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María Corina of Venezuela wins Nobel peace prize

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Govt to cement ties with Saudi Arabia: FinMin

Detailed News On Page-08



Ahsan Iqbal says country progressing

Detailed News On Page-04



DG ISPR says

‘Status quo won’t work anymore’

Lt Gen Chaudhry briefs media on key security-related matters; blames Imran Khan (without naming him) and his party for unrest in the KP province; The general highlighted that at least 917 terrorists were killed in over 1,000 intelligence-based operations in 2025 so far

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Director-General (DG) Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has issued a stern warning to terrorists' facilitators, saying that "political-criminal nexus" is responsible for the surge in militant incidents in the province. "In 2014 after the incident of Army public school tragedy, the government of the that time and the military began rooting out the menace of terrorism from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," said the DG ISPR. Later on, the ISPR chief said that terrorists and their facilitators were given space in KP under the "well thought out plot". The governance and public welfare were deliberately affected, Lt Gen Chaudhry said. Lt Gen Chaudhry noted that

Continued on Page 06

DG ISPR hints at governance failure in KP

BUREAU REPORT

RAWALPINDI: In a strongly worded press conference on Thursday, Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) indirectly criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government, holding it responsible for the deteriorating security and administrative situation in the province. Without naming PTI or Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the military spokesperson cautioned that the provincial administration should "not align itself with any Afghan or militant groups" and instead focus on governance and public welfare. The remarks were widely interpreted as a veiled charge sheet against the ruling party in KP. The DG ISPR said that many of the ills currently faced by the province — including rising militancy, poor governance, and administrative disorder — stem from political mismanagement and misplaced priorities. "National security cannot be strengthened when provincial governments pursue policies contrary to national interests," he remarked.

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ETHIOPIAN ENVOY'S FAREWELL CALL



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, the outgoing Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, paid a farewell call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The Prime Minister congratulated the Ambassador on the successful completion of his tenure in Pakistan and thanked him for his contribution towards the strengthening of Pakistan-Ethiopia relations. — DNA

Security Forces eliminate 30 Indian-backed terrorists

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed all 30 Indian-sponsored Khawarij terrorists after an intense exchange of fire during an operation in the general area of Jamal Maya, Orakzai district. "During the conduct of operation, based on credible intelligence, in the general area Jamal Maya, Orakzai District, after intense fire exchanges, all thirty Indian sponsored khawarij involved in the terrorist incident have been sent to hell," said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). Security Forces have been conducting a series of retribution operations against

Continued on Page 06

Israel begins Gaza pullback as thousands head home

NEWS AGENCIES

TEL AVIV: Israeli forces have declared a ceasefire and withdrawn from some positions in Gaza, as thousands of displaced Palestinians began to trek home and the families of those taken captive on October 7 awaited news, AFP reports. The Israeli army said that its troops had ceased fire at noon (2pm PKT) "in preparation for the ceasefire agreement and the return of hostages". Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli troops and armoured

Continued on Page 06

DONALD TRUMP IGNORED

María Corina of Venezuela wins Nobel peace prize

Machado, 58, is one of Latin America's most prominent voices for democratic reform and has long stood at the forefront of Venezuela's opposition movement

DNA

OSLO/ CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado has been awarded the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize, recognized for her unwavering commitment to democracy, human rights, and peaceful resistance against authoritarian rule in Venezuela. The announcement was made by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo on Friday, ending weeks of speculation over this year's recipient. Machado, 58, is one of Latin America's most prominent voices for democratic reform and has long stood at the forefront of Venezuela's opposition movement. A former member of the National Assembly

(2011-2014), she is the founder of the civic group Súmate and leader of the liberal party Vente Venezuela. In its citation, the Nobel Committee praised Machado for "her courageous and peaceful struggle to restore democratic institutions and defend fundamental freedoms in Venezuela despite threats, imprisonment, and political disqualification." Machado remains banned by the Venezuelan government from holding public office and from leaving the country. In a recorded message shared shortly after the announcement, she said, "This award is not mine alone — it belongs to every Venezuelan who continues to dream of freedom and refuses to surrender to tyranny."

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Briefs

Dar chairs high-level meeting

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, October 10: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a high-level meeting on Friday to review the overall economic situation of the country. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Kiani, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Bajwa, Finance Secretary, and Chairman FBR along with senior officials from the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue. During the meeting, the Finance Ministry and FBR teams presented detailed statistics for the first quarter (Q1) of the fiscal year 2025-26, outlining trends in revenue collection, expenditure, and macroeconomic indicators.

US to deploy 200 troops in Gaza

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States will deploy 200 troops as part of a joint task force for Gaza stability, with no Americans on the ground in the Palestinian enclave, two senior US officials said on Thursday. The officials, speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity, said the 200 would be the core of a task force that would include representatives from Egypt's military, Qatar, Turkey and probably the United Arab Emirates.

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

Tim Kane appointed as Australia's next High Commissioner to Pakistan

The Australian foreign minister thanked outgoing High Commissioner Neil Hawkins for his contributions to advancing Australia's interests in Pakistan since 2022

DNA

CANBERRA: Mr Tim Kane has been appointed as Australia's next High Commissioner to Pakistan.



heritage, and shared love of cricket. Both have enduring people-to-people links, a large and flourishing Pakistani community, including more than 120,000 Australians of Pakistani origin and more than

23,000 Pakistani students in Australia. Commercial relations between Australia and Pakistan continue to grow, particularly in agribusiness, textiles and clothing, and education. Both countries have a common interest in promoting peace and stability in our region. Bilateral defence ties date back to 1907, underpinned by the unique relationship between the Australian Defence Force and Quetta Command and Staff College.

Mr Kane is a senior career officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and was most recently the Director of DFAT's Victoria State Office. He has previously served overseas as Australia's Ambassador to Brazil and Australia's Ambassador to Chile, along with other postings in Spain, the United States and Mexico. The Australian foreign minister thanked outgoing High Commissioner Neil Hawkins for his contributions to advancing Australia's interests in Pakistan since 2022.

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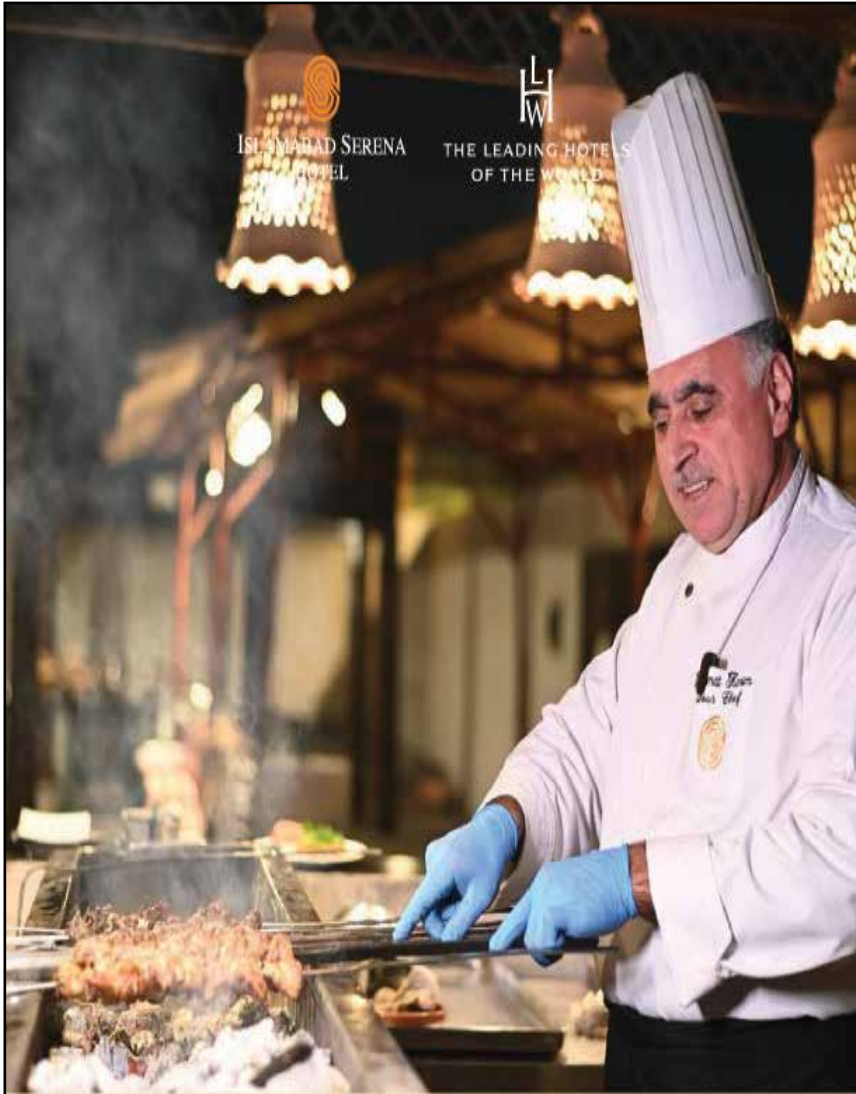
TLP protest: Islamabad, Pindi face roadblocks

Talal Chaudhry says TLP attempting to create "unrest, chaos"; Section 144 imposed across Punjab for 14 days

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The residents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have faced inconvenience in both commuting and communication as the authorities have placed containers and suspended mobile data services in light of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan's (TLP) announcement to march towards Islamabad on Friday. With containers placed at Islamabad's entry points on one hand, the residents are facing internet issues on their cellphones on the other. "The Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control has accorded approval to suspend 3G/4G services in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi [...] until further orders," read the notification issued by the interior ministry on Thursday. It added that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has been requested to take "further necessary action" in coordination with Islamabad commissioner, IGP office, Rawalpindi's commissioner and RPO office. In a statement, the Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA) has said that since all of the city's entry points have been blocked, the lawyers are facing difficulty

in reaching the courts and therefore, the body has requested that any adverse orders in the cases be issued due to lawyers' non-appearance. Apart from the federal capital, the authorities have also imposed Section 144 of the CrPC across Punjab, barring the display of weapons and banning public gatherings. As per a notification issued by the Punjab Home Department, a ban has been imposed on gatherings, processions and sit-ins under Section 144 to maintain law and order in the province. The notification added that the emergency order notes that the ban will remain in force for an initial period of 14 days, subject to extension if the security situation so requires. The statement said the measure was taken after credible intelligence indicated an elevated risk of coordinated attacks targeting public gatherings, government installations and law-enforcement personnel. Additionally, the use of loudspeakers in addition to the call to prayer and sermons has also been banned under the restrictions. Furthermore, security has also been beefed up in Lahore with road closures adding to citizens' woes in various areas. A holiday has been declared for all public and private schools in Lahore with immediate effect.



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CM Maryam to inaugurate electric bus service in Pindi on Oct 15

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will inaugurate a new electric public bus service in the garrison city on October 15, introducing a modern, affordable and environment-friendly transport facility for the residents. Talking to APP on Friday, President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Rawalpindi Division Malik Abrar Ahmad said that a total of 87 air-conditioned electric buses would be introduced across four routes in a phased manner. The first phase, he said, would cover the route from Rawat to Motorway Chowk, providing the citizens with a comfortable and reliable commuting option. Malik Abrar, who is also Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on the Cabinet Secretariat, said the fare had been fixed at an affordable Rs 20 per ride, while students and senior citizens aged 60 and above would be entitled to free travel. He said the new service would provide a dignified and efficient mode of public transport while help reduce traffic congestion in the city. The Member of the National Assembly from Rawalpindi said the people of the garrison city were eagerly waiting to welcome the Punjab chief minister with great enthusiasm and gratitude, describing the launch as a landmark public welfare initiative, aimed at easing daily commuting challenges and extending modern facilities to all segments of society.—APP

Jury finalizes results of IIUI Student Reel Contest

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the jury to finalize the results of the "IIUI Student Reel Contest 2025 - The Silent Hercules: Builders Behind the Scenes" was held at International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI). The contest was launched under the vision and directives of IIUI President, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed, aimed at celebrating the dedication of the university's unsung heroes — the labourers and custodial staff who contribute tirelessly behind the scenes. A total of 14 shortlisted reels were evaluated in the final round. The jury comprised senior journalist from Express News and content creator Fiaz Mahmood; Dr. Asma Mansoor, In-Charge Protocol and Public Relations; Dr. Qurat ul Ain Malik; and Dr. Rooh ul Amin, Assistant Professors, Department of Media and Communication Studies; Dr. Inaam ul Haq, Director Administration; and Muhammad Nauman, Assistant Director Protocol and Public Relations. After a detailed evaluation based on creativity, storytelling, technical quality, and thematic relevance, the jury declared Syeda Zainab Tehseen and her team as the first prize winners, Muhammad Muzamil Hussain as the second position holder, and Saqib Alam as the third prize winner. The judges appreciated the students' enthusiasm and creativity, announcing that those who did not secure top positions would also receive appreciation certificates. The IIUI President will soon confer cash prizes, shields, and certificates upon the winners and participants in a special ceremony, organized by the Protocol and Public Relations Office.—APP

Tahir slams economy-crippling protests, security steps

Sardar Tahir urged the government and administration to devise an alternative traffic management plan instead of completely shutting down roads under the pretext of protests or security arrangements

DNA

ISLAMABAD :President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mahmood, has strongly condemned the closure of routes in the twin cities, saying that the economy should not be paralyzed in the name of protests or security measures. He said the ongoing road blockages in Islamabad and Rawalpindi have severely affected business activities, causing difficulties for both shopkeepers and consumers. Sardar Tahir Mahmood stated that obstacles in accessing business centers are causing losses worth millions of rupees daily. He added that the movement of essential goods between



the capital and Rawalpindi has also been disrupted, while the livelihood of small traders has been badly hit. The country's current economic situation is already fragile, and such measures like road closures are further slowing down the wheel of the economy. He said the business environment in the capital is already under pressure, and additional obstacles are intolerable. Sardar Tahir urged the government and administration to devise an alternative traffic management plan instead of completely shutting down roads under the pretext of protests or security arrangements. He demanded that all closed routes be reopened immediately and smooth traffic flow ensured to provide relief to the public and the business community alike

PAF leadership emphasizes character building as key to military excellence

CASS Lahore hosted a roundtable titled Character Building as the Bedrock of Pakistan Air Force Leadership

DNA

LAHORE : The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a roundtable titled "Character Building as the Bedrock of Pakistan Air Force Leadership." The event was attended by Pakistan Air Force (PAF) officers, members of the academia, and the think tank community. As an independent think-tank, CASS Lahore organises such events to explore the critical dimensions of security, technology and policy. The event started with opening remarks by Dr Zahid Khan, Associate Senior Researcher at CASS Lahore. Air Commodore Khalid Banuri (Retd), Senior Advisor to PAF's Project Phoenix, explained that the PAF's leadership philosophy rests on the belief that true military excellence stems from character before competence. The PAF's training and professional culture, he noted, have been carefully shaped by a commitment to integrity, discipline, humility, and purpose—qualities that enable officers to act with moral clarity in complex operational environments. He highlighted that, under the vision of the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Baber Sidhu, this principle is now being systematically cultivated through the Jinnah Centre for Char-



acter and Leadership. The Speaker also elaborated on what he termed "The Sidhu Phenomenon," referring to the visionary leadership of the incumbent Air Chief, under whose command the PAF witnessed a transformative leap in professionalism and multidomain operational capability. He described how ACM Sidhu's leadership style—anchored in humility, merit, and intellectual discipline—

fused character with strategic foresight to shape a culture of excellence across the Force. This leadership ethos, he emphasised, was demonstrated during the May 2025 war, where the PAF's measured resolve and unmatched prowess secured a historic victory, reaffirming that integrity and moral strength remain the ultimate multipliers of combat power. Air Marshal Asim Sulei-

man (Retd), President, CASS Lahore, reflected on the deeper meaning of leadership within the PAF. He noted that leadership is far more than exercising authority; it is the moral art of living the values that inspire others. He noted that vision and competence lose their substance without integrity. Contrasting the PAF with its Indian counterpart, he

observed that the PAF leadership has remained anchored in humility and discipline, whereas the Indian Air Force has become politicised and falsely claims victories, unlike a chivalrous force. He explained how, during the May 2025 war, the PAF demonstrated that credibility flows from humility, restraint, and moral courage. He observed that this princi-

ple has defined the PAF since its inception and found its full expression under the leadership of the current Chief of the Air Staff of the Pakistan Air Force. During the May 2025 war, ACM Sidhu exemplified the Force's character-driven ethos. Despite transforming the skies over South Asian air theatre, he remained humble and eschewed the media spotlight — the

hallmark of a true leader. He concluded that nations may rise on the shoulders of power but endure only on the foundation of character. The discussion concluded on a reflective note, with participants emphasising that enduring strength in national defence lies in the moral fibre of its leaders and the PAF serves as a glaring example of this principle.

Books helpful as stress-relief tool

ISLAMABAD: World Mental Health Day on Friday was celebrated around the globe, including in Pakistan, with enthusiasm and fervor. On this occasion, literary organizations and mental health experts united to spotlight the healing power of books. From quiet reading corners to public libraries and online campaigns, advocates emphasized that reading is not just a pastime—it is a proven tool for stress relief and emotional balance. Muhammad Akbar Niazi, Vice President of the literary, social, and cultural organization Soach and former Joint Secretary of the literary circle Halqa Arbabe-Zauq, said that books have always been silent

therapists. "Reading allows the mind to detach from external pressures, creating a safe emotional space where empathy and calm can grow," he said. "The act of reading slows the heartbeat and softens anxiety. Even ten minutes spent reading a favorite novel or poem can reduce stress hormones and restore focus. Promoting a reading culture is, in fact, promoting mental well-being," he noted. He added that World Mental Health Day reminds us that healing can come not only from medicine but also from meaning—and books remain one of the richest sources of that meaning. Talking to APP, Zohaib Chaudhry, Director of Plan-

ning and Promotion at the Pakistan Sadequain Foundation, emphasized that literature and art are not merely forms of entertainment but essential tools for emotional healing and personal growth. He noted that reading and artistic engagement provide individuals with a safe space to explore their feelings, understand their inner struggles, and find strength through reflection and imagination. Speaking about the broader role of culture in society, he said that literary institutions must take the lead in shaping conversations about mental health. Zohaib Chaudhry also praised initiatives by educational and literary organizations that

promote reading habits and book therapy, calling them a vital step—not only toward building a more mentally aware society but also as a stress-relief tool for the community. According to a 2009 study conducted by the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom, reading can reduce stress levels by as much as 68 percent—more than listening to music or going for a walk. In a conversation with APP, Sidra-tul-Muntaha, a clinical psychologist, counselor, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Officer, said, "I've often witnessed how reading becomes a quiet refuge for many of my clients, especially adolescents.—APP

MoFE&PT through NAVTTC committed youth empowerment: NA told

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Farah Naz Akbar on Friday informed the National Assembly that the Ministry, through the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC), is committed to inclusive development, human capital improvement, and youth empowerment through multiple skill development and education initiatives across Pakistan. Responding to questions during the Question Hour, she said the government, under the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme (PMYSDP), has launched several free-of-cost training programmes across provinces to equip

youth with employable skills aligned with national priorities and Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) objectives. She noted that NAVTTC is focusing on ten key sectors — aesthetic health and care services, agriculture, banking and finance, construction and electrical engineering, driving, hospitality and tourism, information technology, languages, manufacturing and textiles, and mines and minerals — to create sustainable employment opportunities nationwide. Under the health and care services training programme, 7,555 students were trained: 700 in Balochistan, 1,350 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 660 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 3,710 in Punjab,

and 1,135 in Sindh. In the agriculture sector, 3,315 students received training: 535 in Balochistan, 475 in ICT, 440 in KP, 1,570 in Punjab, and 295 in Sindh. Similarly, in the banking and finance sector, 1,775 students were trained: 90 in Balochistan, 285 in ICT, 190 in KP, 930 in Punjab, and 280 in Sindh. She said Rs. 15 billion had been allocated for this three-year project, of which Rs. 10 billion had already been utilized. She emphasized the need to further increase Pakistan's budgetary allocations for education and health relative to GDP, noting that better investment in these sectors would directly enhance the Human Capital Index (HCI) and long-term economic growth.—APP

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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
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National Day

Oct 29/Turkey
Republic Day

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Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Atta Tarar lauds Ethiopian envoy for remarkable diplomatic services

Ethiopian PM’s Medemer Generation’ book translated



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Friday visited the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad to bid a farewell to outgoing Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula. The Federal Minister appreciated the Ambassador for his remarkable role and services for strengthening the bilateral relations of Ethiopia and Pakistan to the greater heights. Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker said Ethiopia attached great importance to its diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan which has been playing an important role at the international level. He expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for extending immense support to him during his tenure in strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries in diverse areas including peace and security, climate resilience, aviation, trade, investment, tourism and culture. The Ambassador said he was proud of connecting the two nations by diligently working on three main areas including connectivity, economic diplomacy and climate resilience in Pakistan. The Ambassador said the Ethiopian Airlines is serving as an instrument of the Look Africa and Engage Africa policies of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan under which the 5th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference and Single Country Exhibition is taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia next week. He recalled the esteemed presence of the Federal Minister at the celebrations of the Ethiopian New Year in Islamabad that demonstrated the growing bilateral relations based on mutual understanding and respect. The Federal Minister lauded the great transformation and progress achieved by Ethiopia under the leadership of Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. The Minister called the Ambassador a true “Friend of Pakistan” who has built bridges between the two nations and rendered great services not only to Ethiopia but also to Pakistan by bringing the two nations closer together. He announced that the National Television of Pakistan will document his diplomatic services and air it on PTV in recognition of his remarkable services to both countries. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has translated “Medemer Generation,” the famous book by Ethiopian Prime Minister . Dr. Abiy Ahmed, into the national language, Urdu. This gesture of goodwill and respect recognizes the visionary leadership of PM Dr. Abiy Ahmed for Ethiopia and the broader region. The translation was carried out by the National Language Promotion Department (NLPD) of Pakistan in line with the directives of H.E. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture. H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of Ethiopia, visited the NLPD office on Friday to officially receive the translated copies from Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Director General of the NLPD. During the visit, the two sides discussed deepening bilateral cooperation to further promote literature and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

APHC appeals for global action to end Kashmir’s political injustice

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Friday expressed deep regret that the world continues to watch in silence as the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir face escalating repression and political injustice at the hands of India. According to the Kashmir Media Service, All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas, in a statement issued from Srinagar, said that Muslims in occupied Palestine, much like those in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir are being subjected to brutal oppression and systematic targeting. He noted that both regions are enduring state-sponsored violence, where occupying powers continue to violate basic human rights with impunity. He said the international community must not remain a silent spectator while these injustices persist. He emphasized that the time has come for the world to abandon its policy of indifference towards the plight of the Kashmiri people and to take meaningful steps toward resolving the long-standing Kashmir dispute. Advocate Minhas warned that continued inaction poses a serious threat to peace and stability in South Asia and urged global powers to uphold international law, support the right to self-determination and hold India accountable for its violations in the occupied territory. —APP

Pakistan’s meat exports to China surge 208%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s meat exports to China witnessed a surge of 208% from January to August 2025 compared with the same period last year, Gwadar Pro reported quoting the data released by the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC). In the first eight months of 2025, Pakistan exported over \$9.55 million worth of meat to China, up from \$3.10 million in the same period of 2024. Analysts attribute this sharp increase to a combination of factors, including improved quarantine cooperation, expanded access for Pakistani meat processing enterprises, and rising Chinese consumer demand for high-quality halal beef and mutton. Pakistan exported 1,613,051 tons of boiled beef to China from January to August this year, a significant jump from 645,973 tons during the same period in 2024. Experts believe that China has approved multiple Pakistani meat exporters after they met the international sanitary and phytosanitary standards. —APP

Yousaf concerned over KP govt delayed in reconstruction of earthquake-hit area

ISLAMABAD, Oct 10 (AP-P):Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Friday expressed deep concern over the slow pace of rehabilitation and reconstruction in Balakot, more than two decades after the devastating 2005 earthquake. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said that despite 20 years, the reconstruction of 216 schools in the earthquake-affected areas remained incomplete. “The roads are still in poor condition, hospitals remain non-functional, and children continue to study without proper school buildings,” he said. The minister said that although the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had been tasked with overseeing the rehabilitation, little progress had been made. “They made tall claims, but the reality is disappointing — three provincial governments have come and gone, yet the people of Balakot are still deprived of basic facilities,” he added.—APP

Science, tech role stressed in shaping prosperous Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has emphasized the critical role of science, technology and innovation in shaping a prosperous and forward-looking Pakistan. He was addressing the closing ceremony of World Space Week (WSW) 2025, held at Islamabad Model College for Girls, F-7/4, under the auspices of the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), the national space agency and official coordinator of WSW activities in the country. Minister of State for Federal Education, Ms. Wajihah Qamar, and Federal Secretary for Education, Mr. Naadeem Mehboob, also attended the ceremony, which marked the conclusion of a week-long nationwide celebration of space science and technology observed from October 4 to 10, in line with the global theme “Living in Space.” In his keynote address, Ahsan Iqbal said that while humanity continues to explore life beyond Earth, it is equally vital to harness science and technology to improve living conditions on the planet. Urging students to embrace modern education and skill development, he reminded them of the Muslim world’s historic contributions to science and discovery. The minister reaffirmed the government’s commitment to addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development through modern scientific solutions. Highlighting the far-reaching applications of space technology, he said that its use extends to telemedicine, tele-education, communication, and disaster management. He appreciated SUPARCO’s contributions in applying space-based technologies for environmental monitoring and national development and reiterated the ambition of Pakistan’s space program to land on the moon by 2035. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman SUPARCO, Muhammad Yousaf Khan reaffirmed the organization’s commitment to advancing the peaceful uses of space technology for the nation’s benefit. He underscored the significance of Earth observation programs in monitoring natural resources, environmental shifts, and urban expansion, thereby aiding national decision-making. Secretary SUPARCO, in his remarks, noted that World Space Week is celebrated in over 90 countries to commemorate the launch of Sputnik-1 in 1957 and the signing of the Outer Space Treaty in 1967. He highlighted that Pakistan, which has been observing WSW since 2005, consistently ranks among the top-performing countries with thousands of activities held each year.

Siddiqui reaffirms judiciary’s resolve to enhance efficiency

ISLAMABAD:The Sub-Committee constituted by the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) Wednesday to address protracted litigation in commercial, revenue, and fiscal cases, held its first meeting today under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui, Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Mr Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh, Judge, Lahore High Court, Mr Justice Agha Faisal, Judge, High Court of Sindh (online), Mr Justice Arshad Ali, Judge, Peshawar High Court, Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Mr. Munawar Iqbal Duggal, Additional Attorney General for Pakistan, Legal Team of the FBR and Secretary, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP). In his opening remarks, Justice Siddiqui emphasized that prolonged litigation and injunctive orders not only stall public revenue recovery but also erode investors’ confidence and commercial certainty. The Committee, it was noted, is tasked with formulating concrete recommendations to accelerate resolution of such cases and reviewing proposals from the Attorney General for Pakistan concerning the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards. Participants acknowledged that the establishment of specialized commercial benches across the High Courts has already delivered encouraging results by reducing pendency. Justice Siddiqui appreciated these outcomes and suggested extending the specialized bench model to cases involving foreign arbitral awards for swift and expert adjudication. Chairman FBR while welcoming judiciary’s proactive engagement, affirmed FBR’s commitment to strengthen institutional coordination and expeditious resolution of revenue-related disputes. He also endorsed the proposal to create a dedicated Legal Department within FBR to ensure consistent legal strategy and institutional support. Concluding the session, Justice Siddiqui reaffirmed the judiciary’s resolve to enhance judicial efficiency. —APP

ITP issues diversion plan for Faizabad amid law, order steps

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has announced a special diversion plan to manage traffic flow around Faizabad in view of law and order arrangements. Citizens have been urged to use alternate routes to avoid inconvenience. An official told APP on Friday that entry of all kinds of heavy traffic into Islamabad will remain suspended until further orders, while diversions for light traffic have been placed at multiple points. Rawal Dam Chowk Traffic towards Faizabad from both sides will be diverted. Vehicles coming from Bhara Kahu, Murree, and Islamabad towards Rawalpindi should use Park Road, Captain Naem Tufail Shaheed Chowk (Tramri), Lehtar Road, Khanna, and Expressway. Those heading to the Airport are advised to use Kashmir Chowk and Srinagar Highway. Garden Flyover Traffic towards Faizabad from both sides will be diverted. Residents of I-8 should use Zero Point, Srinagar Highway, Club Road, and Park Road. Khanna Pull (Expressway) Both sides towards Faizabad will be diverted. Traffic from Koral should use Lehtar Road, Tramri Chowk, Park Road, and Rawal Dam Chowk. Ninth Avenue / IJP Road Traffic towards Faizabad from both sides will be diverted. Vehicles from IJP Road should use Gohar Shaheed Chowk (Gandum Godown), Faqir Aipee Road, and Srinagar Highway. Alternatively, drivers may use CDA Double Road via I-10 Service Road to Ninth Avenue and Srinagar Highway. Zero Point (Expressway / Faisal Avenue) Traffic from Zero Point towards Faizabad and Faisal Avenue will be diverted. Vehicles from Islamabad towards Rawalpindi should use Srinagar Highway and Ninth Avenue. Residents of F-8, F-9, F-10, F-11, G-10, and G-11 sectors may use Golra Mor via Srinagar Highway to travel to Rawalpindi. The official added that citizens can stay updated through FM 92.4 and the official WhatsApp channel of ITP for the latest traffic advisories.—APP

Pak’s energy future hinges on parliamentary oversight: Danyal

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s Energy Future Hinges on Parliamentary Oversight: Barrister Danyal Chaudhry Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, has emphasized that strong parliamentary oversight is crucial to steering Pakistan toward an affordable and sustainable energy future, while addressing a high-level briefing on “IGCEP 2025-35: The Politics of Energy Generation in Pakistan” held at Serena Hotel, Islamabad. The event was organized by the Parliamentary Forum on Energy and Economy, bringing together lawmakers, experts, and policymakers to discuss the country’s long-term energy strategy. Speaking at the forum, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry said that “the plan determining Pakistan’s energy future is not merely a technical document, but a covenant with the nation. Providing affordable, reliable, and clean energy for coming generations is our national responsibility.” He reaffirmed the government’s commitment to implementing the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP) 2025–35 in line with national unity and provincial autonomy. He said the goal is to ensure quality electricity for citizens and to support businesses in driving economic growth and stability. Chief Guest Senator Sherry Rehman voiced concerns over the centralized nature of the IGCEP, stressing that provincial voices from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, and Punjab must be included in the planning process. “The transition to renewable energy is inevitable,” she said. “We must ensure environmental protection and make energy planning more inclusive and accountable.” During the session, participants raised key questions about the planning and approval process of IGCEP, noting that two crucial elements provincial input and parliamentary engagement were largely missing. Speakers underscored that, following the 18th Amendment and Article 157 of the Constitution, provinces now share powers in electricity generation and tariff regulation. Therefore, the IGCEP should ideally be reviewed through the Council of Common Interests (CCI) with formal mechanisms for provincial and parliamentary consultation. Forum Convener Dr. Nafisa Shah outlined the forum’s mission as a cross-party platform promoting open discussion and research-driven debate on Pakistan’s pressing energy and economic challenges. “While the IGCEP is a technical document, our goal is to advance energy democracy by involving experts, legislators, and the media in this crucial dialogue,” she noted. Technical experts Muhammad Badar Alam and Omer Haroon Malik delivered detailed briefings on the plan, while Engr. Imtiaz Hussain Baloch explained NEPRA’s regulatory framework. Provincial perspectives were shared by Senator Sana Baloch (Balochistan), Ahmed Kundi (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Muejeeb ul Haq (Sindh), and Muhammad Zubair (Secretary Energy & Power, KP). Members of the National Assembly Asad Alam Niazi, Zeb Jaffar, Usama Mela, and Mobein Arif added parliamentary viewpoints.—APP

Briefs

President, PM praise forces for killing 30 Orakzai terrorists

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out a successful anti-terrorist operation in Orakzai. The president and prime minister, in their separately issued statements, appreciated the professional capabilities of the security forces for eliminating 30 India-backed Khawarij in recent days. They said that the sacrifices of Lt. Col. Junaid Tariq, Major Tayyab Rahat, and other martyrs would never be squandered. President Zardari said that the armed forces had made the nation proud by dismantling the network of Indian-sponsored Khawarij. "Continuous successes against terrorism reflect our resolve. The brave sons of the soil have made history by sacrificing their lives to protect the motherland," he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the officers and personnel of the security forces were tirelessly striving to safeguard the country from hostile elements, while risking their own lives. He said that every officer and soldier of Pakistan's armed forces was making the entire nation proud by embracing martyrdom to ensure the country's security. —APP

'Digitisation process begins to establish E-Parliament'

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq announced on Friday that the digitisation process has been initiated to establish an e-Parliament, aimed at modernising the legislative system. Speaking at the start of the National Assembly session, the Speaker said the digitisation work had almost been completed in the Secretariat, while the system would soon be extended to the Parliament Lodges for the facilitation of members. He said that under the new system, members would receive the Order of the Day, a copy of the Constitution, the Rules of Business, and other legislative documents digitally instead of in paper form. "A help desk has been set up at Gate where members can configure their passwords and collect their iPads," he added. The Speaker urged members to inform colleagues who were not present in the House to collect their iPads as well. "Once members start using the new digital system, the practice of placing paper documents on their desks will be discontinued," he said. Ayaz Sadiq further said that in case any member forgets to bring their iPad, a limited number of paper copies or spare devices would be available as a backup. —APP

Sialkot, Gujranwala chambers, GCCI unite to boost Gwadar industries

GWADAR: The Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) is forming a 50-member team in collaboration with industrial hubs in Sialkot and Gujranwala to establish small-scale industries in Gwadar, aiming to generate legal employment opportunities for youth and boost local manufacturing. Speaking at a press conference held at the GCCCI office, President Jeethund Hoth said the initiative follows his team's recent visits to the Lahore, Sialkot, and Gujranwala chambers of commerce. "We have visited Lahore, Gujranwala, and Sialkot chambers, the big industrial hubs. Sialkot and Gujranwala have agreed to support us," he told reporters. Hoth explained that Sialkot and Gujranwala chambers have agreed to support GCCCI's initiative by training a 50-member team from Gwadar in various industrial skills. The Sialkot Chamber will provide training in the manufacturing of leather goods, medical equipment, and other trades, while the Gujranwala Chamber will focus on electronics manufacturing. Both chambers will offer free accommodation during the three-month training program. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti inaugurates Balochistan festival at the Lok Virsa.

ISSI hosts former CNS Admiral (R) Abbasi on maritime security

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the latest edition of its Thought Leaders Forum (TLF), the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted former Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral (R) Zafar Mahmood Abbasi NI(M). The session was titled, 'Maritime Security and Blue Economy.' Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his remarks, stated that this session was organized to provide a perspective on the role of naval power, complementing the previous two TLF sessions held in the backdrop of May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan. It was also designed to have an informed discourse on the challenges in the way of effectively harnessing Pakistan's 'blue economy' potential, said a press release issued on Friday. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood added that Pakistan's geographical position strongly underscores its significant geo-economic and geo-strategic relevance. He highlighted three key challenges to the country's maritime environment: (i) strategic competition in the Indian Ocean Region, particularly India's rapid naval modernization; (ii) non-traditional threats including piracy, terrorism, human and drug trafficking, and the adverse effects of climate change; and (iii) geopolitical rivalries that increasingly play out in the Indian Ocean, with major powers seeking

influence and access. Recent provocative statements and aggressive signaling by the Indian political and military leadership reinforce the imperative of preparedness in the naval domain. Pakistan's maritime strategy must continue to be extremely vigilant to effectively tackle the emerging challenges and to seize new opportunities, including through enhanced regional cooperation. He also underlined the importance of appropriately adjusting a primarily continental mind-set to focus on the increasingly important maritime domain as well. While highlighting Pakistan's vast untapped marine resources and the blue economy potential, the DG ISSI noted several structural challenges, including an inadequate regulatory framework, a fragile institutional setup, limited maritime infrastructure, security concerns, technological lag, insufficient human expertise, and economic uncertainties. He emphasized the need for collaboration between the government, Pakistan Navy, industry, academia, and civil society in order to unlock the potential and reap rich dividends. Admiral (R) Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, in his wide-ranging talk, outlined that Pakistan's maritime domain, though strategically significant, has long been neglected. He opined that the current global geopolitical environment is defined by a divide between the Global North and South, where the former pursues hegemonic,

zero-sum policies while the latter emphasizes inclusive growth. This imbalance, coupled with an interest-based capitalist system, has deepened inequality and instability, dynamics also reflected in the maritime sphere. Admiral (R) Abbasi added that maritime security is crucial for Pakistan's defence and economic growth. It includes protection against armed aggression, terrorism, piracy, and drug trafficking. The principal threat originates from India, requiring robust seaward defenses and deterrence strategies. Despite operational strengths, the absence of a Pakistan Navy (PN) base at Gwadar remains a strategic gap. In peacetime, the Pakistan Navy advances national interests through participation in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSF), and coordination roles under NAVAREA IX and SAR frameworks. Pakistan's coastal defences have improved since the establishment of the Coastal Command in 2005 and deployment of Pak Marines in 2018. The PN plays a vital role in multinational operations, including CTF-150 and CTF-151, combating terrorism, piracy, and drug trafficking. Economically, Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Extended Continental Shelf expanded in 2015 through efforts of the PN and NIO, contain vast untapped resources, including significant oil, gas, and mineral reserves. A revital-

ized shipbuilding industry and greater reliance on indigenous shipping could save valuable foreign exchange. The fishing sector, despite potential, faces overfishing, pollution, and weak regulation. Strengthening governance and modernizing infrastructure could enhance exports and empower coastal communities. Overall, Pakistan's maritime sector offers immense opportunities for economic development, provided the mutual coordination among diverse stakeholders is strengthened maritime security and institutional focus remain central to national policy, he concluded. Earlier, in his introductory remarks, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre, Dr. Talat Shabbir, highlighted the timeliness of the discussion and said that today's session is of immense relevance in an era where oceans play a defining role in shaping economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and geopolitical stability. The address was followed by a thought-provoking question and answer session, where participants engaged deeply with the speaker on evolving dynamics of maritime security and blue economy, and the related challenges. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood presented a memento to Admiral (R) Zafar Mahmood Abbasi. The session brought together scholars, diplomats, and policy experts for an insightful discussion on matters related to maritime security and blue economy.

China-Pakistan skills base empowers local women

ISLAMABAD: A new chapter in China-Pakistan people-to-people cooperation opened with the launch of the China-Pakistan Youth One Sphere International Women's Training Base in Islamabad, an initiative designed to equip Pakistani women with practical skills for generating sustainable economic benefits. The project, supported by the Beijing One Sphere Charity Foundation and the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community, commenced with the donation of 30 sewing machines to establish the training facility's foundational capacity, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Beyond sewing techniques, the base will progressively introduce public welfare courses in basic computer skills and Chinese pastry making. A dedicated program to craft traditional shawls will follow, serving both the preservation of cultural heritage and the development of commercially viable skills. The training program operates in intensive three-month cycles, with four sessions annually accommodating 30 participants each. This structured approach enables the center to equip up to 120 women yearly with valuable technical capabilities. The first cohort of students from Islamabad and Rawalpindi has already started sewing instruction and additional courses scheduled to be launched in the coming months. "The ultimate goal is to provide these women with the tools they need to contribute meaningfully to their families and communities," said Ma Bin from the organizing committee. "By combining traditional crafts with modern skills, we hope to promote practical cross-border cooperation in women's empowerment." —APP

Senate session prorogued sine die

ISLAMABAD: The 354th session of the Senate was prorogued sine die on Friday due to a lack of quorum, as pointed out by Senator Saifullah Abro. Presiding Officer Manzoor Ahmed Kakar, who was chairing the session, ordered the traditional ringing of bells in an attempt to summon absent members. However, the attendance remained insufficient. With no improvement in quorum, the Presiding Officer proceeded to read out the prorogation order, officially ending the session. —APP

Minister urges youth to drive Crypto-led digital economy

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Crypto & Blockchain and CEO of the Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC), Bilal Bin Saqib, emphasized on Friday the importance of Pakistan's youth stepping up as leaders in the digital economy, leveraging robust government support and cutting-edge crypto platforms to build lasting economic empowerment. Bin Saqib, speaking exclusively to a private news channel, encouraged youth to lead Pakistan's digital economy growth through crypto adoption and strong government backing, adding, crypto could be a game-changing force for Pakistan's economic future. He highlighted the critical role of blockchain technology in shaping a secure financial future amid the global move towards digital currencies. Minister Bilal Bin Saqib explained that digital currency, often called "digital gold," eliminates the need for third parties in online transactions and value exchange, adding, this innovation can transform the way business is conducted, making it more secure and efficient. He urged Pakistan's youth to embrace this technology and use it effectively to secure their financial future, highlighting the significant opportunity crypto presents in building a modern economy. He emphasized that cryptocurrency platforms have the potential to empower Pakistanis between 18 and 40 years old by enabling them to

generate sustainable income from the comfort of their homes. "This is the future automated systems and digital technologies will transact value using crypto. I returned from the US with a mission to mentor young Pakistanis in the realm of virtual finance," he explained. Responding to skepticism about digital currencies, Bilal drew a parallel with the early days of social media. "Just as platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram were once doubted, crypto is now facing similar skepticism. However, countries like the U.S. and India have already made significant investments in this space, he said, adding, Pakistan, with its talented youth and growing tech ecosystem, is perfectly positioned to embrace and lead in the crypto revolution. Highlighting global success stories, he noted, "In Bhutan, crypto now contributes 38% of GDP and Ethiopia earned Rs2 billion from the sector last year." With such momentum worldwide, Pakistan is well-placed to unlock significant economic benefits through crypto innovation. Bilal highlighted that Pakistan's true strength lies in its talented youth, who can drive economic growth and innovation through blockchain technology beyond its natural resources. To another query, he said the Pakistan Virtual Access Regulatory Authority (PVARA) oversees a transparent. —APP

Dr. Wajid achieves milestone from Ocean university of China

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Wajid Ali from Pasni, Balochistan's shined himself in his higher study, achieving milestone having a Ph.D. in Fish Genetics from the prestigious Ocean University of China. A report carried by Gwadar Pro on Friday stated, "On a quiet morning in Pasni, Balochistan, a young Wajid Ali would stand by the sea, captivated by the fish beneath the waves and the mysteries of the deep. That early curiosity would eventually take him thousands of miles away, earning him a Ph.D. in Fish Genetics from the prestigious Ocean University of China." "Growing up in Pasni, I always wondered how we could better un-

derstand and protect our marine resources. That curiosity became the compass for my academic journey," Dr. Wajid recalls. His academic pursuit led him first to Quetta, where he completed a Master's degree in Zoology, followed by an M.Phil. in Marine Biology from Lasbela University. Even then, his research focused on the diverse fish species along Balochistan's coast, laying the foundation for advanced studies in marine science. In 2021, Dr. Wajid's dedication earned him the China Scholarship Council (CSC) Award, granting him admission to the Ocean University of China in Qingdao. There, he specialized in molecu-

lar genetics and immunology of aquatic organisms, focusing on antimicrobial peptides (AMPs) from the golden pompano. His research evaluated their effectiveness against multiple bacterial strains, providing valuable insights for disease management and sustainable aquaculture. "My time in China was both challenging and rewarding," he told Gwadar Pro. "I worked alongside brilliant researchers and learned advanced techniques that I hope to bring back to Pakistan. It's not just about research; it's about making a real impact on our fisheries and coastal communities." Despite the demands of his doctoral work, Dr. Wajid published

multiple articles in top-tier, Q1 scientific journals, earning recognition for both the depth and relevance of his research. He completed his Ph.D. in September-October 2025. "I want to share the knowledge and skills I gained in China," he explains. "My dream is to help improve aquaculture practices, promote sustainable seafood production, and support communities along our coasts. This is my way of honoring Pasni and the place that inspired me." Dr. Wajid Ali's journey is more than a story of personal achievement; it is a beacon of inspiration for students across Pakistan, especially those from remote regions. —APP

Ahsan stresses science, tech key to Pakistan's prosperity

The event concluded with a reaffirmation of Pakistan's commitment to using space technology for sustainable development, environmental protection, and inspiring the next generation to look toward the stars with curiosity and purpose

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has emphasized the critical role of science, technology and innovation in shaping a prosperous and forward-looking Pakistan. He was addressing the closing ceremony of World Space Week (WSW) 2025, held at Islamabad Model College for Girls, F-7/4, under the auspices of the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), the national space agency and official coordinator of WSW activities in the country. Minister of State for Federal Education, Ms. Wajiha Qamar, and Federal Secretary for Education, Mr. Nadeem Mehboob, also attended the ceremony, which marked the conclusion of a week-long nationwide celebration of space science and technology observed from October 4 to 10, in line with the global theme "Living in Space." In his keynote address, Ahsan Iqbal said that while humanity continues to explore life beyond Earth, it is equally vital to harness science and technology to improve living conditions on the planet. Urging students to embrace modern education and skill development, he reminded them of the Muslim world's historic contributions to science and discovery. The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development through modern scientific solutions. Highlighting the far-reaching applications of space technology, he said that its use extends to telemedicine, tele-education, communication, and disaster management. He appreciated SUPARCO's contributions in applying space-based technologies for environmental monitoring and national development and reiterated the ambition of Pakistan's space program to land on the moon by 2035. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman SUPARCO, Muhammad Yousaf Khan reaffirmed the organization's commitment to advancing the peaceful uses of space technology for the nation's benefit. He underscored the significance of Earth observation programs in monitoring natural resources, environmental shifts, and urban expansion, thereby aiding national decision-making. Secretary SUPARCO, in his remarks, noted that World Space Week is celebrated in over 90 countries to commemorate the launch of Sputnik-1 in 1957 and the signing of the Outer Space Treaty in 1967. He highlighted that Pakistan, which has been observing WSW since 2005, consistently ranks among the top-performing countries with thousands of activities held each year. This year's events included teacher training workshops, student competitions, exhibitions, model displays, quizzes, webinars, and stargazing sessions organized across the country. SUPARCO's Space Education Vans also reached schools nationwide to promote interactive learning experiences in space science and technology. The ceremony also featured a creative tableau by students of Islamabad Model College for Girls, F-7/4, on the theme of climate change, symbolizing the collective responsibility to protect the planet. Their performance received wide appreciation from the guests for effectively linking environmental awareness with the broader theme of sustainability and space exploration. In his concluding remarks, Secretary SUPARCO expressed gratitude to all participating schools, teachers, and students for their enthusiastic involvement in the nationwide activities. He also commended the efforts of SUPARCO's Space Education and Awareness Division for promoting space science education and outreach across Pakistan. The event concluded with a reaffirmation of Pakistan's commitment to using space technology for sustainable development, environmental protection, and inspiring the next generation to look toward the stars with curiosity and purpose. —DNA

TLP march: A nation held hostage once again

ONCE again, Pakistan finds itself at a standstill, roads blocked, cities sealed, transport suspended, and millions stranded, even before a single protester has set foot on the streets. The Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) has announced yet another march towards Islamabad, and in anticipation, the government has shut down major highways, inter-city routes, and entry points across Punjab. Lahore wears the look of a besieged city, and Islamabad, the destination of the planned march, has effectively been cut off from the rest of the country.

The irony could not be more glaring. The TLP march, reportedly to protest against the killing of Palestinians in Gaza, comes at a time when peace has already returned to the region after months of devastating conflict. The ceasefire, fragile as it may be, has brought relief and hope to millions. In such circumstances, the justification for a “Gaza solidarity march” has all but evaporated. The timing and motives, therefore, have raised serious questions, is this really about Gaza, or is there something deeper and more political behind the move?

For ordinary Pakistanis, however, these questions are of little comfort. What they feel today is anger, frustration, and helplessness. Roads are closed, schools are shut, offices are empty, and transporters have pulled their vehicles off the roads. The economy, already staggering under the weight of inflation and unemployment, is now bleeding further losses, running into hundreds of millions of rupees each day. Traders complain of shuttered markets and lost business opportunities, while daily wage earners lament another day without income. A march that hasn't even begun has paralyzed half the country. The very mention of a TLP procession is enough to trigger nationwide closures and panic. It is a reflection not only of the group's disruptive power but also of the state's inability or unwillingness to manage them. The bigger question is: why is the TLP repeatedly allowed to hold such marches that bring life to a standstill? While the right to peaceful protest is enshrined in every democracy, Pakistan's experience with such movements has rarely been peaceful. Previous TLP sit-ins in Islamabad have resulted in violence, vandalism, and deadly clashes with law enforcement. They have disrupted national life, damaged property, and caused immeasurable harm to Pakistan's global image.

Yet, every time, the pattern remains the same, a sudden announcement, an overreaction by the government, widespread panic, and eventually, a negotiated settlement that leaves the group emboldened and the public disillusioned. If the TLP's cause this time was truly humanitarian, the



question remains: why march to Islamabad? why should Pakistan already battling economic crisis, political instability, and a fragile security environment be plunged into further chaos over an issue that has already seen diplomatic closure? Perhaps, as many political observers suggest, the Gaza slogan is only a convenient pretext. There may be political calculations at play visibility, relevance, and leverage in a rapidly shifting political landscape. If that is indeed the case, it is deeply unfortunate. Using a tragedy like Gaza for domestic political gains only weakens genuine causes and deepens national cynicism.

The cost of these recurring episodes is far greater than a few days of traffic disruptions. Every such crisis chips away at the country's credibility, both at home and abroad. Pakistan is already struggling to attract foreign investment. The recent uptick in security concerns, combined with political volatility, has made investors wary. Many foreign companies operating in Pakistan are reportedly scaling down operations or exploring exit options, citing uncertainty and security fears.

The current shutdown with roads blocked and transport halted only reinforces the perception that Pakistan remains an unpredictable and unstable place to do business. For international observers, it sends a simple but damaging message: this is a country perpetually in crisis.

At such a critical time, Pakistan's civil and military leadership must come together to find a permanent solution. The state cannot afford to be repeatedly held hostage by one group or another. Dialogue, yes but not at the cost of national paralysis. Tolerance, yes but not for chaos.

There is also a collective responsibility that goes beyond the government. The so-called “powers that be” whether political, religious, media, or business all claim to act in the national interest. Now is the time to prove it. If everyone indeed “listens to them,” as the popular saying goes, then they must use their influence to avert this crisis before it escalates. The costs are too high, and the patience of the people too thin. Pakistan stands at a crossroads. It can either continue down this path of reactionary governance closing cities and silencing daily life every time a group announces a protest or it can enforce the rule of law and reclaim its streets for its citizens. The fear that one march can shut down the country is itself a national tragedy. It speaks to the weakness of our institutions and the erosion of public confidence in the state's ability to maintain order. For a nation of 240 million, blessed with potential and resilience, it is heartbreaking to see daily life grind to a halt at the whim of a few thousand agitators. It is time to end this cycle of paralysis. The people deserve better a government that governs, a system that works, and streets that remain open for those who simply want to live, work, and hope. Because if every march means a lockdown, every protest means paralysis, and every slogan means fear then the real casualty is not the government or the TLP. It is Pakistan itself.

High-Stakes Games in the Middle East

Qamar Bashir



China and Russia limited their involvement largely to issuing statements, avoiding direct entanglement. The real surprise came from Europe. Under immense public pressure, European governments pivoted dramatically. Citizens poured into the streets demanding sanctions against Israel, recognition of Palestine as a state, and an end to the occupation. Governments responded by canceling military, civilian, and economic agreements with Israel, withdrawing investments...

THE Middle East has long been the epicenter of conflict, betrayal, shifting alliances, and global maneuvering. Yet the most recent chapter has revealed not just another tragic confrontation, but a sophisticated, high-intensity, high-stake game where every move was calculated to achieve both destruction and survival. The sequence began with Hamas's surprise attack on Israel—an operation described by some analysts as clumsy and poorly coordinated, yet one that, paradoxically, many claim was abetted by Israel itself to trigger a wider conflict. What followed was a brutal escalation that saw Gaza reduced to rubble, its people starved, slaughtered, and collectively punished under what international observers called nothing less than genocide. The early days of the war set the stage for Israel's long-held expansionist ambition: to annex Gaza, the West Bank, and potentially extend its dominance into the broader Middle East. With the United States' unconditional backing, Israel unleashed a campaign that turned Gaza into what one doctor called a “slaughterhouse,” where children, women, doctors, and civilians were killed daily in horrifying numbers. This genocidal spectacle shocked the world and forced international powers to take sides.

China and Russia limited their involvement largely to issuing statements, avoiding direct entanglement. The real surprise came from Europe. Under immense public pressure, European governments pivoted dramatically. Citizens poured into the streets demanding sanctions against Israel, recognition of Palestine as a state, and an end to the occupation. Governments responded by canceling military, civilian, and economic agreements with Israel, withdrawing investments, and promising support for a two-state solution. This groundswell of European public opinion became a turning point. For decades, Israel had enjoyed near-total impunity in Western capitals, but this time the moral force of public condemnation began to erode even the most entrenched political loyalties. One decisive moment came when a prominent European leader flew to Israel, not to offer support, but to confront its leadership, creating diplomatic shockwaves and forcing new pressure on Tel Aviv. Equally astonishing was the role of the Muslim world. Long criticized for division and inaction, the Muslim ummah displayed unprecedented cohesion. Iran, while vilified as a sponsor of Hamas, proved its influence by supporting Palestinian resistance and deterring Israel and the United States from full-scale regional escalation. The collective strength of Muslim nations, particularly through economic and diplomatic channels, became a bargaining chip powerful enough to push the United States toward reconsidering its position. Amid this turmoil, President Donald Trump played what many now describe as one of the most intelligent and

strategic diplomatic games of his career. Historically, U.S. presidents have been tethered to Israel's narrative, often adopting regime-change agendas across the Middle East at Israel's urging. Netanyahu, for example, loudly advocated regime change in Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Libya. But Trump deviated sharply from this script. He refused to endorse Netanyahu's ambition to annex Gaza and the West Bank, despite widespread support for the idea within Israel's parliament and public opinion. He rejected calls for regime change in Iran, signaling that Washington would no longer be manipulated into destabilizing yet another regional power. For Israel, this was an unprecedented betrayal. For the world, it was a signal that America might finally be pulling back from decades of Middle Eastern entanglements.

Trump's stance marked a turning point. It reflected not only his desire to assert American independence from Israeli influence but also his recognition that the United States could not afford endless wars while its economy and political institutions were under strain. His 21-point peace plan became the centerpiece of this recalibration—a plan that sought not only to stop the carnage in Gaza but also to end centuries of conflict by pushing for a viable two-state solution. When Trump unveiled the plan, many dismissed it as fragile, unrealistic, and destined to fail. Yet, against all odds, it gained momentum. The plan's strength lay not in forcing capitulation but in balancing interests. It acknowledged Hamas as a legitimate political actor—something Israel had long resisted—and compelled Israel to sit at the same negotiation table as its sworn enemy.

In an unprecedented development, Hamas and Israel accepted the first phase of the plan. This meant an agreement to a ceasefire, humanitarian access to Gaza, and recognition of Palestine's right to statehood in principle. The agreement is expected to be formally signed in Egypt, with Trump himself likely attending the ceremony. This moment is remarkable not only for its symbolic power but also for its practical implications. For the first time in decades, Israel was forced to concede to negotiations that recognized Palestinians as equal stakeholders. Trump's ability to leverage European sanctions, Muslim unity, and American political will into one cohesive push was a rare alignment of global forces. The immediate outcome of the plan is the cessation of the most brutal phase of the Gaza war. Yet its long-term implications are far more significant. If implemented fully, it could establish a two-state solution with Palestine gaining international recognition and sovereignty, force Israel to halt annexation and ethnic cleansing policies, rebalance U.S. foreign policy away from blind loyalty to Israel, strengthen European political autonomy, and reinforce Muslim nations' influence as collective economic

and diplomatic actors in global politics.

Nevertheless, challenges remain. Israel's political establishment continues to resist, with Netanyahu lobbying fiercely to derail the plan and push the United States back into alignment with Israel's hardline agenda. Doubts persist about Hamas's ability to transform from an armed resistance group into a reliable political entity. Skeptics also question Trump's capacity to maintain momentum given domestic pressures and the fragility of international alliances. Yet despite these uncertainties, the peace plan represents a monumental shift. It demonstrates that even in a region as complex and conflict-ridden as the Middle East, diplomacy, economic leverage, and public opinion can achieve what decades of war could not.

Credit for this breakthrough belongs to multiple actors. Trump's strategic deviations from Israel's traditional influence were decisive. Europe's citizens, by refusing to remain silent in the face of genocide, forced their governments into action. Muslim nations, particularly Iran, used their strength to tilt the balance. International institutions such as the UN and the International Court of Justice provided moral legitimacy by condemning Israel's actions and upholding Palestinian rights. Even Pakistan's diplomats, often overlooked, played a vital role in mobilizing the Muslim world and countering Israeli-American propaganda at the United Nations. Conversely, China and Russia, despite their global stature, remained largely on the sidelines—issuing statements but contributing little. Their absence highlights a critical lesson: in this conflict, words without action mean little.

The Middle East has endured millennia of bloodshed, with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at its modern heart. Yet the alignment of international outrage, Muslim unity, European pressure, and Trump's uncharacteristically disciplined diplomacy has produced a fragile but real chance for peace. The 21-point plan is not merely a blueprint for ending one war; it is a test of whether humanity can finally prioritize justice and coexistence over expansion and annihilation. If the plan succeeds, it will not only be remembered as Trump's greatest diplomatic achievement but also as the moment when the world finally forced Israel and Palestine to imagine peace. If it fails, it will join the long list of shattered hopes in the Middle East. For now, however, the world stands at a rare crossroads—one where the slaughter has paused, the diplomacy has begun, and the possibility of justice has flickered into view.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC
Macomb, Michigan, USA

Cracks in the World's Largest Democracy

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Historically, India's democratic credentials, cultural richness and non-aligned foreign policy served as important pillars of soft power. However, the current trajectory of rising authoritarianism, communal tensions and suppression of dissent diminishes India's moral authority on the global stage. Allegations of human rights abuses in Kashmir, discrimination against minorities and curbs on press freedom tarnish its image as the “world's largest democracy”

THE contemporary international order is witnessing rapid transformations driven by shifting power structures, evolving security alliances and new patterns of political and economic realignments. India, as a pivotal player in South Asia and an emerging power within the Indo-Pacific, finds itself at the center of these transitions. However, despite its global visibility and ambition to position itself as a great power, multiple fault lines within India's domestic political framework, economic trajectory and foreign policy posture suggest that the “Indian system is breaking down.” This phrase does not merely imply internal instability but reflects the contradictions between India's aspirations and its structural limitations amid global realignment.

One of the central dimensions of India's systemic breakdown lies in its domestic political environment. While India has long prided itself on being the world's largest democracy, recent trends indicate a move away from pluralism and inclusivity toward a more majoritarian, centralized and polarized political order. The rise of Hindu nationalism has reshaped India's political discourse, marginalizing religious and ethnic minorities and eroding the secular ethos enshrined in its constitution. This transformation undermines internal cohesion and weakens the foundations of India's federal system. States like Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal increasingly contest the central government's authority, while the Kashmir issue continues to be a flashpoint of unrest and discontent. The erosion of democratic institutions through restrictions on the press, weakening of the judiciary and suppression of dissent further deepens domestic fragility. Rather than fostering stability, the centralization of power in New Delhi amplifies the risks of political fragmentation, delegitimizes democratic values and casts doubt on India's internal resilience in the long term. Another critical aspect of India's systemic stress is the widening gap between its economic aspirations and ground realities. India's economic growth is frequently celebrated, yet beneath the aggregate figures lies a highly unequal and precarious structure. The rural economy, where a majority of India's population resides, suffers from chronic agrarian distress. Rising unemployment, particularly among the youth, has generated frustration that could transform into political instability. Moreover, India's much-touted technological sector, while globally competitive, does not generate sufficient employment to absorb the millions entering the workforce each year. The result is a paradox of jobless growth that further exacerbates inequality. Additionally, India's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed institutional weaknesses in healthcare and governance, raising questions about its capacity to manage future crises. The juxtaposition of India's

aspirations to be a global economic leader with its domestic struggles suggests a growing disconnect. A system that fails to distribute economic opportunities equitably, or to address structural weaknesses in agriculture, industry and social welfare, risks long-term instability.

From a geostrategic standpoint, India faces mounting difficulties in navigating the contemporary realignments shaping the international order. On the one hand, India seeks to strengthen ties with the United States and its allies through initiatives like the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) to counterbalance China's influence. On the other, India remains deeply entangled with Russia for defense cooperation, energy needs and diplomatic leverage. The Russia-Ukraine war has highlighted this dilemma. While India refrains from condemning Russia outright, in line with its strategic dependence on Moscow, it simultaneously deepens its engagement with Washington to secure defense and economic support. This balancing act is becoming increasingly unsustainable as the United States presses its allies and partners to align more closely against Russia and China. China's rise poses another profound challenge. The Sino-Indian border clashes, particularly in Ladakh since 2020, have exposed India's vulnerabilities in defending its territorial claims. Despite New Delhi's rhetoric of strength, the reality remains that China holds strategic and infrastructural advantages along the contested borders. India's inability to decisively counter China's assertiveness raises questions about its credibility as a regional power capable of shaping Indo-Pacific security dynamics.

Its strained relations with Pakistan further compound India's systemic fragility. The abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, which revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status, has intensified hostility between the two states. While India portrays itself as a decisive actor, this move has internationalized the Kashmir issue and created an enduring flashpoint in South Asia. Pakistan continues to leverage diplomatic platforms such as the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to highlight human rights violations in Kashmir. Furthermore, the possibility of cross-border militancy and escalation into military confrontation remains ever-present. A system that seeks regional leadership but is perpetually embroiled in bilateral hostility undermines India's credibility and prevents it from achieving broader strategic stability in South Asia. The breaking down of the Indian system is also visible in its internal federal structure. India's federalism, designed to accommodate its vast diversity, is under strain from the central government's attempts to impose uniformity. Language policies, economic distribution and the dominance of northern states in national politics alienate southern and north-

eastern regions. The politics of exclusion and identity-based mobilization, especially through caste and religion, erodes the sense of collective nationhood. Instead of integrating diversity, the state's approach risks reinforcing fractures along ethnic, linguistic and regional lines. The consequence is a system that lacks resilience against centrifugal tendencies a critical weakness for a state seeking global leadership.

India's global ambitions manifest in its bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, its active role in BRICS, G20 and Quad and its pursuit of strategic partnerships contrast with its limited material capabilities. While India presents itself as a counterweight to China, it lacks the economic resources, technological sophistication and military readiness to sustain such a role independently. Moreover, India's foreign policy often oscillates between non-alignment, strategic autonomy and alignment with Western powers, creating ambiguity about its long-term direction. This lack of coherence weakens its ability to shape global developments, reducing it to a reactive rather than proactive actor. The contradiction between ambition and capacity represents another manifestation of systemic breakdown.

Historically, India's democratic credentials, cultural richness and non-aligned foreign policy served as important pillars of soft power. However, the current trajectory of rising authoritarianism, communal tensions and suppression of dissent diminishes India's moral authority on the global stage. Allegations of human rights abuses in Kashmir, discrimination against minorities and curbs on press freedom tarnish its image as the “world's largest democracy.” This erosion of soft power is particularly significant in a multipolar world where states increasingly rely on normative legitimacy alongside material capabilities. A system that loses credibility in its democratic identity risks being marginalized in shaping international narratives. The assertion that “the Indian system is breaking down” reflects the growing incongruence between India's aspirations as a global power and the domestic and external realities it faces. Internally, political centralization, identity-based polarization, economic inequality and federal strains weaken national cohesion. Externally, India's strategic dilemmas, unresolved conflicts with neighbors and inability to match its ambitions with capacities undermine its global standing. In an era of geostrategic realignment marked by U.S.-China rivalry, Russia's reassertion and regional volatility, India's systemic fragilities are becoming more visible. Unless India addresses its internal contradictions, strengthens its democratic institutions and recalibrates its foreign policy with realism, it risks being trapped in a cycle of overextension and underperformance. Thus, while India continues to project itself as a rising power, the evidence suggests that its system is under severe stress.

Briefs

'Status quo won't work anymore'

FROM PAGE 01

while the surge in terrorism has been witnessed during recent years, the swift and decisive response of the Pakistan Army, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies is evident to all. The general highlighted that at least 917 terrorists were killed in over 1,000 intelligence-based operations in 2025 so far in KP, adding that 132 civilians and 311 Pakistan Army soldiers were among 516 martyred during the period. Speaking on the repatriation of Afghan refugees, the military's spokesperson said that Pakistan has hosted "Afghan brothers" for decades, but now the state decided to send them back. "Unfortunately, politics is being done on this issue, and a narrative is being created around it." "A fake and fabricated narrative is being built against the ongoing operations against terrorism and martyrs of Pakistan Army and police are being ridiculed," he noted, while describing it as a "nexus between political and criminal elements." "A person or group that is facilitating Fitna al-Khawarij has three choices – one is to hand over these terrorists to the state, second is to join hands with state institutions in anti-terror operations." "If both of these options do not work, then they [the facilitators] should be ready for action by the state," he added. "This status quo will not work anymore." Responding to a question on the purported airstrikes in Afghanistan's Kabul, the DG ISPR neither admitted or rejected targeting Tahrir-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) chief Noor Wali Mehsud. "We are doing and we will continue to do whatever is necessary for the protection our civilians' lives and properties as well as territorial integrity of Pakistan," he replied. Reaffirming the nation's resolve to eradicate terrorism, the ISPR chief paid tribute to the people of KP for their unwavering courage in the fight against militancy. "The people of KP are bravely fighting terrorism," he said, adding that "the brave sons of the soil have written a glorious history of sacrifice and valour with their blood." Renewing the commitment to uproot terrorism, he said that Pakistan's security forces, along with the nation, remain determined to ensure lasting peace and stability across the country.

Security Forces eliminate 30 Indian...

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the Kharji involved in the heinous incident that occurred in Orakzai District on 7 October, resulting in the Shahadat of brave sons of soil, including Lieutenant Colonel Junaid Tariq and Major Tayyab Rahat, it further said. These successful operations have avenged the heinous act and have brought the main perpetrators to justice. "Sanitization operations are being conducted to hunt and eliminate any other Indian sponsored Kharji found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined and remain steadfast to eradicate and wipe out the menace of Indian sponsored terrorism from the country," the news release said.

Israel begins...

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vehicles were pulling back from forward positions in both Gaza City and Khan Yunis, and displaced Palestinian civilians told AFP that they hoped to return home. Thousands of civilians could be seen by AFP journalists walking along a raised route on Gaza's waterfront, as displaced Palestinians sought to return home after two years of intense fighting. Meanwhile, Baptist Hospital in Gaza City said 19 of them were brought to its morgue from several areas of the city. Quds News also reported that five people were seriously injured when Israeli warplanes struck the Halima al-Saadia School in Jabalia al-Nazla, where displaced families are sheltering.

Djokovic Reaches Shanghai Semis, Vacherot's Dream Run Continues

Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return to Belgium's Zizou Bergs during their quarterfinal men's singles match at the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament in Shanghai

SHANGHAI: Fourth seed Novak Djokovic battled past a spirited Zizou Bergs 6-3, 7-5 on Thursday to reach the Shanghai Masters semifinals for a 10th time, setting up a clash with surprise package and world No. 204 Valentin Vacherot. In challenging conditions, Djokovic was made to work harder than the scoreline suggests by his Belgian opponent, who actually registered more winners than the four-time champion but was undone by unforced errors. "First encounter with Bergs, a great guy. Obviously a lot of firepower in his game. He played a good game," Djokovic said. "Again, I was a little bit too passive. Just very challenging conditions these days for all the players. Just trying to stay alive on the court and glad to overcome this hurdle." In the opening set, Bergs showed remarkable resilience by saving five set points to frustrate Djokovic, before the Serbian finally closed it out with an unreturned serve.

The second set proved even more gruelling, with both players serving well but treating the crowd to breathtaking rallies that left Djokovic hunched over his racquet on several occasions. The highlight came during one extraordinary rally where Djokovic gave Bergs five golden opportunities to seal the point with overhead shots and volleys at the net, only to somehow emerge victorious and bring the crowd to its feet. Djokovic eventually sealed victory on his third



match point, advancing to face Vacherot in what promises to be an intriguing semifinal clash. "Amazing story for him. This tournament has taken out top players of the world... it's really impressive what he's doing," Djokovic said.

Vacherot pulled off a huge upset, stunning 10th seed Holger Rune 2-6 7-6(4) 6-4 to become the second-lowest ranked player ever to reach an ATP Masters semifinal. The Monegasque qualifier's remarkable run will see him crack the top 100 next

week after spending half of last year sidelined with injury, but even playing in Shanghai was a question mark when he arrived.

"I didn't even come as a qualifier, I came as an alternate. I wasn't sure to even play the qualifier," Vacherot said. "Coming back from six months out is always not easy. You cannot just come back and win tournaments right and left. You've just got to fight your way through a little bit."

Vacherot's stunning journey in Shanghai, which now includes wins over four seeds, looked doomed early on as Rune raced through a physically demanding opening set while the underdog felt his "lungs were screaming."

But the tide turned dramatically in the second-set tiebreak when Vacherot produced a stunning backhand crosscourt winner to take a 5-4 lead.

Rune crashed his next shot into the net and could only watch as Vacherot fired a forehand winner down the line on set point to level the match.

Rune struggled physically in the decider, requiring the trainer twice to massage his leg. Vacherot then capitalized to complete a memorable victory in a contest lasting a minute shy of three hours.

"It would mean a lot to play at least one of the guys of the 'Big Three' in my career," Vacherot said on playing Djokovic.

Vacherot's cousin Arthur Rinderknech is also in the quarterfinals, with the Frenchman set to play Felix Auger-Aliassime on Friday. – Agencies

Indonesia Bars Israeli Athletes from World Gymnastics Championships

PARIS: Indonesia has decided not to issue visas to Israeli athletes set to compete at the upcoming World Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Jakarta, following widespread public opposition and the country's long-standing support for Palestine. According to the Associated Press, Senior Minister for Law and Human Rights Yusril Isha Mahendra confirmed the decision on Thursday, stating that it was made in line with President Prabowo Subianto's directives and Indonesia's consistent foreign policy stance.

"The government will not grant visas to Israeli gymnasts who intend to attend the championships," Mahendra said in a video message, adding that the decision reflects Indonesia's condemnation of Israel's

actions in Gaza.

Israel was among 86 nations registered for the World Gymnastics Championships, set to begin on October 19, with its lineup including Olympic gold medalist Artem Dolgopiat. However, participation was already in doubt after Indonesian politicians, Muslim groups, and civil society organizations demanded that the athletes be barred from entering the country. Indonesia's top Islamic body, the MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council), publicly supported the move, calling it a stand for justice and humanity. "By refusing Israeli athletes, we reaffirm that all forms of colonialism must be abolished," said Amirsyah Tambunan, the MUI Secretary General. This is not the first time

Indonesia has taken such a stance. The country was stripped of the FIFA U-20 World Cup in 2023 after refusing to host the Israeli team, a position consistent with its decades-long refusal to host Israeli delegations, dating back to the 1962 Asian Games.

Indonesia's move comes amid growing efforts within the sporting world to draw attention to Israel's genocide in Gaza. Several sporting federations have urged global bodies to take action and bar Israel from international events. For Indonesia, the message is clear: sport is not separate from solidarity. It is a platform where political values and public sentiment converge and Jakarta is making sure that message is heard loud and clear. – Agencies

Mirwaiz welcomes Gaza ceasefire, describes it as a crucial relief for Palestinians

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Friday, hailed the ceasefire in Gaza, welcoming the truce as a monumental and hard-fought relief for the oppressed Palestinian people. According to Kashmir Media Service, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, in a post on X, emphasized that genuine peace can only be achieved when the rights, dignity, and homeland of the people are fully restored. He characterized the ceasefire in Gaza as a vital and long-overdue relief for the beleaguered Palestinian people, who have endured months of brutal slaughter, starvation, and genocide at the hands of Israel. – APP

Jaiswal ton propels India to 220-1 in West Indies Test

NEW DELHI: Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal hit a sparkling century to put India on course for a big total as they reached 220-1 at tea on day one of the second Test against the West Indies on Friday. Jaiswal, who was 111 not out, reached his seventh Test ton and soaked in the applause at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium. The attacking Jaiswal put on an unbeaten 162-run stand with fellow left-hander Sai Sudharsan, batting on 71, as the two made the opposition toil after they elected to bat first. Jaiswal hit pace bowler Jayden Seales for three fours in the first over after lunch to raise his fifty and kept up the attack with regular boundaries. Sudharsan reached his fifty with a boundary off Khary Pierre and survived a dropped catch on 58 by Jomel Warrican at short mid-wicket off Justin Greaves. India started strongly in their bid to sweep the two-match series with KL Rahul and Jaiswal putting on 58 runs for the first wicket. Rahul made a rapid 38 before being stumped by wicket-keeper Tevin Imlach off Warrican's left-arm spin. Rahul had attacked Seales for successive fours, including a rasping cover drive followed by a whip towards the mid-on fence in the first hour of play. Jaiswal's straight drive off pace bowler Anderson Phillip after the first drinks break also delighted the home fans, who are expecting a big win. Spin was introduced in the 15th over, with Pierre bowling his left-arm orthodox on a tidy line and length. Rahul took on Pierre in the next over and came down the track to hit the first six of the match over long-on, but another ambitious attempt in the next over had him walking back. – APP

DG ISPR hints at...

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Political observers say the tone and content of the press conference suggest growing frustration within the security establishment over the KP government's conduct. Some analysts even see the statement as a subtle warning that federal intervention or governor's rule could be considered if the situation fails to improve. The DG ISPR also emphasized that the army had no political agenda but would not tolerate actions or narratives that undermine internal security. His statement, however, is being viewed as a clear indication that the establishment would "prefer any responsible administration other than PTI" in the province. The press conference has sparked intense political debate, with PTI leaders accusing the military of overstepping its constitutional role, while rival parties welcomed the DG ISPR's remarks as "a timely reminder of where responsibility lies."

María Corina of Venzuella...

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Her recognition comes at a pivotal time for Venezuela, where Nicolás Maduro continues to tighten his grip on power amid growing economic hardship and international isolation. Machado, widely viewed as the legitimate leader of the Venezuelan opposition, was prevented from contesting the 2024 presidential elections, despite winning the opposition primaries. In recent years, she has drawn international attention for her steadfast opposition to the Maduro regime. In 2024, she went into hiding after publishing an op-ed in The Wall Street Journal titled "My Country Is Dying, but I Still Have Hope," describing the dangers she and other activists faced. Meanwhile, the decision to award Machado the Nobel Peace Prize came as a surprise to many observers, who had speculated that U.S. President Donald Trump might be in contention for his claimed role in brokering the Gaza ceasefire agreement earlier this year. The committee, however, did not acknowledge Trump in its announcement, focusing instead on grassroots movements and human rights defenders. Political analysts say the choice of Machado sends a strong message in support of democracy movements facing repression worldwide. "This award underscores the global importance of peaceful political resistance," said Lars Peterson, a senior fellow at the Oslo Peace Institute. "It reflects the committee's belief that courage under dictatorship deserves more recognition than transactional diplomacy." Machado has previously been included in BBC's 100 Women (2018) and TIME's 100 Most Influential People (2025). Her Nobel win marks a significant moment for Venezuela's pro-democracy forces, giving renewed visibility to their struggle on the world stage.

Pakistan Cricket Goes Digital with Debut of PCB's Own Streaming Service

KARACHI: In a major step toward modernizing Pakistan cricket's digital presence, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has launched its own online streaming service, PCB LIVE, marking the first time fans will have direct digital access to official PCB content on their preferred devices. The PCB has already begun trials in the UK at live.pcb.com. pk. UK-based fans can register immediately and enjoy live streaming of the Pakistan-South Africa series, starting on 12 October 2025. According to the PCB, a mobile app version of PCB LIVE will also be released later this month, allowing fans to stream matches on their smartphones and smart TVs. PCB had previously announced plans to develop its own OTT streaming service, and this move is part of a broader strategy to bring Pakistan cricket closer to its global fan-base, not just through live coverage of international games, but also via a treasure trove of archival footage, behind-the-scenes content, player interviews, and exclusive documentaries. The platform will feature upcoming marquee events, including the tri-nation series between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as selected domestic tournaments that have rarely been broadcast before. PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi called the launch a "momentous milestone" for the board and for Pakistan cricket fans worldwide. He added that while the streaming service is debuting in the UK, global expansion is already in the pipeline. "No matter where our fans are, PCB LIVE will ensure Pakistan cricket is just a click away," he said. – APP

Sardar Yousaf Criticizes KPK Delay in Earthquake Reconstruction

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Friday expressed deep concern over the slow pace of rehabilitation and reconstruction in Balakot, more than two decades after the devastating 2005 earthquake. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said that despite 20 years, the reconstruction of 216 schools in the earthquake-affected areas remained incomplete. "The roads are still in poor condition, hospitals remain non-functional, and children continue to study without proper school buildings," he said. The minister said that although the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had been tasked with overseeing the re-

habilitation, little progress had been made. "They made tall claims, but the reality is disappointing – three provincial governments have come and gone, yet the people of Balakot are still deprived of basic facilities," he added. He further said that residents of Balakot City were still living in temporary settlements despite the release of funds for the reconstruction project to the provincial government. "It is a matter of great regret that even after receiving the necessary funds, the promised development work has not been completed," Sardar Yousaf said, urging authorities to expedite the completion of schools, roads, and hospitals to provide long-awaited relief to the people. – APP

Imposition of Rs.10.98 mln fine, 4502 FIRs registered against dengue violators

The authorities have taken strict punitive actions against dengue SOPs violations, including 4,502 FIRs filed, 1,859 properties sealed, and issuance of 3,518 challans to a number of domestic and commercial premises during the current year

RAWALPINDI: The District Health Authority (DHA) Rawalpindi has collected fines of Rs. 10.98 million in its efforts of dengue SOPs compliance. The authorities have taken strict punitive actions against dengue SOPs violations, including 4,502 FIRs filed, 1,859 properties sealed, and issuance of 3,518 challans to a number of domestic and commercial premises during the current year. The authority has intensified efforts to curb the spread of dengue. In the last 24 hours, 19 new confirmed cases were detected. The latest data released in this regard shows 908 confirmed cases across the district, whereas 47 patients are currently admitted to hospitals. The hospitals have screened a total of 13,555 patients for dengue symptoms. Vector control teams have inspected over 5.65 million houses and 1.55 million potential breeding spots, uncovering 178,871 positive houses and 24,052 positive spots, leading to the destruction of 202,923 larvae. – APP

Women's World Cup: South Africa beat India in nail-biting fixture

Nadine de Klerk's heroic innings of 84 off 54 powers South Africa to victory over India

VISAKHAPATNAM: South Africa downed India in a thrilling ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 match at the Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Stadium on Thursday. Skipper Laura Wolvaardt's anchoring half-century, coupled with Nadine de Klerk's unbeaten 84, powered South Africa to an enthralling victory over the hosts. Set to chase 252, the Proteas knocked the winning runs on the fifth delivery of the penultimate over, when de Klerk smashed Amanjot Kaur for a massive six over deep mid-wicket, powering her side to their second consecutive victory in the mega event. South Africa, however, had a contrasting start to their innings as they Kaur and Kranti Gaud made early inroads with the ball, reducing them to 18/2 inside six overs. Following the twin setback, experienced all-rounder Marizanne Kapp (20) joined skipper Wolvaardt for an anchoring 39-run partnership for the third wicket before being outfoxed by Sneha Rana in the 14th over. The Proteas then lost two more wickets at regular intervals and were consequently reduced to 81/5 in 19.4 overs. Meanwhile, Wolvaardt remained firm during the collapse and eventually found subtle support at the other end in the form of Chloe Tryon. Wolvaardt and Tryon led the recovery by putting together 61 runs for the sixth-wicket partnership, which culminated with the opener's dismissal in the 36th over. The captain remained the top-scorer with 70 off 111 deliveries, featuring eight fours. Walking out to bat at number eight, de Klerk launched

a counterattack on the Indian bowlers with a swash-buckling half-century and ultimately led South Africa to a hard-earned three-wicket victory with seven balls to spare. The right-handed batter top-scored with an unbeaten 84 off just 54 deliveries, studded with eight fours and five sixes. She was adequately supported by Tryon, who made a handy contribution with a 66-ball 49, featuring five boundaries.



For India, Rana and Gaud took two wickets each, while Shree Charani, Deepti Sharma and Kaur could pick up one apiece. Put into bat first, the home side accumulated 251 runs before getting bowled out in 49.1 overs. India got off to a decent start to their innings, with their opening pair of Smriti Mandhana and Pratika Rawal yielding 55 runs before the former was dismissed by Nonkululeko Mlaba in the 11th over. Mandhana scored 23 off 32 deliveries with the help of one six and a four. Her dismissal sparked a middle-order collapse which saw India lose six more wickets for just 98 runs in 178 deliveries and consequently slipped to 153/7 in 40 overs. Following the slump, wicketkeeper batter Richa Ghosh launched an astounding recovery with a blistering half-century, top-scoring with a 77-ball 94, laced with 11 fours and four sixes. She also shared a crucial 88-run partnership for the eighth wicket with Sneha Rana, who made a handy contribution with a brisk 33 off 24 deliveries until falling victim to Marizanne Kapp in the 48th over.

Chloe Tryon led the bowling charge for South Africa with 3/32 in her 10 overs, followed by Nonkululeko Mlaba, Nadine de Klerk and Kapp with two each, while Tumi Sekhukhune made one strike. The three-wicket victory lifted South Africa to the fourth position in the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 standings as they now have four points in three matches, while India remained third due to superior net run rate. – Agencies

Briefs

S. Korea's
imported
car sale logs
double-digit
growth in Sep

SEOUL: South Korea's imported car sale logged a double-digit growth last month due to strong demand for U.S. electric vehicles and German luxury models, industry data showed Friday.

The number of imported vehicles sold here soared 32.2 percent from a year earlier to 32,834 in September, according to the Korea Automobile Importers & Distributors Association.

For the first nine months of 2025, 225,348 foreign vehicles were sold here, up 15.7 percent compared to the same period of last year.

U.S. automaker Tesla ranked first in terms of automotive sales here among foreign companies by selling 9,069 units last month.

German automaker Mercedes-Benz came next with 6,904 units, followed by German car-maker BMW with 6,610 units, Audi with 1,426 units, Lexus with 1,417 units and Volvo with 1,399 units. The number of European models sold here was 19,551 last month, taking up 59.5 percent of the total. U.S., Japanese and Chinese brands recorded the market shares of 30.0 percent, 7.3 percent and 3.1 percent each. _APP

Magnitude 7.5
earthquake
hits southern
Philippines

MANILA: An offshore earthquake with a magnitude of 7.5 struck Davao Oriental province in the southern Philippines on Friday morning, prompting the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology to issue a tsunami warning for coastal areas in Mindanao.

In a report, the institute said that the quake, which occurred at 9:43 a.m. local time (0143 GMT), struck at a depth of 20 kilometers, approximately 44 kilometers northeast of the municipality of Manay.

The institute initially reported the earthquake's magnitude as 7.6. The institute also strongly advised residents in coastal communities to immediately move to higher ground and stay away from the shore, warning that hazardous tsunami waves of more than 1 meter may impact areas near the epicenter within minutes to hours. "These waves may continue for hours," said the tsunami warning, adding that they may be "more than 1 meter above the normal tides and may be higher on enclosed bays and straits." Local disaster risk reduction offices across Davao Oriental, Davao de Oro, and nearby provinces have been placed on alert status as authorities continue to monitor the situation for possible aftershocks and sea-level changes. _APP

Bold
institutional
reforms to
inspire future
generations

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, stated that the government is implementing groundbreaking reforms across its institutions, aiming to set a lasting example and inspire future generations. He expressed these views while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of award-winning students at PBF International College, Islamabad. Secretary Workers Welfare Fund, Zulfiqar Ahmed, and Director General Radio Pakistan, Saeed Ahmed Sheikh, were also present on the occasion. Speaking at the ceremony, the minister said that the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development is setting new benchmarks across all its affiliated institutions – benchmarks that will inspire others to follow. Chaudhry Salik Hussain emphasized that the nation's hopes rest upon its youth, whose hard work, honesty, and character will shape the country's future.

He lauded the Workers Welfare Fund and its Secretary for playing a key role in promoting education and providing high-quality learning facilities to the children of the working class. He said that through the efforts of the Workers Welfare Fund, students have excelled not only at the national level but have also brought honor to Pakistan internationally. _APP

Azerbaijan, Pak chambers agree to boost bilateral trade ties

During the meeting, Waqar Bakhtawari said that there are vast opportunities for trade between Pakistan and Azerbaijan

DNA

BAKU : The delegation of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry met with the management of Azerbaijan's largest retail business group, BRAVO, in Baku and visited the company's main store. The delegation was led by Chamber President Waqar Bakhtawari, who held detailed discussions on the growing business opportunities between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He particularly briefed the BRAVO management on key Pakistani products such as rice, Himalayan salt, mangoes, citrus fruits, and textiles. BRAVO Directors Zaur Daryav, Garakhan Shirinli, and Vajisi Ben expressed deep interest in Pakistani products and agreed to enhance trade relations between the two countries. It was mutually decided that if BRAVO requires any products from Pakistan or wishes to strengthen business cooperation, the company will directly coordinate through the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce. Similarly, if the Chamber requires any information or assistance regarding



the Azerbaijani market, it will remain in contact with BRAVO to ensure more effective bilateral collaboration.

During the meeting, Waqar Bakhtawari said that there are vast opportunities for trade between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. We aim to build strong connections between major business entities of both countries to further expand bilateral

trade. Pakistani products are globally recognized for their quality, and there is growing demand for them in Azerbaijan. BRAVO Group representatives expressed their willingness to expand business relations with Pakistan, noting potential cooperation in sectors such as agricultural products, salt, and tex-

tiles. It was also agreed to continue mutual cooperation to establish direct business relations between Pakistan's leading retail group D. Watson and BRAVO, in order to promote imports, exports, and trade development between the two friendly nations. The Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce

delegation included Chairman Zafar Bakhtawari, Abid Bakhtawari, Haris Bakhtawari, Yousaf Rajput, Asad Aziz, Malik Shabir Awan, Awais Satti, Nasir Ali Raki, Mohsin Khalid Malik, Rohail Anwar Butt, Umar Khayyam Abbasi, Shumaila Siddiqui, Malik Abdul Aziz, Fatima Hassan, and other distinguished members.

Advancing space tech stressed for sustainable national uplift

Earlier, the minister visited a space exhibition, took part in a symbolic space-walk and planted a sapling at the college

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday highlighted the importance of advancing in space technology to accelerate Pakistan's development pace and equip its youth to meet future challenges. Addressing the closing ceremony of World Space Week at a Model College for Girls, the minister said the government was according special focus to space research as it played a crucial role in national progress, economic growth and global competitiveness. "You will be happy to know that, by the grace of Allah Almighty, next year Pakistan's first astronaut will enter space and participate in experiments aboard China's space station," he informed the participant. He further said that Pakistan's space agency had also been tasked with pursuing a moon mission by 2035. "Ahsan Iqbal noted that civilizations have historically risen through their commitment to knowledge and scientific exploration, and declined when they neglected them." "Whenever Islamic civilization was at its peak – in Baghdad or Muslim Spain – our scholars were the world's leading astrophysicists," he remarked. But when we broke our connection with science and research, we began to decline and became dependent on others for knowledge," he added. Referring to the current global scenario, he said nations that invested in human resource development and technology had gained influence and control. "A country of ten million people has dominated two billion Muslims because it invested in education, science and technology," he observed, calling for renewed focus on research and innovation. He urged students to rekindle their curiosity and passion for discovery. "If we want our young generation to remain hopeful, creative and capable of leading the nation, we must connect them with space exploration," he emphasized. The minister said space research expanded children's intellectual capacity and inspired a culture of inquiry essential for progress. "Space sciences now underpin every field – from communication and defense to climate monitoring – and no country can progress without investing in them," he added. _DNA

FCCI to focus on remote flood-hit areas for relief efforts

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Farooq Yousaf Sheikh said that FCCI in collaboration with welfare organizations would prioritize relief efforts in far-flung flood-affected areas where access by government and private institutions is limited. He was addressing a ceremony to hand over 1,100 ration bags to Maulana Tariq Jamil Foundation (MTJF) for distribution among residents of flood-hit localities along the River Ravi. He lauded the humanitarian work of MTJF and said that business community of Faisalabad has always played a frontline role in assisting victims of natural calamities and this tradition would continue with renewed commitment. He informed that FCCI has already distributed 1,000 ration bags while another 1,100 are being dispatched now for flood-affected families. Chairman Flood Relief Committee Mian Javed Iqbal appreciated ongoing efforts for the rehabilitation of affected farmers including the reconstruction of damaged houses and distribution of seeds and fertilizers to help restore their livelihoods. He stressed the need to focus special attention on those areas where floodwater still remained stagnant along with delay in recovery efforts. He said that FCCI and business community would actively participate in long-term rehabilitation projects and a detailed survey is currently underway to identify needs on the ground. Mian Javed Iqbal also urged the philanthropists and business associations to motivate more donors to come forward. As soon as appeals were made, donations began arriving promptly from across the city, he added. He called upon association office-bearers to encourage their members to contribute generously for relief activities. Former Deputy Chief Officer Hafiza Azmat Firdous praised the historical role of business community in support of refugees after creation of Pakistan in addition to assisting victims of natural disasters. She said that Punjab government with the support of relevant institutions is compiling comprehensive data of flood-affected households to ensure transparency and organization in the rehabilitation process. _DNA

Abu Dhabi govt to participate at GITEX Global

ABU DHABI: The Department of Government Enablement (DGE) will lead Abu Dhabi Government's showcase at GITEX, taking place from 13-17 October at the Dubai World Trade Centre, under the theme 'AI-Native by Design, Community-Driven by Purpose'. This marks the 14th year of participation by Abu Dhabi Government, reinforcing the emirate's commitment to becoming the world's first AI-native government as part of the Abu Dhabi Government Digital Strategy 2025-2027. DGE will coordinate contributions from more than 30 government and academic institutions to deliver an immersive, engaging experience for every visitor. At this year's Abu Dhabi Government Pavilion, 55 projects will highlight the real-world benefits AI is already delivering to millions across the emirate. Highlights will include TAMM 4.0, the latest version of the cross-government super app; Smart Investigator and AI Supervisor by Abu Dhabi Police; and Smart Hotel Check-In by the Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT), which uses facial recognition technology to enable effortless hotel check-in experiences. Ahmed Tamim Hisham Al Kuttab, Chairman of DGE, said: "In Abu Dhabi, we are designing every public service around people's needs. This is central to how we are embracing an AI-native mindset from the ground up. AI-Native by Design, Community-Driven by Purpose means reimagining a government to be more intuitive, personal, and responsive. By working together within a unified government ecosystem, we are shaping a digital future where innovation serves a clear purpose: empowering communities and building a government ready for tomorrow." Many of the projects will be shown in public for the first time. Visitors will also be able to adopt six different VR personas to explore how each is impacting every community in Abu Dhabi, including students, business owners, working parents, international tourists and investors, and government employees. Other project highlights include the Personal AI Recruitment Companion, which streamlines the entire hiring process across government; QMobility's AI-powered parking pilot which allows drivers to park without barriers, tickets, or manual payments; Rayah, by the Department of Education and Knowledge, a mobile app that helps parents track their children's grades, attendance, milestones and activities; and Sahatna's health services which will be among one of four new TAMM Spaces unveiled. Dr Mohamed Al Askar, Director General of TAMM, said: "TAMM's journey over the past year has been nothing short of remarkable. Since the last GITEX, TAMM has grown to more than 1,100 services, a milestone made possible by more than 90 public and private sector partners working together as one. TAMM stands as a testament to what cross-government partnership can achieve, delivering AI-powered services that are more intuitive than ever. This latest version takes that vision further, being smarter, more seamless, and our most ambitious yet." Abu Dhabi Government will set out the next phase of its journey toward an AI-native government, anchored by more than 80 strategic partnerships with global technology partners advancing the emirate's digital ecosystem. Wesam Lootah, Director General at DGE, said: "To date, we have assessed almost 400 AI-powered solutions across Abu Dhabi Government and have now deployed more than 100 of the most impactful, paving the way toward our 2027 vision of becoming the world's first AI native government. These initiatives go beyond efficiency – empowering our public sector workforce to solve complex challenges, anticipate needs, and create greater value for society." Abu Dhabi Government's participation at GITEX 2025 underscores the emirate's commitment to becoming the world's first AI-native government. By showcasing breakthrough projects, unveiling next-generation services, and deepening global partnerships, Abu Dhabi is demonstrating how AI-driven innovation can create a government that is smarter, more human, and future-ready, setting new benchmarks for digital excellence worldwide. _DNA

Plastic pollution treaty not dead in the water

GENEVA: The UN's environment chief insists that a landmark global treaty tackling plastic pollution remains achievable, despite talks twice imploding without agreement, and the chair suddenly resigning this week. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) executive director Inger Andersen told AFP in an exclusive interview that countries were not walking away, regardless of their sharp differences on combating the ever-growing problem, including in the oceans. A large bloc wants bold action such as curbing plastic production, while a smaller clutch of oil-producing states wants to focus more narrowly on waste management. Supposedly final talks in South Korea in 2024 ended without a deal – and a resumed effort in Geneva in August likewise collapsed. Countries voiced anger and despair as the talks unraveled, but said they nonetheless wanted future negotiations. "We left with greater clarity. And no-one has left the table," said Andersen. "No-one has walked away and said, 'this is just too hopeless, we're giving up'. No-one. And all of that, I take courage from." The plastic pollution problem is so ubiquitous that microplastics have been found on the highest mountain peaks, in

the deepest ocean trench and scattered throughout almost every part of the human body. More than 400 million tons of plastic are produced globally each year, half of which is for single-use items. While 15 percent of plastic waste is collected for recycling, only nine percent is actually recycled. Nearly half, or 46 percent, ends up in landfills, while 17 percent is incinerated and 22 percent is mismanaged and becomes litter. Annual production of fossil fuel-based plastics is set to triple by 2060. As things stand, there is no timetable for when further talks might be held, and no countries have made formal offers to host them. But Andersen "absolutely" thinks a deal is within reach. "This is totally doable. We just need to keep at it," she said. UNEP has been shepherding the talks process, which began in 2022. Summarising where countries are at, Andersen said: "The mood music is: 'we're still in the negotiations. We are not walking away. We have our red lines, but we have a better understanding of the others' red lines. And we still want this'." Andersen said Norway and Kenya convened a well-attended meeting at the UN General Assembly in New York last month. The COP30 climate summit in Brazil in

November will provide another opportunity to put the feelers out, ahead of the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi in December. Luis Vayas Valdivieso, Ecuador's ambassador to Britain who chaired the last three of six negotiation rounds, has announced he is stepping down, leaving the process rudderless. Vayas's Geneva draft treaty text was instantly ripped apart by countries in brutal fashion, and while a revised effort gained some traction, the clock ran out. British newspaper The Guardian reported that staff from Andersen's UNEP team held a covert meeting on the last night in Geneva, aimed at coaxing members of civil society groups into pressuring Vayas to quit. "This is a very, very serious allegation," Andersen said. "I did not know and obviously had not asked anyone to do something of this sort." She said the allegation had been referred to the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services. "I've been in this business for 40 years, and I have never, ever done such a thing, and I would never have asked a staff of mine, or anyone else for that matter, to go and have covert meetings and quote my name and ask to undo a seated chair who is elected by member states. It's outrageous. _DNA

Chinese-invested industrial park for boosting industrialization hailed

HARARE: Zimbabwean Vice President Constantino Chiwenga on Thursday commended a Chinese-invested industrial park for enhancing the country's industrialization and modernization drive. Officially opening a conference on mining, engineering, and transport in the second-largest city of Bulawayo, Chiwenga said the Chinese-invested Palm River Energy Metallurgical Special Economic Zone is a strategic project that boosts the country's mineral beneficiation capacity, energy supplies, and job creation. Launched by Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa in February, the project in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland South Province integrates energy production and metallurgical industries. It will be implemented in five phases over 12 years to produce chromium-based materials and coke. "We commend the recent commissioning of strategic projects such as the Palm River Energy Metallurgical Plant. These are milestones that anchor beneficiation and energy self-sufficiency," Chiwenga said. Chiwenga said Zimbabwe is pushing for more local beneficiation of mineral resources to accelerate industrialization and urged miners to move beyond mineral extraction and embed beneficiation and value addition in their operations. "To the investors, both local and international, Zimbabwe remains open for business," he said. "We seek mutual partnerships that ensure the minerals beneath our soil empower all our people."

Mining remains a key sector of Zimbabwe's economy, contributing over 70 percent to the country's export earnings. _APP

UK govt must do 'much more' to explain Palestine Action ban: Labour peer

LONDON: A peer with the UK's ruling Labour Party has demanded that government ministers do "much more" to explain why Palestine Action was banned as a terrorist organization. Harriet Harman, the party's former deputy leader, was speaking after the latest demonstration in London in support of Palestine Action, which saw around 500 people detained. She told the Sky News "Electoral Dysfunction" podcast that the government has a "number of incredibly important duties," including upholding freedom of speech, and that it appears instead to be "arresting octogenarian vicars who are worried about the awful situation in Gaza." The government has to "support and uphold the right to free speech and the right of protest," she said, adding: "People have felt so horrified. We all have about the devastating loss of life and suffering in Gaza. And so it's right that people are allowed to protest." Palestine Action was proscribed in the UK under terrorism legislation after a series of incidents, including a break-in at a Royal Air Force base that saw red paint sprayed on two military aircraft in July. "They've got to actually be much clearer in why Palestine Action is a terrorist group and that they're justified in prescribing them and making them illegal," Harman said. _APP

Refugees in Ethiopia risk losing food aid

ADDIS ABABA: The World Food Programme is on the brink of suspending food aid for millions of refugees in Ethiopia due to cuts in international aid, the UN agency said on Friday.

Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country, hosts many refugees from neighboring Sudan and South Sudan, and also has internally displaced residents fleeing internal conflicts. The director of the program (WFP) in Ethiopia, Zlatan Milisic, said it needed to raise about \$230 million to sustain humanitarian operations for the next six months. "Without immediate new funding, WFP could be forced to completely suspend food assistance for all refugees in Ethiopia in the coming months," he said in a statement. Reductions in foreign humanitarian aid by the United States and other Western countries this year have worsened funding issues in many developing countries. WFP said this month it was forced to cut food rations for 780,000 refugees in 27 camps across Ethiopia. "We are making impossible choices," Milisic said. "These reductions are just another step toward stopping food distributions completely, putting the lives of those we currently assist at risk." _APP

Briefs

Mohsin Naqvi
praises
security
forces

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the security forces for their successful operation against the Fitnah al-Khawarij militants in the Orakzai district, describing it as a significant achievement in the ongoing fight against terrorism.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the minister praised the professionalism and bravery of the security personnel who eliminated Indain-sponsored 30 Khawarij terrorists during the operation.

"The security forces have displayed exemplary skill and dedication by consigning 30 Khawarij terrorists to their ultimate fate," Naqvi said.

He further commended the forces for foiling the terrorists' "nefarious designs" and reaffirmed the government's commitment to eradicating terrorism from every corner of the country.

"The nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in the mission to eliminate terrorism," he added.

Naqvi vowed that elements associated with the Fitnah al-Khawarij would not be allowed to find refuge anywhere in Pakistan. "We will not permit these terrorists to hide or regroup. Pakistan's resolve against terrorism remains unwavering," he said.

The operation in Orakzai marks another decisive step in the country's counterterrorism efforts, reflecting the continued vigilance and resolve of Pakistan's security institutions.

PTI leader
Barrister
Gohar seeks
early hearing

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Barrister Gohar Ali has filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking early hearing of an appeal against a decision of the Peshawar High Court.

In his application, the PTI leader contended that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has already issued the schedule for by-elections on vacant seats of the Senate and National Assembly.

According to the schedule, polling for the Senate seat vacated by Shibli Faraz is set for October 30, while the by-election for the National Assembly seat previously held by Omar Ayub is scheduled for November 23.

The petition stated that the Peshawar High Court had adjourned indefinitely the plea challenging the ECP's disqualification decision, making it essential for the Supreme Court to hear the appeal without delay.

Barrister Gohar requested the apex court to fix the appeal for hearing during judicial week beginning October 13, stating if not heard promptly, the appeal would become ineffective. - APP

Govt committed to strengthen economic ties with Saudi Arabia

Senator Aurangzeb recalled his recent interaction with His Highness Prince Mansour and members of the Saudi delegation at a luncheon hosted by the Prime Minister and reiterated that the Government of Pakistan firmly believes that the private sector must take the lead in driving the country's economic growth, with the government's role being to provide an enabling ecosystem

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, virtually addressed a business session arranged for the visiting Saudi business delegation at the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OICCI) in Karachi today. The event was co-hosted by the OICCI and the Pakistan Business Council (PBC).

While expressing gratitude to the leadership of OICCI and PBC for the invitation, the Minister said he regretted being unable to attend the event in person due to his imminent departure for Washington to participate in the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank.

Sensor Aurangzeb recalled his recent interaction with His Highness Prince Mansour and members of the Saudi delegation at a luncheon hosted by the Prime Minister and reiterated that the Government of Pakistan firmly believes that the private sector must take the lead in driving the country's economic growth, with the government's role being to provide an enabling ecosystem.

Highlighting Pakistan's improving macroeconomic indicators, the Finance Minister stated that macroeconomic stability has been restored, with all three major global rating agencies now aligned

after a gap of several years. He emphasized that stable financing rates, a steady foreign exchange regime, and adequate reserves have helped make capital and profit repatriation routine matters rather than challenges. Referring to the timely repayment of Pakistan's US\$500 million Eurobond on September 30, he remarked that "when there is macroeconomic stability, such events become non-events - there is no drama."

The Minister noted that while progress has been achieved on the stabilization front, the Government is simultaneously pursuing structural reforms in taxation and energy sectors through a consultative process with the private sector. He acknowledged the valuable input from both OICCI and PBC in shaping these reforms.

Sensor Aurangzeb appreciated the strategic partnership developing with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the guidance of His Excellency Al-Tuwaijri and his team, especially in learning from Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and its remarkable success in execution. He underlined that Pakistan looks forward to strengthening export-led growth, identifying it as one of the key constraints and opportunities for sustainable development.

The Finance Minister informed the participants that the Federal Cabinet had, a day earlier, formally approved the historic Security Pact signed

between His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. He termed this development a significant step in deepening the multifaceted ties between the two brotherly countries.

He said Pakistan currently enjoys a unique confluence of favorable factors - macroeconomic stability and positive geopolitical tailwinds - with longstanding partners such as Saudi Arabia, China, and the United States engaging with us on trade and investment, emphasizing that the Saudi delegation's visit is both timely and strategically important in unlocking new avenues of bilateral cooperation.

On the domestic front, Senator Aurangzeb said that the government is finalizing rapid damage assessments following recent floods and will prioritize the use of domestic resources for rescue and relief operations before considering external assistance for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Regarding the ongoing engagement with the International Monetary Fund, the Minister reaffirmed that talks with the IMF mission remain constructive, with only a few outstanding issues, and expressed optimism about reaching a staff-level agreement shortly during his upcoming meetings in Washington.

Addressing His Highness Prince Mansour and the Saudi business delegation, the Finance Min-

ister commended the thought leadership and professionalism of Pakistan's private sector, represented by OICCI and PBC. He noted that the session would highlight key sectors of mutual interest including agriculture, mining, IT, pharmaceuticals, and tourism, while presenting concrete project opportunities.

The Minister also apprised the participants of two major reform tracks being personally led by the Prime Minister on taxation reforms and Pakistan's digital transformation towards a cashless economy. He pointed out that while Pakistan's recorded economy stands at US\$411 billion, nearly half remains undocumented, implying that "the real size of our economy is close to a trillion dollars." He added that digitization and documentation will be pivotal in broadening the tax base and improving fiscal discipline.

Concluding his remarks, Senator Aurangzeb extended his best wishes to His Highness Prince Mansour and the Saudi delegation for their engagements in Karachi and Lahore, and expressed hope for fruitful deliberations and enhanced investment partnerships between the business communities of both countries.

He also looked forward to meeting the Saudi leadership again during the forthcoming Future Investment Initiative (FII) in Riyadh.



ISLAMABAD: Artists are performing during 03 Days Baluchistan Grand Tourism Festival at Lok Versa in Federal Capital. - DNA

Regional politics

India to
reopen its
embassy
in Kabul

India fully committed to sovereignty, territorial integrity of Afghanistan, Jaishankar tells Muttaqi

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India will reopen its embassy in the Afghan capital Kabul that was shut four years ago, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar said on Friday, a significant move that expands the diplomatic links of the country governed by the Taliban. India had closed its embassy in Kabul after the Taliban seized power following the withdrawal of US-led NATO forces in 2021, but opened a small mission a year later to facilitate trade, medical support, and humanitarian aid. About a dozen countries including Paki-

stan, China, Russia, Iran, and Türkiye have embassies operating in Kabul, although Russia is the only country to have formally recognised the Taliban administration.

New Delhi's announcement came as Afghan Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi began talks with Jaishankar on what is the first visit to India by a Taliban leader since 2021. "India is fully committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Afghanistan," Jaishankar told Muttaqi in his opening remarks.

"Closer cooperation between us contributes to your national development, as well as regional stability and resilience," he said, adding that India's "technical mission" in Kabul was being upgraded to an embassy. Jaishankar did not mention a timeline for the change. Muttaqi is on a six-day visit to India aiming to boost ties with New Delhi. Analysts say the trip highlights Taliban efforts to expand engagement with regional powers in a quest for economic relations and eventual diplomatic recognition.

India and Afghanistan have historically had friendly ties, but New Delhi does not recognise the Taliban government. Western diplomats have said the Taliban administration's path to recognition is being stalled by its curbs on women. Talks between the two countries are expected to include discussions on political, economic and trade issues, the Afghan foreign ministry said this week.

Muttaqi's trip was made possible after the UN Security Council Committee temporarily lifted a travel ban on him to allow diplomatic engagements abroad.

PSX fluctuates as IMF talks, US shutdown hit sentiment

KSE-100 Index retreats to intraday low of 162,411.25 points, declining 2,119.55 points, or 1.29%

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The equity market traded range-bound on Friday, posting a mild recovery as investors weighed progress in Pakistan's IMF review talks against renewed geopolitical and ongoing global economic concerns. During intraday trading, PSX benchmark KSE-100 Index touched a high of 165,140.76 points, up 609.96 points, or 0.37%, and retreated to a low of 162,411.25 points, reflecting a decline of 2,119.55 points, or -1.29%, from the previous close of 164,530.8 points. "Stocks are under pressure amid security unrest and geopolit-

ical uncertainty," said Ahsan Mehanti, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities. "Weak global crude oil prices and weak global equities amid fears over the outcome of the US Govt shutdown, US tariffs played a catalyst role in bearish activity at PSX," he added. The US government shutdown entered its third week after senators once again rejected a Republican funding bill, with President Donald Trump ramping up pressure on Democrats as public services remain crippled. The impasse has unsettled global markets, raising concerns about fiscal stability and economic growth in the United States. Back home, unresolved talks between Pakistan and the IMF over a staff-level agreement continued to weigh on sentiment. Sources told The News that disagreements persisted on external financing tables and the release of GCD Assessment report, both key components of the IMF's MEFP.

Pakistan wins IMF praise for programme implementation

Washington-based lender seeks financing assurances as external gap may widen

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Delays in confirming external financing and uncertainty over the release of the Governance and Corruption Diagnostic (GCD) Assessment report have emerged as key hurdles in finalising a staff-level agreement (SLA) between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Of the nine tables under the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP), those concerning the Balance of Payment (BoP) and external financing needs remained unsettled. These tables would now be finalised in the coming week. Thirdly, as flood damage assessments are still evolving, the IMF is awaiting final estimates. This correspondent made all-out efforts to get an official viewpoint, but the Ministry of Finance high-ups preferred to remain silent. However, officials expressed the hope that the outstanding issues would be settled in the coming weeks, allowing an SLA to be reached within the next seven to 15 days if both sides resolve the issues amicably.

Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurang-

zeb had told a select group of reporters on Wednesday evening that talks with the IMF had been productive and that signing the SLA was just a matter of time. The sources said the IMF mission sought confirmation from multilateral and bilateral creditors regarding the BoP and external financing, as the current account deficit may increase further. Interestingly, the IMF issued its statement in the early hours of Friday, following the visiting team's departure from Islamabad. According to the statement issued from Washington, an IMF team, led by Iva Petrova, visited Karachi and Islamabad from September 24 to October 8, to hold discussions on the second review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the first review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). At the conclusion of the discussions, Petrova issued the statement, clarifying that the statements in End-of-Mission press releases convey the preliminary findings of IMF staff teams after a visit to a country. These views are those of the staff alone and do not necessarily represent the views of the IMF's Executive Board. Furthermore, this mission will not lead to a discussion by the Board.

Trump says 'stepping up pressure' to end Ukraine war

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said Thursday that Washington and NATO allies were "stepping up the pressure" to end the war in Ukraine, after his outreach to Russia's Vladimir Putin failed to achieve a ceasefire.

"Yeah, we are stepping up the pressure," Trump said in the Oval Office during a meeting with Finnish President Alexander Stubb when asked by an AFP reporter if he would increase efforts for a deal. "We're stepping it up together. We're all stepping it up. NATO has been great," he added.

Trump this week brokered a peace deal in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, but has said that the war sparked by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine was proving even harder to solve. - APP

Amb.
Mumtaz
Zahra
reaches Paris

PARIS: Ambassador of Pakistan to France, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, has presented her credentials as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Principality of Monaco. The presentation of credentials ceremony was held on 7th October 2025 at the Royal Palace in Monaco.

On arrival at the Royal Palace, Ambassador Baloch reviewed the Compagnie des Carabiniers of the Prince de Monaco before she was escorted to the Salon des Glaces for the formal presentation of her credentials to His Serene Highness, Prince Albert II, Sovereign Prince of Monaco.

After presentation of her letters of credence, Ambassador Baloch presented the warmest greetings of the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan to His Highness Prince Albert. - DNA

Pak deepens regional engagement, strengthens Malaysia ties: FO Spox

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan on Friday said Pakistan continued its proactive diplomatic outreach during the past week, marked by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's successful visit to Malaysia and a series of high-level engagements aimed at promoting peace, trade, and regional cooperation. The Foreign Office Spokesperson made these remarks at his weekly media briefing here at the Foreign Office. Ambassador Khan said that at the invitation of Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif undertook an official visit to Malaysia from October 5 to 7, 2025, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, federal ministers, and senior officials. Upon arrival in Kuala Lumpur, the

Prime Minister was warmly received by his Malaysian counterpart, followed by an official welcome ceremony at Perdana Putra. The two leaders held extensive bilateral talks on October 6, covering trade and investment, defense, education, climate cooperation, and tourism. "The visit marked an important milestone in Pakistan-Malaysia relations," Ambassador Khan noted, adding that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed Malaysia's decision to import halal meat worth 200 million US dollars from Pakistan, which he described as a "landmark step in expanding halal trade partnership."

During the visit, both leaders also launched the Urdu translation of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's book "Script for a Better Malaysia", reflecting shared values of sustainability, inclusivity, and compassion. Ambassador Khan said that the two sides also exchanged views on

major regional and global developments, including the situations in the Middle East and South Asia. In their joint statement, both leaders reaffirmed the importance of regular high-level exchanges and agreed to reconvene the Pakistan-Malaysia Joint Commission at the foreign ministers' level soon. The Spokesperson highlighted that the leaders expressed satisfaction with ongoing defense collaboration under the Joint Committee on Defense Cooperation established in 1997 and agreed to enhance cooperation in defense science, technology, and industry.

Both leaders strongly condemned the ongoing genocide in Gaza and reiterated unwavering support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and for the establishment of an independent and contiguous Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

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