye, Istanbul Medipol University Türkiye, Coventry University (UK), Macquarie University (Australia), Prince Sultan University Riyadh Saudi Arabia and other leading institutions and provided a forum for academia, research organizations, and industry to exchange knowledge and share experiences in areas such as Signal Processing, Computing, Digital Systems, Creative Systems, Communication, and Security. Their contributions on emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, 6G, IoT, and sustainable systems showcased the wide-ranging expertise brought together through C-CODE 2025. Experts from diverse domains, through specialized technical tracks, emphasized the importance of fostering collaboration between academia and industry, while also encouraging young researchers to explore new frontiers in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and digital innovation. The conference was attended by the senior management of Bahria University Islamabad, Vice Chancellors of distinguished universities, keynote speakers, diplomatic officials, faculty, and students.

Ethical training key to PM's youth empowerment vision

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan revealed on Friday that Pakistan's first National Youth Employment Policy will soon be rolled out, with Ethical Training programs playing a pivotal role in advancing the Prime Minister's vision for youth empowerment. While speaking exclusively with a local news channel, Rana Mashhood informed that Pakistan's first-ever National Youth Employment Policy has been officially approved by the cabinet. He said this landmark policy aims to create extensive employment opportunities for the youth across the country, with a special focus on ensuring that 35% of these opportunities are reserved for women, promoting gender equality in the workforce. The policy not only focuses on domestic job creation but also includes initiatives to open up employment avenues abroad, he said, adding, drawing inspiration from successful international models. Khan highlighted plans similar to China's skilled labor

export programs, which have effectively facilitated overseas employment for their workforce, adding, Pakistan aims to emulate this approach, enabling its youth to gain valuable international work experience and contribute to the country's economy through remittances. He also emphasized that these measures are vital components of the Prime Minister's broader vision for youth empowerment. By combining the National Youth Employment Policy with Ethical Training programs, the government seeks to equip young Pakistanis with the skills and values necessary to thrive both at home and abroad, ultimately driving sustainable growth and development, he added. Furthermore, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan highlighted that the Prime Minister's vision for youth empowerment is being actively implemented through collaborations with key institutions like TEVTA (Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority).

Under this partnership, a series

of Ethical Skilled Training Programs is being launched to ensure that Pakistani youth are not only technically proficient but also grounded in strong ethical values, making them globally competitive and workplace-ready, he added. He said the government is especially focused on tapping into international job markets for skilled labor. Citing recent statistics, Khan shared that nearly 1.8 million (18 lakh) Pakistanis are already working abroad and the new policy aims to significantly increase this number by equipping young people with internationally recognized certifications and skills.

These efforts align with successful models like China's labor export programs, which have helped boost employment and foreign remittances, he mentioned. This multi-pronged approach combining ethical training, technical skills, and international placement reflects the Prime Minister's comprehensive strategy for youth empowerment, he stressed.—DNA

Aftab demands breaking 'cancer taboos'

Raising awareness about pediatric cancers is especially important to provide children with the best chance of recovery through early intervention.

ISLAMABAD: During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Omer Aftab, co-founder of Pink Ribbon Pakistan Friday stressed the importance of breast cancer awareness, explaining that in Pakistan countless women face the disease silently because of social taboos, limited knowledge and difficulties in getting proper healthcare. In an exclusive conversation with private news channel, Omer Aftab shared how Pink Ribbon Pakistan with the support of government has been successfully overcoming the social taboos surrounding breast cancer. He

emphasized the importance of breaking the silence and educating communities to ensure that women no longer suffer in silence due to fear or stigma.

Aftab also highlighted the critical role of mammography screening awareness in early detection of breast cancer, which significantly improves treatment outcomes. He stressed that increasing access to and knowledge about these screenings is vital for saving lives, especially in rural and underserved areas. Beyond breast cancer, Omer Aftab pointed out that Pink Ribbon Pakistan is also

raising awareness about cervical and other cancers, promoting early diagnosis and treatment as key strategies, adding, these efforts aim to empower women with information and resources to seek timely medical help, improving survival rates across the board. Aftab also highlighted the critical role of mammography screening awareness in early detection, which greatly improves treatment outcomes. He also pointed out that October is dedicated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month and social media has played a powerful role in spreading information and

encouraging women to get screened. Omer Aftab also stressed that while breast cancer remains a primary focus, Pink Ribbon Pakistan is committed to raising awareness about other critical cancers, including cervical cancer and childhood cancers. He emphasized the need for educating families about early signs and symptoms, ensuring timely diagnosis and treatment for all age groups. Raising awareness about pediatric cancers is especially important to provide children with the best chance of recovery through early intervention.—APP

PEC convenes roundtable to develop flood resilience strategy

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) convened a high-level roundtable conference on Friday, bringing together world-renowned climate and disaster resilience experts, senior national professionals from federal and provincial departments, and representatives of development partners and donor agencies to deliberate on a national flood resilience strategy. The conference, organized under PEC's mandate, focused on Pakistan's recurring challenge of annual flooding and the urgent need to shift from a reactive to a preventive approach to mitigate its devastating impacts. Building on the expert insights shared at the forum, PEC is formulating a comprehensive framework that will include a 12-month short-term action plan and 1-3 year medium-term strategy. These plans aim to transition Pakistan's flood management from ad-hoc crisis responses to a systematic, coordinated, and accountable approach. The framework will prioritize reducing the impacts of flooding on communities, livelihoods, essential services, agriculture, food security, and the overall economy in 2026 and beyond. Highlighting PEC's commitment, the Council assured close collaboration with government institutions and relevant stakeholders to significantly reduce flood damages in the coming year.—APP

IRSA releases 129,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD :Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 129,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 131,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, Tarbela Dam has already attained its maximum conservation level of 1550.00 feet, which was 148.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 81,000 cusecs and 80,600 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1240.85 feet, which was 190.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 10,300 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 93,600, 72,300, 125,000, and 69,300 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 10,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 17,600 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Weekly inflation up by 0.56%

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), recorded an increase of 0.56 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on October 02, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 332.17 points against 330.32 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 4.07 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16-100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs17,732 increased by 0.82 percent, going up to 325.43 points from last week's 322.77 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs17,733-22,888; Rs22,889-29,517; Rs29,518-44,175 and above Rs44,175 increased by 0.76 percent, 0.61 percent, 0.57 percent and 0.49 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 19 (37.25%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) items decreased and 20 (39.22%) items remained stable. The commodities which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included chicken (7.96%), bananas (0.78%), pulse gram (0.67%), gur (0.59%), potatoes (0.43%), LPG (0.42%), eggs (0.41%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.30%) and pulse moong (0.29%). The items which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis tomatoes (46.44%), petrol (1.72%), diesel (1.45%), garlic (1.41%), onions (1.22%), chilies powder (0.72%), mutton (0.59%), beef (0.41%), vegetable ghee 1kg (0.22%), curd (0.19%) lawn printed (0.17%) and cigarettes (0.07%). On year-on-year basis, the commodities which recorded decrease in their average prices included onions (44.93%), chicken (31.08%), garlic (28.69%), electricity charges for Q1 (26.26%), pulse gram (24.24%), pulse mash (19.11%), tea packet (17.93%), potatoes (17.50%), pulse masoor (4.10%) and LPG (1.33%).—DNA

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Trump's peace plan and a Turkish-Arab role for Palestine

DR. SINEM CENGİZ

THE past week's meetings, announcements and official visits have signaled an intensified regional effort to end the Israeli aggression in Gaza. From the meeting between US President Donald Trump and several regional leaders to the US' 20-point plan to end the war in Gaza and from the intensified diplomatic contacts between Turkish and Arab officials to the Turkish foreign minister's tour of Gulf states, there have been clear signs of the role Türkiye and regional states are set to assume in the coming days. On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Trump spoke with the leaders of several Muslim and Arab nations, namely Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia and Pakistan, in a closed-door meeting. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described it as "fruitful," while Trump said the countries that attended the meeting were "the group that could do it (end the war in Gaza)." A few days after this meeting, Trump announced his 20-point peace plan. All eight countries that attended the meeting with the US president issued a joint statement welcoming the Gaza plan and expressing their readiness to help finalize it. Erdogan praised Trump's leadership and expressed his support for the plan, while Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had phone calls with his counterparts from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to discuss it. But what if Hamas were to accept the plan? That is when things might get tough for Netanyahu at home. Following the announcement, officials from Türkiye, Qatar and Egypt convened in Doha on Tuesday to encourage Hamas to give a positive response to Trump's proposal. Fidan's successor in Türkiye's National Intelligence Organization, Ibrahim Kalin, was in Qatar to join Doha's mediation efforts with Hamas. The presence of Kalin represented Türkiye's official inclusion in the mediation talks, following several meetings between Erdogan and Trump. Fidan reportedly said that, while the US was tasked with persuading Israel to accept the plan, Türkiye and other regional players would focus on convincing the Palestinians. Observers note that Hamas is likely to accept the plan, which is an option that Israel would not favor. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had made it clear that, if Hamas were to reject the plan, he had secured a guarantee from the US to do whatever he wants.

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This was also his guarantee to his own supporters, thinking that Hamas would likely decline the plan. But what if Hamas were to accept it? That is when things might get tough for Netanyahu at home, as he may lose the support he has garnered through his genocidal war in Gaza. Despite the fact the plan is not a perfect one for Palestinians, it appears to be the final chance to end the bloodshed in Gaza – and this is what all the regional states want. For Türkiye and the other regional states, support for the US peace plan reflects the understanding that "a bad peace is better than an ongoing war." That is why, despite all the uncertainties, Trump's peace plan matters for all. Because there is no alternative for the region to end the bombardment, mass displacement and starvation of the people in Gaza. Also, the plan matters because, for the first time, all regional states will be supporting Gaza through a military presence, as guarantors, and with funds they are expected to establish. Ankara and the other regional states see the plan as the first step toward a ceasefire with "cautious hope." So, at this stage, they are extending their support for this narrow yet open window for diplomacy and for progress on the path to peace. Support for the US peace plan reflects the understanding that 'a bad peace is better than an ongoing war'. Again, the plan matters because it is the first time the US administration has come up with a proposal and sought regional support. Trump wanted to discuss the plan with Arab and Islamic countries before Israel. One aspect of Trump's meeting with regional leaders was that he reportedly asked them to contribute troops to the so-called International Stabilization Force for Gaza. However, as with many other points of the US plan, several questions about this force remain unanswered. Which countries will contribute and with how many troops? Which country will lead it? These are the main questions that need to be answered. For now, Türkiye, the Arab Gulf states – primarily Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar – Egypt and Jordan are seen as the key actors in the peace plan. Each state has a significant responsibility. While Türkiye and Qatar have positioned themselves to convince Hamas, Egypt and the UAE have focused on how to lead reconstruction and humanitarian relief in Gaza. Saudi Arabia has been using its status as a diplomatic powerhouse to bring together the officials of these states. For instance, the Kingdom hosted a summit in AlUla on Wednesday, with Fidan in attendance alongside officials from Syria and other regional states. The Turkish foreign minister then headed to the UAE to discuss the situations in Gaza and Syria. These meetings show that the roles assumed by Türkiye and the Gulf states largely complement each other. In fact, since the beginning of the war in Gaza, Türkiye has been supporting Arab agency regarding the conflict and vice versa. The growing Turkish-Arab coordination has become key to bringing international attention to regional issues, particularly Gaza, and to act as a united bulwark against further Israeli aggression.

Ukraine position improving

Luke Coffey

Then came the early White House meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky. The public spat between Zelensky, Trump and Vice President J.D.

Vance quickly became infamous. Many observers at the time thought that US-Ukraine relations were broken beyond repair and that the flow of American support was finished. For Ukrainians, it looked like they would be left on their own to fend off Russia's full-scale invasion. Policy has been shifting in Washington. Trump is now considering a request from Ukraine for Tomahawk missiles But what a difference several months can make. Trump now seems to be realizing that Vladimir Putin is obstacle to peace in Ukraine, not the enabler of it

MORE than nine months into his second term, US President Donald Trump is no closer to bringing Russia's invasion of Ukraine to an end than he was on Day 1. But something in his thinking about the conflict is starting to change. On the campaign trail, bidding for a second term, Trump was clear in his criticism of US support for Ukraine and the policies pursued by his predecessor, Joe Biden. He routinely called US assistance a waste of taxpayers' money, often placed the blame for the invasion on Ukraine and insisted that, once in the Oval Office, he would end the war in 24 hours. There is no doubt his intentions were genuine. He wanted to bring about a peace agreement between the two warring countries, seeing this as a way to define his legacy as an international statesman and peacemaker. To achieve this goal, however, Trump tried to walk a very fine line. He made sure never to show outright support for either Russia or Ukraine. At times, he even appeared to put more pressure on Kyiv than on Moscow. He would take heavy criticism at home for refusing to call Russia the aggressor. Even his Cabinet picks, during their Senate confirmation hearings, were careful to echo Trump's neutral-sounding statements. Then came the early White House meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky. The public spat between Zelensky, Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance quickly became infamous. Many observers at the time thought that US-Ukraine relations were broken beyond repair and that the flow of American support was finished. For Ukrainians, it looked like they would be left on their own to fend off Russia's full-scale invasion. Policy has been shifting in Washington. Trump is now considering a request from Ukraine for Tomahawk missiles But what a difference several months can make. Trump now seems to be realizing that Vladimir Putin is the obstacle to peace in Ukraine, not the enabler of it. His decision over the summer to sell billions of dollars in US weapons and munitions to Europeans – who then delivered them

to Ukraine – surprised many, given his earlier rhetoric against arming Kyiv. This framework allowed Trump to walk a political tightrope with his base of support, which has been hostile to aid for Ukraine, while still ensuring Kyiv received the material support it needed. In recent months, Trump has dispatched his special envoy to meet personally with Putin in Moscow and even took the controversial step of inviting the Russian leader to American soil for a meeting in Alaska. While this was criticized heavily at home, Trump seemed convinced that direct engagement could yield results. Yet, as the months dragged on, it became obvious that Putin was never serious about reaching a comprehensive peace. He was willing to engage just enough to appear interested, but only to buy time and to keep Trump from applying additional sanctions. Since the Alaska meeting, policy has been shifting in Washington. This week, Vance confirmed that Trump is considering a request from Ukraine for American Tomahawk cruise missiles. With a range of about 2,400 km, these missiles could strike deep inside Russia. The very idea of providing Tomahawks to Ukraine during the Biden administration would have seemed impossible, to the point that nobody in policy circles was suggesting it. The fact that Trump is now publicly considering it shows just how much his thinking has evolved since taking office. Another sign of change came with Trump's decision to give NATO countries the green light to shoot down Russian planes, drones or missiles that stray into the airspace of alliance members. Up until then, Europeans had been hesitant, fearing escalation – even when Russian drones crashed inside their borders. But after NATO forces recently shot down more than a dozen drones over Poland, and with Trump signaling his support for continued robust action, there have been no repeated Russian incursions into NATO skies. This suggests that Moscow is recalculating its risk of escalation, a shift prompted by Trump's willingness to back fellow NATO countries.

Trump made clear that he believed in Ukraine's ultimate victory. This is something Biden never said publicly. Most surprising of all was Trump's lengthy social media post during the week of the UN General Assembly regarding Ukraine. In it, he stated openly that Ukraine could not only win the war but retake all its territory, restoring its 1991 borders – including Crimea. If there was a defining moment in his rhetoric on Ukraine, this was it. For the first time, Trump made clear that he believed in Ukraine's ultimate victory. This is something Biden never said publicly and the contrast was striking, if not also surprising. The peace process may remain stalled but Ukraine's position has improved. Trump's earlier willingness to accommodate Putin – sending envoys, offering meetings, holding back sanctions – was rooted in the belief that Russia wanted peace. But now even Trump appears to understand that more pressure will need to be applied to Moscow before it comes to the table in good faith. What comes next is uncertain. Considering the deployment of Tomahawks to Ukraine is not the same as actually providing them. Saying Ukraine can win is not the same as giving Ukraine the means to achieve victory. Weapons and ammunition remain essential, not just from Europe but, crucially, from the US. Trump knows that his legacy will be defined abroad as well as at home. His recent peace efforts in Africa, the Caucasus and South Asia have drawn attention, but the ultimate prize is ending Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Doing so would reshape the global security landscape in a way few other actions could. That requires turning words into action. Ukraine deserves an honorable and fair peace. To reach it, Trump must deliver the support Ukraine needs and apply the pressure necessary to change Putin's calculus. If he succeeds, his legacy as a peacemaker will be secured. If he fails, history will record that he had the opportunity – but did not act.

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Xi Jinping's Era and Beyond

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The PLA's influence during succession raises the danger of politicized military assessments. Leaders may receive intelligence skewed to match their preferences, leading to strategic miscalculations. Deng's 1979 invasion of Vietnam undertaken partly amid his maneuvering to oust Hua was a political gambit with poor battlefield results, illustrating how domestic power struggles can distort foreign policy decisions

FOR over a decade, Xi Jinping, has consolidated power to an extent unseen and has reshaped the CCP elite through a sweeping anti-corruption campaign, curtailed civil society, restructured and modernized the military and expanded state involvement in the economy. He has also pursued assertive foreign policies escalating military activity around Taiwan, expanding China's presence in the South China Sea, deploying confrontational "wolf warrior" diplomacy and deepening ties with Russia even after its invasion of Ukraine. This has ushered in what is widely viewed as Xi's personal era in Chinese politics. Past precedent shows that power transfers in China have been fraught with political intrigue, factional struggles and even instability. The 2012 leadership change from Hu Jintao to Xi occurred amid rumors though unsubstantiated of coups and assassinations, underscoring the volatility of such moments. Succession politics often begin long before a leader steps down, as incumbents seek to secure their legacy by installing loyal successors. Mao Zedong's fixation on preserving his revolutionary vision in his final decade led to the Cultural Revolution, while Deng Xiaoping ensured his economic reforms continued even after relinquishing formal titles. Xi is likely to follow the strongman precedent of Mao and Deng, selecting a successor ideologically aligned with him. However, survival in elite politics requires more than shared ideology successors must also navigate the rivalry of those passed over, making political cohesion fragile. A critical determinant of succession success is military backing. Although the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has never directly seized political control, it plays a decisive "kingmaker"

role in internal CCP struggles. The Mao-Hua Guofeng transition illustrates this: Mao's chosen heir lacked strong political and military standing, surviving only temporarily with top generals' support before being ousted by Deng. Xi himself benefited from strong military ties upon taking office, enabling him to purge rivals and reshape the PLA leadership. Maintaining such control will be essential for any future leader. Historically, personalist rulers in China have cycled through multiple would-be successors Mao discarded Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao before settling on Hua, while Deng replaced Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang before elevating Jiang Zemin. Such instability risks factional splits, as seen in the 1989 Tiananmen protests, which were partly triggered by Hu Yaobang's death. Leadership transitions can also influence foreign policy Xi's awareness of limited time could increase his willingness to take risks, particularly over Taiwan, which he views as central to national rejuvenation. Yet the potential costs of failure military defeat, economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation could temper such ambitions. The PLA's influence during succession raises the danger of politicized military assessments. Leaders may receive intelligence skewed to match their preferences, leading to strategic miscalculations. Deng's 1979 invasion of Vietnam undertaken partly amid his maneuvering to oust Hua was a political gambit with poor battlefield results, illustrating how domestic power struggles can distort foreign policy decisions. Determining Xi's successor will be complicated by demographic and political constraints. None of the current seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee fit the ideal profile of a relatively young leader capable of ruling for many

years. Older candidates risk short tenures, while younger "dark horse" picks would require sidelining an entire generation of senior politicians, potentially causing long-term fractures. Historical cautionary tales such as the Soviet Union's unstable transitions in the 1980s loom large in Xi's thinking. If Xi dies unexpectedly without naming a successor, the CCP constitution calls for the Central Committee to elect a new leader. In reality, a smaller circle of elites, possibly including military figures, would likely decide beforehand. Premier Li Qiang could be a natural choice, but military-backed rivals could displace him. The best-case scenario for stability is for Xi to designate and gradually empower a successor in his final years, as Deng did with Jiang Zemin. This would require giving the heir key posts in party administration and military leadership to build competence and authority. Failing to groom a capable successor increases the risk of a weak leader falling to internal challenges, destabilizing both Chinese politics and international relations. For the United States, the looming succession represents both a potential turning point and a source of uncertainty. However, Washington should resist the temptation to interfere both because of the risk of backlash and because the CCP still interprets the 1989 protests through the lens of perceived foreign subversion. Instead, careful observation and preparedness for post-Xi adjustments are advised. A future leader could similarly steer China toward moderation and greater openness, though this outcome is far from guaranteed. Xi's eventual succession will be a defining moment, shaping China's domestic governance, its military orientation and its global posture for years to come.

Briefs

Pakistan distances itself from Trump's...

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state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. The minister also highlighted Pakistan's efforts during its presidency of the United Nations Security Council, where he said Islamabad had "tried its best" to push for dialogue, conflict resolution, and recognition of Palestinian rights. Dar's remarks come at a time of renewed debate in the Muslim world about external attempts to reshape the Middle East peace process. Pakistan's leadership has reiterated on multiple occasions that any solution must be rooted in justice and endorsed by the Palestinian people themselves. By firmly rejecting Trump's plan, Dar signalled Pakistan's continued alignment with the consensus of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and reaffirmed Islamabad's long-standing position on the Palestine issue.

PTI questions Shama's...

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position in a statement, saying that her inclusion in the delegation was approved by the Prime Minister's Office. "I was invited and made part of the official delegation by the Prime Minister himself," she said, rejecting the criticism. Alongside the issue, Asad Qaisar also lashed out at the government for "siding with Donald Trump" on his proposed Middle East peace plan. He argued that the government had failed to stand firmly with the united stance of Muslim countries on Palestine. "The government's mixed signals are damaging Pakistan's credibility. We cannot compromise on Palestine at any cost," Qaisar asserted. The twin controversies — over delegation management and foreign policy on Palestine — have stirred heated debate in the National Assembly, with the opposition demanding transparency and a clear stance from the government on both matters.

Reserved seats case: PTI not...

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Justice Musarrat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhter Afghan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar, Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, The News reported. The apex court on June 27 had deprived the PTI of reserved seats after setting aside last year's verdict that had declared the party was entitled to reserved seats for women and minorities in the National and provincial assemblies. The court, by a majority of 7-3, had accepted the review petitions filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) and Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) against the reserved seats verdict delivered last year on July 12. The majority judges, including Justice Aminuddin, Justice Hilali, Justice Afghan, Justice Hassan, Justice Kakar, Justice Farooq and Justice Najafi, allowed all the civil review petitions.

Last Gaza flotilla boat..

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Israel said it would deport the activists to Europe, adding that none of the vessels had breached its maritime blockade of the territory. "Marinette, the last remaining boat of the Global Sumud Flotilla, was intercepted at 10:29 am (0729 GMT) local time, approximately 42.5 nautical miles from Gaza," the flotilla organisers said on Telegram. The statement added that Israeli naval forces had "illegally intercepted all 42 of our vessels — each carrying humanitarian aid, volunteers, and the determination to break Israel's illegal siege on Gaza". The interception of the final boat, which brings to an end this flotilla's mission, came hours after protesters around the world held rallies condemning Israel's actions.

‘Weaponization of victimhood emerging as a global concern’, experts warn

Dr. Murat Aslan, faculty at Hasan Kalyoncu University, Turkey, argued that the misuse of victimhood narratives by activists poses a national security risk. He called for a comprehensive government-provincial response supported by public awareness campaigns

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The weaponization of victimhood is a growing global concern, blurring the line between genuine human rights advocacy and the exploitation of narratives for hidden agendas. This challenge is particularly grave in Pakistan, where some activists are alleged to have ties with militant groups, mirroring their behavior and actions. Pakistan must reclaim the intellectual and strategic space from pseudo-human rights advocates misusing the "victimhood card." These views were expressed at a discussion organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad. Laurie A. Watkins, a U.S.-based security policy expert, noted that terrorist groups, political activists, anarchist networks, and their supporters increasingly leverage victimhood narratives to delegitimize states and shield extremists from accountability. She highlighted the attempts of

manipulation of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and the selective grievance politics of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), which overlooks terrorist atrocities. Watkins emphasized that reframing extremist violence as victimhood distorts reality, a distortion amplified by global information networks. With regard to Pak-US ties, she noted a shift in Washington's view of Pakistan, with growing recognition of its strategic, economic, and counterterrorism roles. Amb Asif Ali Khan Durrani, former Pakistan Special Representative for Afghanistan, observed that the BLA has moved beyond traditional insurgency and now uses digital platforms like Telegram and X to spread high-quality propaganda—ranging from multilingual revolutionary songs to videos of attacks on military bases. He warned that while the BLA portrays itself as a victim of economic exploitation and repression, the real victims remain the

local Baloch population exploited by militant groups. He stressed the need to address root causes through economic inclusion, political mainstreaming, and dismantling the digital ecosystem that sustains terrorist organizations. Dr. Murat Aslan, faculty at Hasan Kalyoncu University, Turkey, argued that the misuse of victimhood narratives by activists poses a national security risk. He called for a comprehensive government-provincial response supported by public awareness campaigns. Ms. Saba Aslam, Founder and Executive Director of the Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR), warned that Pakistan faces deliberate narrative warfare, where extremist groups project themselves as victims and the state as the aggressor. She emphasized the importance of youth awareness initiatives, international scholarships on counterterrorism, and sustained diplomatic engagement to counter this threat. Mr. Abdullah Khan, Managing Director of the Pakistan Institute of Conflict and Security Studies

(PICSS), cited global precedents where charities and advocacy groups later emerged as fronts for terrorism or separatism. To deal with the emerging weaponization of victimhood by the terrorist groups, he proposed a three-pronged approach: mandatory registration of such entities, compulsory foreign funding disclosure, and regular third-party audits. Mr. Waqar Khan, Defence Analyst, stated that Pakistan faces a dual challenge of terrorist groups with external sponsorship and the manipulation of narratives through social and digital media. To counter this, Pakistan needs a clear policy leveraging youth engagement and social media to shape narratives and resist the exploitation of victimhood by terrorist groups and their supporters online, he added. Ms. Sadia Sattar, the founder of Pak-Bangla Connect, emphasized the need for a robust policy strategy to counter the digital ecosystem of terrorist organizations, which disseminates distorted narratives, especially concerning Pakistan, among young people.

Alex Pereira attempts to retake title from Magomed Ankalaev at UFC 320

LAS VEGAS: Before Alex Pereira's loss to Magomed Ankalaev at UFC 313 in March, it looked as if the Brazilian knockout artist had given in to the temptations that come with being the sport's most marketable fighter. At times, it became a common joke among fans and fighters about how visible Pereira was during his camp. At UFC 320 on Saturday, Pereira will get what could very well be the final chance in his storied career to reclaim the light heavyweight title belt. Since Ankalaev (20-1-1, 1 no contest) beat Pereira (12-3-0) earlier this year, some visible bad blood has festered between the fighters in their interactions. With his reputation at risk and with a fighter who clearly irritates him holding the title he recently elevated to prominence, Pereira steps into the Saturday fight with a hunger that was missing in March. Even if

Pereira, 38, blames it on injuries rather than the lifestyle he led in the months before the fight. After the first bout, Pereira claimed he fought at just 40 percent of his usual capabilities. Ahead of the second matchup, he won't reveal just how healthy he is, but he made it clear that it shouldn't be used as an excuse this time around. "I took this time off to rest, to take care of myself and to heal some injuries," Pereira said. "I can tell you that I'm going to be very good in this fight. I can't tell you an exact percentage, but I can tell you I'm going to be doing well. "I don't think (I feel a chip on my shoulder). Obviously, I'm here to win. We can't control everything, but I'm here to win. In the last fight, I wasn't able to show a lot. This time, I had time to really prepare, and I think I'm going to be able to show everything that I've

improved and everything I've been learning." Ankalaev, on the other hand, hopes to wash his hands of the Pereira problem once and for all. Another win for the 33-year-old Russian sambo star would mark 15 consecutive fights without a loss. Ankalaev's only career UFC loss came during his debut against Paul Craig in 2018, and it taught him lessons that have made him nearly unbeatable since then. The defeat showed Ankalaev that staying calm is a superpower, and that demeanor proved crucial in his initial victory over Pereira. "When it comes to my calmness, my calm demeanor, I think it comes from taking the lessons out of that one loss that I had at the very beginning of my career," Ankalaev said. "I took a specific lesson out of that. I learned things I needed to find from that loss. From then on, I think the confi-

dence comes from preparation and hard work. "It's something that every fighter develops as they go through their career. They find that calm in which they can operate during the fight. When it comes to being nervous in front of a certain fight, I can't say that I've never been nervous or I've never been shaky. There were fights where, not that I was scared, but it was more responsibility that I felt going in. At this point, for this fight specifically, the reason for the calm is that I went through a really good camp." In the co-main event, Merab Dvalishvili (20-4-0) will defend his bantamweight title against Cory Sandhagen (18-5). Dvalishvili defeated Sean O'Malley for the belt at UFC 306 last September and in the rematch at UFC 316 in June, the latter being his 13th consecutive win. Sandhagen has won four of his past five bouts. — APP

Trionda': FIFA unveils official ball of 2026 World Cup

The ball is again designed by German manufacturer Adidas, provider of official World Cup balls since 1970

FIFA has unveiled the official match ball for the 2026 World Cup, combining high-tech refinements and design details celebrating the three co-host countries — the United States, Mexico and Canada. The ball, called Trionda, was again designed by German manufacturer Adidas, provider of the official World Cup balls since the 1970 tournament. "I am delighted and proud to present the Trionda," FIFA president Gianni Infantino as the ball was revealed at an event in New York on Thursday. The first World Cup organised by three countries, with 48 teams competing, inspired both the name and the design of the ball featuring red, blue and green colours. Iconography from each host nation — maple leaves from Canada, the eagle from Mexico and stars from the United States also feature, with a triangle referring to the unity of the three countries. Former footballers Jurgen Klinsmann, Cafu, Zinedine Zidane, Alessandro Del Piero, and Xavi Hernandez attend the official launch of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Match Ball Trionda at Brooklyn Bridge Park on October 02, 2025, in New York City. Former footballers Jurgen Klinsmann, Cafu, Zinedine Zidane, Alessandro Del Piero, and Xavi Hernandez attend the official launch of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Match Ball "Trionda" at Brooklyn Bridge Park on October 02, 2025, in New York City. Less visible are technological advancements that include deep seams designed to produce "optimal in-flight stability" and embossed icons that improve grip in wet or humid conditions. A motion sensor chip will relay information on the ball's movement, sending data to the video assistant referee (VAR) system. — APP

Seven India-sponsored terrorists gunned-down

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recorded compared to the entire tally of 2024, which reported 2,546 deaths in total. Out of the total 901 fatalities in Q3, 516 (57%) were those of the outlaws, whereas there were 385 civilian and military martyrdoms. Further breakdown reveals that civilian deaths stood at 219 (24%), whereas 166 (18%) security personnel embraced martyrdom.

Deal with US not to affect Pakistan...

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Therefore, the idea that we would compromise these ties for short-term gains elsewhere is entirely baseless," Dar said. His remarks come amid renewed debate on Pakistan's foreign policy priorities, with analysts suggesting Islamabad may seek to reset ties with Washington. However, Dar's statement signals continuity in Pakistan's longstanding "all-weather" partnership with China, even as it explores avenues of cooperation with the United States. By reaffirming the centrality of Beijing in Islamabad's foreign policy, Dar sought to put to rest any speculation about a shift in Pakistan's strategic outlook.

PPP should seek pardon, says Maryam

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which began over flood compensation through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), and intensified after the Punjab CM dismissed PPP's objection over the contentious canal project on the Indus River. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the electric bus project in Lahore, the chief minister said: "Lahore is home for me, Nawaz Sharif, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Nawaz Sharif's love and service are visible throughout the city." She added that visitors often praised Lahore, saying it felt like a different country, and even jokingly asked for Punjab's chief minister to be given to them. Announcing new transport initiatives, Maryam informed that 70 more buses will be added to Lahore's fleet by December. With the inclusion of Sheikhupura, Lahore and Kasur divisions, the total number of buses across Punjab will reach 500. The chief minister also unveiled plans to distribute two million ration cards, each offering a monthly stipend of Rs3,000. She noted that the special relief cards for differently-abled citizens had already been issued to 60,000 people, with a target to expand the scheme to 100,000 beneficiaries. Recalling Punjab's flood relief efforts, Maryam emphasised that the provincial government had rescued at least 2.5 million flood-affected people and treated them like guests by providing three daily meals, shelter and vaccinations. She also underlined her administration's measures against street crime, stating: "When I took oath, murders, rapes, and robberies were common in the province, but now CDD has curbed the crime rate."

Pakistan's Noor Zaman qualifies for Charlottesville Open semi-final

21-year-old Pakistani will now face top seed Timothy Brownell of US in semifinal

KARACHI: Pakistan's Noor Zaman has advanced to the semifinals of the Charlottesville Open after a straight-games victory over third seed Yahya Elnawasany of Egypt. The eighth-seeded Zaman needed just 35 minutes to dispatch Elnawasany, winning 11-9, 11-9 in their quarter-final clash on Thursday. The 21-year-old Pakistani will now face top seed Timothy Brownell of the United States in the semifinal. Brownell reached the last four by defeating India's Veer Chotrani 3-1 (11-6, 9-11, 11-1, 11-6) in 41 minutes. In other quarterfinal results, England's Sam Todd overcame Argentina's Leandro Romiglio 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-8) while Egypt's Salman Khalil knocked out fourth seed Velavan Senthilkumar of India 3-1 (12-10, 11-1, 11-8, 11-3). The Charlottesville Open, which carries a total prize purse of \$31,250, is part of the PSA World Tour series. Zaman stormed into the Charlottesville Open quarter-final with a resounding 3-1 victory over England's Tom Walsh on Thursday. The in-form player, who received a first-round bye, started the game on a high as he sealed a hard-



fought opening set 13-11, while completely outclassing Walsh 11-5 in the second. The Englishman pulled one back by sealing the third set 11-5, only for Zaman to clinch the fourth and round up a comprehensive victory to book his spot in the quarter-final. Notably, Zaman is riding high on confidence after clinching the Nash Cup in Canada last week, another PSA World Tour event. The 21-year-old, seeded fifth, stunned the tournament's No. 2 seed 3-0 in a gripping 52-minute contest. — DNA

Pakistan slump to seven-wicket loss against Bangladesh in World Cup opener

COLOMBO: Rain was predicted, and it was a bit humid too, but the Colombo sun was shining as bright as ever when Pakistan started their Women's World Cup campaign against Bangladesh at the R. Premadasa Stadium here on Thursday. After winning the toss, skipper Fatima Sana elected to bat on a pitch where few, if any, deliveries misbehaved throughout the match. However, the perfect batting conditions could not prevent the trademark Pakistan batting collapse to start off a World Cup from taking place. The last encounter between the two sides was in Lahore in the World Cup Qualifiers, and Pakistan had nearly knocked out the Tigers from the World Cup itself when they won in style with seven wickets in hand. It was only due to a freak innings of 70 of just 29 by the West Indies skipper Hayley Matthews that got the run-rate permutations to tilt in their favour, and on a plane from Dhaka to the World Cup. However, in the Sri Lankan capital, the scripts were flipped completely as Bangladesh romped home in style — losing just three wickets in their pursuit of a paltry 129. Marufa Akter set the momentum from the get-go with a double blow that Fatima's side never recovered from. The lanky right-arm pacer found movement early on to get rid of Omaima Sohail and, more importantly, Sidra Amin, eventually being adjudged of player-of-the-match for her exploits. The veteran batter — fresh off two back-to-back centuries and a crucial 50 against the Proteas, fell for a golden duck as Marufa seamed one back in to make a mess of Sidra's stumps. There were just the fifth

and sixth ball of the innings, but the writing was already on the wall — the teams had switched positions to do a complete 180 degree of the match situation in their previous encounter. The Pakistan skipper also chalked that moment as the point where her team lost the plot, and to never recover from that point on. "We lost batters on the first and second balls of their innings today, we need to take our time and apply ourselves better going forward," Fatima said at the post-match press conference. A handful of spectators, including school cricketers, had shown up for the match,



with the odd Bangladesh and Pakistan flag visible in the stands. One of those school cricketers, Bashaira, spoke about how she hoped the match would turn out into a close encounter, cheekily adding that a big fight could also be on the cards. What she and others who had turned up got instead was a crash course in the Pakistan way of starting a World Cup — showing up like one would at a mandatory stand-up meeting in the middle of a hectic work week — there in body, not in mind. For all the talk of the camaraderie between the players of the two sides — especially the captains in the

lead-up — there was quite a bit of chatter on the field as well, with both sides engaging in banter. Pakistan had actually managed a mini-recovery by the end of the powerplay — from being 2-2 to 41-2 at the end of 10. That, however, was short-lived as Nuseeba Ali slashed one straight to point off the other Akter in the Bangladesh side — Nahida. Nahida then took a return off top-scorer Rameen Shamim (22) as Pakistan were left tottering at 47-4. They kept losing wickets with Fatima (22) becoming the seventh batter to depart with the score at exactly 100. Another Akter, teenage leg-spinner Shorna, then came on to clean up the tail, returning remarkable figures of 3-5 in 3.3 overs, as Pakistan wound up in 38.3 overs. The mid-innings break saw skipper Fatima and coach Mohammad Waseem have an animated discussion, but whatever they discussed came to nought as Bangladesh chased down the paltry total with ease thanks to an unbeaten 54 by opener Rubya Haider. Pakistan had reduced Bangladesh to 35-2 but Rubya stitched a 62-run stand with skipper Nigar Sultana (23) and Bangladesh eventually overhauled the target in the 32nd over. The Women in Green take on India next on Sunday, and with all the happenings of the men's Asia Cup over the past month, Fatima's side will have to find a way to focus on the cricket itself if they are going to get their World Cup rolling. "We need to put this defeat behind us now and bounce back stronger," said Fatima. "We have a lot of young players in our ranks and the World Cup is their first big tournament and hopefully they will learn from the mistakes." — Agencies

Briefs

PSX gains 500 more points to close at 168,990

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Friday, as the benchmark KSE-100 index gained 500.44 points, showing a positive change of 0.30 percent, closing at 168,990.07 points against 168,489.63 points on the previous trading day. A total of 1,573,346,286 shares were traded during the day compared to 1,573,381,774 shares the previous day, whereas the share value stood at Rs 78.66 billion against Rs 70.19 billion on the last trading day. As many as 485 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, out of which 201 recorded gains, 254 sustained losses, whereas 30 remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were Energycico PK with 211,444,284 shares at Rs 9.07 per share, Bank of Punjab with 131,821,305 shares at Rs 33.50 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 103,923,227 shares at Rs 1.76 per share. PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 823.67 per share, closing at Rs 25,849.70, followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited which rose by Rs 199.85 to close at Rs 8,601.59. On the other hand, Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited recorded a maximum decrease of Rs 88.86 per share to close at Rs 9,809.84, followed by Hoechst Pakistan Limited which declined by Rs 44.48 to close at Rs 3,983.07. In the futures market, a total of 312 companies transacted shares, out of which 135 recorded gains, 175 sustained losses and 2 remained unchanged.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.26 against the previous day's closing of Rs 281.27. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.3 and Rs 282.4, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 45 paisa to close at Rs 330.04 against the last day's closing of Rs 330.49, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 1.90, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound decreased by 93 paise to Rs 378.63, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 379.56. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged and closed at Rs 76.57 and Rs 74.99, respectively.—APP

Morocco's youth protests demand better schools, hospitals, PM resignation

RABAT, Morocco: Youth-led demonstrators in Morocco took to the streets on Thursday for a sixth straight night despite fears of more violence after police killed three people the night before. The protesters in at least a dozen cities, including Casablanca, demanded better schools and hospitals, with some calling for Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch to resign. The call for resignation came after police killed three people on Wednesday as largely peaceful protests turned into riots, with banks looted and cars set ablaze. Though Morocco's king is the country's highest authority, protests in Morocco routinely focus on the government charged with carrying out his agenda. On Thursday, hundreds chanted for King Mohammed VI to intervene against the government. Crowds shouted "The people want to topple Akhannouch" and "Government out!" as demonstrations unfolded peacefully. In his first public remarks, Akhannouch said earlier on Thursday that he was mourning Wednesday's deaths.—APP

Indonesia free meals program under fire after thousands sickened

The disastrous rollout comes as Prabowo is working to move on from violent anti-government protests fueled by deep inequality in Indonesia, where stunting spurred by malnutrition affects more than 20 percent of children

JAKARTA: Indonesian families whose children were offered free school meals are joining non-profit groups calling for the flagship government program to be suspended after thousands of students fell ill from the food. Cases of food poisoning spiked last week in West Bandung, a district of Java island, when more than 1,300 children were rushed to health clinics after suffering from breathing difficulties, nausea and diarrhea, local media reported. President Prabowo Subianto's initiative was touted as a way to tackle a child nutrition crisis but the government has instead had to suspend dozens of production kitchens. "This program should be stopped and replaced with cash," said 50-year-old grandmother Aminah, who goes by one name and whose seven-year-old grandson got sick after a free meal. "I'd rather the kids bring their own lunch from home." The disastrous rollout comes as Prabowo is working to move on from violent anti-government protests fueled by deep inequality in Indonesia, where stunting spurred by malnutrition affects more than 20 percent of children. But nine months after the program began, food poisoning cases have affected thou-

sands of people, prompting mounting calls from non-profit groups for a temporary halt to the multi-billion-dollar scheme. In West Bandung, students wailed in pain as they were hooked up to oxygen tanks in a temporary health clinic set up by local government to handle the surge in food poisonings, an AFP journalist saw. The National Nutrition Agency (BGN), which is responsible for the initiative, reported 70 food poisoning incidents since the program began in January until late September. More than 6,400 people are affected, the agency said in an update on Wednesday. The reported cases were the "tip of the iceberg," said Diah Satyani Saminarsih, founder of the non-profit Center for Indonesia's Strategic Development Initiatives. "The actual number of cases could be higher because the government has not yet provided a publicly available reporting dashboard," Diah said. Part of the problem was the government's rapid expansion of the program, she added. Rapid expansion The government initially aimed to deliver meals to almost 83 million people by 2029, including students, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers,

but now says the target will be reached by the end of 2025. The nutrition agency expanded the number of production kitchens from around 1,000 in April to more than 9,600 by late September. The number of beneficiaries grew from three million to 31 million over the same period. The agency did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Dadan Hindayana, chair of the nutrition agency, said in a statement on Sunday that most of the cases occurred in newly operating kitchens where cooks lacked experience. The food poisoning incidents were also caused by the quality of raw materials, water and violations of operational standards, he said. Prabowo's administration has allocated 62 cents per meal and set a budget of 71 trillion rupiah (\$4.2 billion) for 2025. Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa said last week that the government had prepared an additional budget of 28 trillion rupiah requested by the agency, local media reported. Prabowo defended the program in a televised speech on Monday, saying cases of food poisoning incidents were long a small percentage of the

number of meals served. "We calculated from all the food that went out, the deviation, or shortcoming or error is 0.00017 percent," he said. He added that all kitchens involved in the program were ordered to test foods before distribution. Calls for suspension It was "very urgent" for the program to be suspended given the number of people who fell ill, said Izzudin Al Farras, a researcher at the Institute for Development of Economics and Finance. Ubaid Matraji, a researcher at the Network for Education Watch, said the program should be suspended before matters worsen. "We stress that we will no longer wait until we have thousands more victims — we cannot let death happen," he said. The nutrition agency suspended 56 kitchens allegedly responsible for "food safety incidents," it said in a statement Monday. Nanik S. Deyang, the agency's deputy chair, said the suspension was part of a "comprehensive evaluation" to prevent similar incidents from recurring. "The safety of the people, especially children who receive the free nutritious meals, is our top priority," she said.—Agencies



Riyadh: Federal Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja's meeting with Saudi Telecom Company (STC).

FBR unearths mega duty/tax-evasion scam

The FBR Chairman and Member Customs have vowed that no leniency would be shown to custodians and customs functionaries who failed to perform their duties

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has uncovered a massive fraud at Jinnah International Airport (JIAP) in Karachi, where high-value electronic consignments were being removed illegally without filing Goods Declarations (GDs) or paying customs duties and taxes. "The scam, orchestrated by employees of a foreign-based ground-handling company, which was also the custodian of the goods, in connivance with unscrupulous importers, involved the use of fake and forged documents issued by the company employees to remove electronic goods worth hundreds of millions from the airport," a news release said here on Friday. The fraud came to light after credible intelligence was received and promptly acted upon, strengthening controls at the Karachi airport. The FBR said the timely intervention led to the seizure of a consignment valued at Rs. 103 million, including laptops, iPads, iPhones, MacBooks, PlayStations, and memory cards, before it could be spirited away. "Apart from this, two consignments were found fraudulently cleared based on fake gate passes. The Collectorate of Customs Airport Karachi immediately lodged two FIRs and also arrested employees of the company involved in the case," it added. Investigations have confirmed that five consignments in total were illegally removed through this fraudulent modus operandi, the FBR said, adding all were shipped from the UAE by M/s Pir Jillani General Trading LLC, Dubai. These consignments, packed in two pallets, weighing around 900–1000 kg each, were deliberately concealed from the Customs WebOC system, preventing GD filings and enabling their clearance through fake gate passes. The total estimated value of evaded duty and taxes involved in the illegal removal of the five consignments is Rs. 384 million. The FBR said employees of the company manipulated their computerized iCargo system to conceal airway bills for issuance of fake gate passes for illegal removal of high value electronic goods. It said customs investigators have also highlighted the foreign-based company's refusal to provide CCTV footage and critical records despite repeated requests, raising serious suspicion of complicity at senior management level. FIRs have been lodged and accused have been arrested while efforts are underway to recover the evaded amounts. Further FIRs and arrests are on the cards as FBR resolves to leave no stone unturned to recover the evaded amount. The FBR Chairman and Member Customs have vowed that no leniency would be shown to custodians and customs functionaries who failed to perform their duties.—DNA

Kayani test rides UAE's future-forward Etihad Rail Network

ISLAMABAD :Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani undertook a test ride on the Etihad Rail, traveling from Al Faya Depot in Abu Dhabi to Al Qudra in Dubai during the Global Rail and Infrastructure Conference and Exhibition, reflecting Pakistan's commitment to advancing regional transport cooperation and innovation. According to a message received here, the test ride, organized by Etihad Rail, marked a milestone in the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) first national railway project, slated for commercial launch in 2026. Designed to link 11 cities across the Emirates, the network will feature passenger trains reaching speeds of up to 200 km/h, promising a fast, efficient, and sustainable mode of travel. The project aims to enhance connectivity, support economic growth, and promote environmental sustainability. During his visit, Kayani also toured the control room at the Al Faya Depot, gaining insight into the advanced technologies that will support the operation of the network.—APP



Russia targets Ukraine's natural gas facilities in biggest attack of war

KYIV, Ukraine: Russia launched its biggest attack of the war overnight against natural gas facilities run by Ukraine's state-owned Naftogaz Group, officials said Friday. Russia fired a total of 381 drones and 35 missiles at Ukraine, according to Ukraine's air force in what officials said was an attempt to wreck the Ukrainian power grid ahead of winter and wear down public appetite for the 3-year-old conflict. "This is deliberate terror against civilian facilities that provide gas extraction and processing for the normal life of people," Serhii Koretskyi, chief executive of Ukraine's state-owned gas company Naftogaz, said in a statement. "It has no military purpose. This is yet another act of Russian malice aimed solely at disrupting the heating season and depriving Ukrainians of warmth in winter." Russia aimed 35 missiles, many of them ballistic, and 60 drones at Naftogaz's gas extraction and processing facilities in the northeastern Kharkiv and central Poltava regions, some of which sustained critical damage, Koretskyi said. Russia's Ministry of Defense said its forces launched a mass strike using drones and guided weapons against Ukraine's military-industrial complex and the gas and energy infrastructure that supports it. "All designated targets were hit," it said in a statement. As winter has approached each year since Russia's February 2022 invasion of its neighbor, Russian forces have blasted Ukraine's power grid. Ukraine says it is an attempt to weaponize winter by denying civilians heat, light and running water. Russia has recently escalated its strikes on the power grid, as well as on Ukraine's rail network, which is essential for military transport. "Russia is terrorizing civilians and trying to disrupt the heating season," Ukraine's Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said in a statement. In Poltava, the attacks injured an 8-year-old child and two women, according to authorities. One blast also shattered about half of the windows in the city's historic St. Nicholas Church, which is listed as an architectural monument of local significance.—APP

Strike in Italy over Gaza flotilla strands commuters

ROME: A general strike in Italy in support of the Gaza aid flotilla disrupted trains and threatened more commuter chaos Friday in a second day of demonstrations in Rome. The strike, called by the USB and CFIL unions, follows demonstrations Thursday in several cities across the world, including in Milan and Rome, where some 10,000 people marched from the Colosseum. Protesters began to amass again Friday morning in Rome to march to the vast plaza outside the central train station of Termini, where services were canceled or delayed up to 80 minutes. "The squares will be packed," the head of the CGIL union, Maurizio Landini, told Radio Anch'io Friday. "It shows the humanity and determination of decent people who want to stop genocide and are doing what governments and states have pretended not to see or are even complicit in," Landini said.—APP

Premature baby dies of measles in Canada amid national outbreak

OTTAWA: A premature baby infected with measles has died in Alberta, marking the province's first measles-related death and the second nationwide since the start of Canada's ongoing outbreak, local media reported Thursday. Adriana LaGrange, Alberta's minister of primary and preventative health services, said in an emailed statement she was "saddened" to confirm the death. Children under five, pregnant people and those with weak immune systems face the highest risk from measles, LaGrange said. She urged anyone planning a pregnancy to ensure they have received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine beforehand, as vaccination is not recommended during pregnancy. The country's first recent measles death was reported in Ontario in June, when another prematurely born baby died of the disease. The outbreak has been spreading across several provinces since last October. As of Sept. 20, Canadian health authorities had recorded 5,006 cases this year, with Alberta and Ontario the hardest hit.—APP

Kuwaiti, Bahraini academies reaffirm coop in diplomatic training

LONDON: Kuwait and Bahrain reaffirmed their cooperation in diplomatic training and studies during a visit by a Kuwaiti delegation to the Mohamed bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies in Manama this week. Sheikha Muneera Al-Khalifa, the academy's director general, emphasized the importance of exchanging experiences in diplomatic training and digital transformation of administrative work, the Kuwait News Agency reported. Her meeting with Nasser Sabeeh Al-Sabeeh, Kuwait's assistant foreign minister at the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute, reaffirmed the ongoing cooperation in diplomatic training with Kuwait. The meeting also focused on the academy's training, development strategies, workshops, and programs designed to improve the efficiency of employees at the ministry of foreign affairs. Additionally, it highlighted the latest digital platforms in use in the diplomatic sector, enhancing efficiency and improving the quality of diplomatic work.—APP

WFP warns of 'catastrophic conditions' in Somalia

NAIROBI: Millions of people in Somalia face worsening hunger as major cuts to donor aid leave the World Food Programme with a critical funding shortfall, the UN agency warned Friday. The Horn of Africa nation is among the most vulnerable to climate change, according to the United Nations, and in the last five years has experienced both the worst drought in four decades and once-in-a-century flooding. In November, 750,000 people — more than two thirds of the current number — will be cut off from the WFP emergency food program. That could "tip those worst affected into catastrophic conditions," the agency said. "We are seeing a dangerous rise in emergency levels of hunger, and our ability to respond is shrinking by the day," said Ross Smith, WFP's director of emergency preparedness and response, in a statement. WFP leads the largest humanitarian operation in Somalia and supports more than 90 percent of the country's food security response. "The current level of response is far below what is required to meet the growing needs," Smith said. Government data released in August shows that 4.4 million people are facing acute food insecurity in the conflict-ravaged nation. With about 1.7 million children under five already acutely malnourished — including 466,000 in critical condition — WFP said only 180,000 are currently receiving its nutritional treatment, a number that could fall even further.—APP

Briefs

Govt, action Committee resume negotiations

Talks to focus on outstanding requests require constitutional amendments, says Federal Minister Tariq Fazal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Formal talks between the Jammu Kashmir Awami Action Committee (JKAAC) and a government-appointed negotiation team have resumed in Muzaffarabad. The second round of negotiations opened between a delegation sent on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and representatives of the public action committee shortly after Friday prayers. The action committee has been organising protests in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), which turned violent and claimed the lives of at least nine people, three of them were police personnel, and injured over 100. The region is witnessing an overwhelming shutdown and wheeljam strike amid intermittent skirmishes between law enforcers and activists in the state capital. Participants from the government side included Federal Ministers Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Amir Muqam, and Ahsan Iqbal, while Raja Pervez Ashraf, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Rana Sanaulah, and others were also present. Core members of the action committee, including Sardar Masood Khan and Sardar Yousaf, took part in the discussions. The action committee members demanded restoration of internet services, and officials said final consultations on the remaining demands will take place during the negotiations.

Press club attack: minister tenders apology

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Chaudhry said they fully support the rights of the Kashmiri people and noted that most demands judged to be in the public interest have already been accepted. He added that a few outstanding requests require constitutional amendments and are therefore subject to further discussion. Chaudhry emphasised that violence is not a solution and expressed hope that the action committee will resolve outstanding issues through peaceful dialogue. ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Interior Affairs Talal Chaudhry on Friday issued an apology for the assault on journalists at NPC in Islamabad, which took place a day earlier when police stormed the premises and beat several journalists. At a media talk in Islamabad, Chaudhry assured the media fraternity that the government will implement all the demands put forward by the journalists. "We will address the issue in accordance with the guidelines of the press club and journalist organisations to ensure that such incidents do not happen again," he said.

Gilani says he raised IWT issue at House of Lords

The Acting President appreciated the delegation's efforts to highlight issues of national concern and their continued support for the Pakistani community abroad

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Acting President of Pakistan, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, met with Lord Shafiq Mohammad of Tinsley, Member of the House of Lords, former Member of the European Parliament Barrister Tanveer Hussain, and Chaudhary Mehboob Hussain at Aiwan-e-Sadr today. During the meeting, matters concerning the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom, the situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts in flood-affected areas of AJK were discussed. Lord Shafiq Mohammad informed Mr Gilani that he had raised the issue of India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty in the House of Lords. The Acting President appreciated the delegation's efforts to highlight issues of national concern and their continued support for the Pakistani community abroad.



Pakistan's trade deficit balloons nearly 46% to \$3.3 billion

Surge in imports and drop in export amplifies pressure on fragile external sector, threatens currency stability

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's trade deficit ballooned nearly 46% in September 2025 to \$3.34 billion, official data showed Thursday, as imports surged and exports shrank, increasing pressure on the country's fragile external sector and threatening currency stability. The deficit, up from \$2.29 billion in September last year, was fuelled by a 14% jump in imports to \$5.85 billion, while exports slid 11.7% to \$2.5 billion, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Compared with August 2025, the gap widened 16.3%. For the July-September quarter of the ongoing fiscal year, the trade gap swelled 32.9% year-on-year to \$9.37 billion. Imports during the period climbed 13.5% to \$16.97 billion, while exports fell 3.8% to \$7.6 billion. Economists warn the widening deficit could strain foreign reserves, fuel rupee volatility, and complicate debt repayments at a time when Pakistan is already dependent on external financing. PBS data also showed the services trade deficit rising 21.9% in August 2025, reaching \$437 million against \$358 million a year earlier. While services exports rose 8.4% to \$672 million, imports grew faster at 13.4% to \$1.11 billion. In the last fiscal year (July-June FY25), however, the services trade deficit narrowed 15.8% to \$2.62 billion compared with \$3.1 billion

in FY24, as exports of services improved 9.2% to \$8.4 billion while imports rose modestly by 2% to \$11 billion. Independent economists say the ballooning goods trade gap, paired with renewed services import demand, underscores Pakistan's structural export weakness. Without aggressive steps to boost industrial competitiveness and diversify exports, the deficit could derail stabilisation gains made under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. Strengthening regional trade links, incentivising high-value exports, and curbing non-essential imports are seen as urgent measures to ease external sector stress. Dr Khaqan Najeeb, former adviser to Ministry of Finance, said Pakistan's export model remains heavily concentrated in agriculture and textiles, which together account for the bulk of our \$30-31 billion in annual exports. This narrow base leaves the country exposed to price swings, limited demand, and little room for innovation. Dr Khaqan felt to truly unlock export potential, we need to move beyond low-complexity, commodity-driven growth by strengthening the ecosystem that underpins exports – from affordable and reliable energy to smoother logistics, easier market access, frictionless transactions, wider access to finance, and a skilled workforce aligned with global standards. At the same time, diversification into higher-value and knowledge-intensive sectors such as technical textiles, processed foods, branded agro-products, light engineering, and IT/BPO is critical. Only by upgrading both the structure and the complexity of our exports can Pakistan build resilience, raise incomes, and compete sustainably in global markets concluded Dr Najeeb.

Journalists, PPP boycott assembly session

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Members of the PPP and media representatives briefly boycotted the National Assembly session on Friday over separate matters. The PPP, which is a coalition partner of the ruling PML-N in the Centre, has been incensed after Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's remarks amid an ongoing rift between the two parties over flood relief. Meanwhile, journalists have been protesting a raid by Islamabad police at the National Press Club (NPC) yesterday, during which media persons were assaulted. A while after the NA session began today, PPP's Naveed Qamar said, "I want to say this on record that in the last session, we had raised some issues. We had also protested and walked out. After that, the government sent a team that engaged in dialogue with us." He, however, maintained that nothing changed despite the talks. "There has been no difference on the ground [...] We cannot be a part of this House until this matter is resolved." "So, we are walking out today," he announced. Later, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar began his speech by expressing the hope that differences between the PPP and PML-N would be resolved. He also requested Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and National Food Security and Research Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain to talk and convince PPP leaders to rejoin the session if they had not left parliament by then. As Dar continued his speech, some of PPP members were seen returning to hall amid applause.

Russia ready to push war to Europe, warns Zelensky

Recent drone incidents across Europe are clear sign that Russia still feels bold enough to escalate this war: Zelensky

NEWS DESK

COPENHAGEN: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has warned European leaders that Russia is preparing to step up the war. Speaking at a summit of European leaders from just under 50 countries in Copenhagen on Thursday, he pointed to recent drone flights over Denmark and other countries as a sign that Moscow is looking to escalate the conflict beyond Ukraine's borders. He urged Europe to take the threat seriously and said Ukraine is ready to share its battlefield experience to help partners defend themselves. The warning came at a summit of European leaders from just under 50 countries, who converged on a conference centre in Copenhagen under tight security after mystery drone flights rattled Denmark last month. The drone sightings in Denmark and high-profile aerial incursions by Moscow in Estonia and Poland have heightened fears that Russia's assault on Ukraine could spill over Europe's borders. "The recent drone incidents across Europe are a clear sign that Russia still feels bold enough to escalate this war," Zelensky said. "It was never just about Ukraine, Russia has always aimed to break the West and Europe." Russian President Vladimir Putin waived the accusations, but said Russia was "closely monitoring the rising militarisation of Europe", adding that Mos-

cow's response will be timely and "significant". Putin accused Europe of stoking "hysteria" to excuse rising military spending, and said Russia did not pose a threat. "Just calm down," he said. European leaders are keen to work with Ukraine's war-tested expertise as they seek to bolster their own defences, and are discussing plans for a "drone wall" to counter the menace from Moscow. "If the Russians dare to launch drones against Poland, or violate the airspace of northern European countries, it means this can happen anywhere," Zelensky said. "We are ready to share this experience with our partners." French President Emmanuel Macron said Western countries should be willing to take a tougher line when confronted by Russian drones, to sow doubt in the Kremlin. "It's very important to have a clear message. Drones which would violate our territories are just taking a big risk. They can be destroyed, full stop," Macron said. Romanian PM Nicosur Dan, whose country has seen Russian drones crossing over from Ukraine, warned that his forces would shoot down the next one to violate their airspace. As Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine drags on through a fourth year, Europe is scrambling to keep up pressure on Moscow and secure funding for Kyiv. Macron said it was key to step up efforts to counter the so-called shadow fleet of ageing oil tankers to "kill" the business model Russia uses to circumvent restrictions on exporting its oil.

FBR slaps 40% regulatory duty on import of used cars

Ministry of Commerce issues SRO, allowing commercial import of up to five-year-old vehicles with 40% additional duty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The FBR has imposed a 40% Regulatory Duty (RD) on the commercial import of old and used vehicles, according to a notification issued on Wednesday. The duty applies to vehicles under PCT headings 8702, 8703, 8704, and 8711 of the Customs Act, 1969, imported under clause (xvi) of Serial No.10 of the Import Policy Order, 2022. The notification said the levy is in addition to regulatory duties imposed under S.R.O. 1152(1)/2025, dated June 30, 2025. The Ministry of Commerce had issued an SRO, allowing commercial import of up to five-year-old vehicles with 40% additional duty with immediate effect. In its meeting on September 18, 2025, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, presided over by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, had approved the scheme on a summary moved by the Ministry of Commerce. The ECC decision was also ratified by the federal cabinet. According to the SRO 1895 (1) 2025 issued by the Commerce Ministry on September 30, 2025, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section(I) of Section 3 of the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950 (XXXIX of 1950), the federal government has directed that the following amendments shall be made in the Import Policy Order, 2022 namely: - ECC approves commercial import of used vehicles In the Order, in the table, under Appendix-C, in column (1) against serial No.10, in column (2), after clause (xv), the following new clause shall be inserted, namely: (xvi) commercial import of used vehicles, falling under PCT headings 8702, 8703, 8704 and 8711, shall be allowed for vehicles less than five years old, until June 30, 2026, thereafter, the vehicles 'age limit may be removed.

Death toll from Indonesia school collapse rises to eight

JAKARTA: The death toll from the collapse of a school building in Indonesia's East Java province has risen to eight, a senior rescue official said Friday. Suharyanto, head of the National Disaster Management Agency, said three more bodies were retrieved by rescuers, bringing the fatalities to eight. He said heavy machinery has been deployed in the ongoing excavation, with 55 people still unaccounted for. Earlier, rescue workers had relied mainly on manual excavation out of concern that heavy equipment could trigger further collapse. Part of the multi-storey Al Khoziny Islamic Boarding School in Sidoarjo district collapsed on Monday while undergoing unauthorized renovation, trapping dozens of students. - APP

Typhoon Bualoi death toll rises to 51 in Vietnam

Bualoi made landfall in northern central Vietnam earlier this week, bringing huge sea swells, strong winds and heavy rains

NEWS DESK

HANOI: The death toll in Vietnam from Typhoon Bualoi and the floods it triggered has risen to 51, according to a Friday government report, as the central bank urged banks to support affected businesses. Bualoi made landfall on Monday in northern central Vietnam, bringing huge sea swells, strong winds and heavy rains that also left 14 people missing and injured 164 others, according to the report from the government's disaster management agency. The agency also raised its estimate of property damage caused by the typhoon and its flooding to 15.9 trillion dong (\$603 million), up from \$435.8 million in a previous report released on Thursday. The typhoon severely damaged roads, schools and offices, and caused power grid failures that left tens of thousands of families without electricity, the report said. More than 230,000 houses were damaged or inundated, and nearly 89,000 hectares of rice and other crops were destroyed, it said. The report did not mention any major damage to industrial properties. Vietnam is a regional manufacturing hub, and large factories in or near the typhoon's path included some owned by Foxconn, Formosa Plastics, Luxshare and Vinfat. - APP

Indian air force chief repeats claims of downing 5 PAF jets

NEW DELHI: Indian Air Force Chief Amar Preet Singh on Friday claimed that his country "downed five Pakistani fighter jets of the F-16 and JF-17 class" during the intense fighting between the nuclear-armed neighbours in May. "As far as air defence part is concerned, we have evidence of one long-range strike ... along with that five fighters, high-tech fighters between F-16 and JF-17 class, our system tells us," Singh told reporters at the Indian Air Force annual day press conference. However, he did not share the said evidence. The F-16 is a US-made fighter jet, while the JF-17 is of Chinese origin. Although Singh had previously too claimed without credible evidence that five Pakistani fighter jets and another military aircraft were shot down during the conflict, this is the first time New Delhi has mentioned the class of jets in public. He also refused to comment on Pakistan downing Indian jets in May. - DNA

Fin Min says no UN aid needed

Funds could be repurposed to tackle destruction by coordination between Centre and provinces: Aurangzeb

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has ruled out the need for seeking assistance from the United Nations (UN) for flood-related relief, saying that Pakistan has ample resources available within its development budget of Rs4.3 trillion (around US\$12-13 billion) for rescue and relief efforts. Addressing a Pakistan Business Summit as a keynote speaker in Peshawar, the finance minister said that by effectively prioritising and coordinating between the federal government and provinces, the funds could be repurposed to tackle the destruction caused by the recent floods that have severely impacted agricultural lands nationwide. The News reported. Aurangzeb said Pakistan had made a significant improvement in remittances, which reached \$38 billion last year and are projected to grow to \$41-43 billion in the current fiscal year. He said that Pakistan successfully repaid \$500 million in Eurobond obligations in September this year without market disruption and it is well-positioned to repay the \$1.3 billion Eurobond in April 2026. The conference was the first major business activity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's capital city in years as policymakers, in-

vestors, and corporate leaders from across the country participated in the event under the theme of "Shaping What's Next". The summit was also addressed by acting president and Senate chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani, KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Federal Minister for Privatisation Mohammad Ali, KP Advisor for Finance Muzammil Aslam, former minister Mohammad Azfar Ahsan, and others. Aurangzeb said that the remittance inflows into the formal economy had increased. "Last year, we had \$38 billion in remittances. This year, we expect \$41-43 billion," he said. He maintained that the policy rate, which remains at 11%, is expected to be lowered in the ongoing fiscal year. "Although the policy rate is very much the domain of the central bank, I think there is enough cushion that we can continue to push the rate south during the course of this fiscal year," he added. Aurangzeb said that in order to take the private sector forward, a structural reform agenda should be pursued effectively. He said that the government needed to restore the trust and credibility of tax authorities in the country. "We are making progress in both deepening and widening the tax base," he added. The finance minister said that the Federal Board of Revenue has been reduced to a tax/revenue collection forum, and the economic policymaking has been shifted to the finance division.

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