



Islamabad POST

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US mediation to ensure world peace hopes, says Asim Iftikhar

Detailed News On Page-08

No insurgency in Balochistan, says CM Bugti

Detailed News On Page-08



Russia calls Pak, Afghan to show restraint

Detailed News On Page-01



Finance Minister says

Pak sees staff deal on \$1.2 bn IMF payout soon

The mission was on the ground for a couple of weeks, we had very constructive dialogue with them around the quantitative benchmarks, the structural benchmarks, and we've been having some follow-up discussions," Muhammad Aurangzeb told

NEWS DESK / DNA

WASHINGTON: Pakistan is poised to sign a preliminary deal on a review of its loan programme with the International Monetary Fund this week, the country's finance minister said, a key step required to pave the way for another \$1.24 billion payout from the lender. An IMF mission left Pakistan last week without signing a so-called staff level agreement on the second review of the Washington-based lender's \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility and the first one on its \$1.4 billion Resilience and Sustainability Facility agreed in 2024 to shore up the economy after a severe financial crisis. "The mission was on the ground for a couple of weeks, we had very constructive dialogue with them around the quantitative benchmarks, the structural benchmarks, and we've been having some follow-up discussions," Muhammad Aurangzeb told a foreign news agency during an interview on the sidelines of the IMF World Bank annual meeting. "During the course of this week, we're hoping that we can get the SLA done." Countries under IMF lending programmes need to pass regular reviews, which - once signed off by the Fund's executive board, trigger a payment of the next tranche of IMF funding. The IMF programme agreed in September 2024 helped shore up then-cash-strapped Pakistan's \$370 billion economy that was engulfed in an economic crisis with inflation spiralling to record highs, a rapidly depreciating currency and a bulging external deficit. Aurangzeb expected the government would launch a green Panda bond - the first one denominated in Chinese yuan for Pakistan - before year-end and return to international markets next year with a bond

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IMF forecasts Pakistan's inflation rate to hit 6%

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected an increase in Pakistan's inflation rate, forecasting a Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation of 6% for the fiscal year 2025-26. The global lender released its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) on Tuesday, expecting that inflation in the country was likely to increase from 4.5% in FY25 to 6% in the ongoing fiscal year. Globally, inflation is projected to decline to 4.2% in 2025 and to 3.7% in 2026. While the IMF projected global growth to slow down from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.1% in 2026, it kept Pakistan's economic growth unchanged at 3.6% for the ongoing FY2025-26. Meanwhile, the IMF stated that the unemployment rate in Pakistan is projected to decline during the current fiscal year. According to projections, the unemployment rate in the country is likely to come down to 7.5% from last fiscal year's 8%. The IMF, however, stated that its forecasts did not take into account the impact of recent floods, which were still being assessed. Earlier this month, Pakistan apprised the IMF of economic losses to the tune of Rs371 billion in the aftermath of floods.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high-level meeting on Jinnah Complex and Research Center. - DNA

Zelensky to visit Trump in Washington

APP

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Monday he will go to Washington this week to see US President Donald Trump, to discuss air defences and how to put more pressure on Russia. Zelensky said he would join a Ukrainian delegation there holding talks with US politicians and companies, and he hoped to have his meeting with Trump on Friday. Trump confirmed what would be the Ukrainian leader's third visit to the White House since January when a reporter asked if he plans to host Zelensky on Friday. "I think so, yeah," the US president said during a brief fuel stop as he travelled back to Washington from the Middle East.

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Relief for PTI

PHC directs Kundi to administer oath to KP CM-elect

If governor will not administer oath, KP Assembly speaker will have to perform this duty, rules court; PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari urged Governor Faisal Karim Kundi a PPP member to proceed to Peshawar, fulfil his constitutional duties

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Following many twists and turns, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday directed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to administer the oath to Chief Minister-elect Sohail Khan Afridi at 4pm on Wednesday (today). Announcing the reserved verdict, a PHC bench led by Chief Justice SM Attique Shah directed that if the governor fails to administer the oath, KP Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati should do so. Moments before the court's order, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, speaking at an event in Karachi, urged Governor Faisal Karim Kundi - a PPP member - to proceed to Peshawar, fulfil his constitutional duties, and comply with the court's directives.

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JUI F chief offers mediation

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Tuesday offered to mediate between Pakistan and Afghanistan to ease tensions, days after border clashes heightened friction between the two neighbours. On Sunday, 23 Pakistani troops were martyred and 200 Taliban and affiliated terrorists were killed in border clashes following an attack from the Afghan side, according to the military's media wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

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Briefs

PM reaffirms polio-free Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the polio vaccination team in Swat's Matta area, in which a security official was martyred. The prime minister, in a statement, expressed grief over the martyrdom of Levies personnel Abdul Kabeer, who was on duty to safeguard the polio vaccination team. Praying for peace for the martyred soul and patience for the bereaved family, he said that the attack on those serving the important cause of polio eradication was intolerable. "The government is committed to the complete eradication of polio from the country. Despite such resistance from terrorists, the anti-polio campaign continues with full momentum and will go on until the disease is completely eradicated," he resolved. - APP

TLP chief, 20 others booked

RAWALPINDI: The Rawat Police have booked Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) chief Hafiz Saad Hussain Rizvi, 20 other leaders and 35 unidentified persons under the Anti-Terrorism Act and other serious charges for allegedly attacking police and inciting unrest. According to a spokesman for the Rawalpindi Police on Tuesday, the accused blocked a public road in violation of a ban and opened direct fire on the police, spreading fear and panic in the area. He said the case also included sections related to attempt to murder, dacoity and public incitement. The report mentioned that a suspect, Qari Abrar, fired shots that hit a policeman, who escaped unhurt due to his bulletproof jacket, while Qari Danish and others allegedly assaulted another officer and snatched tear-gas shells from him. - APP

Moscow calls for Kabul, Islamabad to show restraint

Exchanges of airstrikes and gunfire have effectively spread across the entire border area, including the Pashtun tribal belt

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia's Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova's comment regarding the escalation on the Afghan-Pakistani border. We have been following with concern the reports of a new escalation along the Afghan-Pakistani border on October 10-11. Kabul and Islamabad have provided differing interpretations of the nature of the clashes and the reasons behind the escalation. Exchanges of airstrikes and gunfire have effectively spread across the entire border area, including the Pashtun tribal belt. There have been casualties among military personnel on both sides. According to the latest information, the situation is now stabilising. We welcome this development. We call on Kabul and Islamabad to exercise restraint and forbearance, and to address any disagreements through political and diplomatic means. We look forward to the resumption of constructive dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan - two countries friendly to Russia - including on counterterrorism and regional security issues.

Iran says Trump's call for peace 'at odds' with US actions

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran on Tuesday said that US President Donald Trump's call for a peace deal with Tehran was inconsistent with Washington's actions, referring to its strikes on Iranian nuclear sites in June. "The desire for peace and dialogue expressed by the US president is at odds with the hostile and criminal behaviour of the United States towards the Iranian people," the foreign ministry said in a statement. In mid-June, Israel launched an unprecedented bombing campaign on Iran, striking nuclear and military facilities as well as residential areas and killing more than 1,000 people. The 12-day war with

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Levies cop shot dead in KP

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: A Levies constable deployed for the security of a polio team was killed when unidentified assailants opened fire on him in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat district on Tuesday, according to the police. The attack comes a day after the government launched a nationwide polio eradication campaign, aiming to vaccinate over 45 million children. A special order was issued for the campaign, with the deployment of 285 police personnel across the country to provide security to the vaccination teams. According to Swat's District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Umar Khan,

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26th Amendment

SC judges debate formation of full court

Senior lawyer Abid Zuberi argues CJP still holds the authority to form full court

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's (SC) Constitutional Bench (CB) on Tuesday engaged in a debate over whether the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) holds the authority to constitute a full court, as hearings continued on petitions challenging the 26th Constitutional Amendment. SC constitutional bench, headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din, heard several petitions filed against the 26th Constitutional Amendment passed by parliament in October 2024. Other members of the bench include Justice Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan. Around three dozen petitioners, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), Lahore High Court Bar Association, Lahore Bar Association, Karachi Bar Association as well as the former seven presidents of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and various individuals in personal capacity, had challenged the validity of the 26th Constitutional Amendment. During the hearing today, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan questioned, "Can the chief justice form a full court consisting of all judges of the constitutional bench?" To which, senior lawyer Abid Zuberi argued that the CJP still holds the authority to form a full court," adding that "directions can be issued for its constitution."

At one point, Justice Ayesha Malik remarked that the committee has the authority to form benches, not a full court. "[The] committee's powers cannot be equated with those of the chief justice," she observed. Justice Jamal Mandokhail observed that "some say Article 191-A should be set aside - but how can it be ignored?" Justice Ayesha Malik remarked that there are already judgments available on this matter. "Benches are to be formed under the Supreme Court Rules," Justice Jamal Mandokhail remarked. Lawyer Abid Zuberi argued that under Order 11 of the Supreme Court Rules,

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Balochistan CM vows eco growth through PPP mode

Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has expressed strong optimism that the province is on the verge of achieving its long-standing goal of becoming polio-free

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to driving economic growth through strategic partnerships with public and private sector institutions.

He made these remarks while chairing a high-level meeting at the Chief Minister's Secretariat, focused on reviewing progress on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) and the development of the Sui Master Plan. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, MD PPL Sikandar Ali Memon, the Provincial Secretary for Energy, and senior officials from relevant departments and Sui gas field projects.

During the session, the Managing Director of PPL presented a comprehensive briefing on the MoU's implementation and the milestones achieved under the Sui Master Plan. Chief Minister Bugti emphasized that Balochistan's natural resources are a public trust, and the benefits must directly reach the local communities, particularly those residing in Sui. He stressed that the government is ensuring maximum local participation in projects related to employment, education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure. Describing the Sui Master Plan as a cornerstone of regional de-

velopment, Sarfraz Bugti highlighted its comprehensive strategy for enhancing local infrastructure, social services, and energy initiatives. The plan aims to foster sustainable and inclusive growth, tailored to the needs of the people. He directed all relevant departments to implement the MoU's targets within the stipulated time-frame, ensuring that public interest remains central to every phase of the project. Reiterating the government's broader vision, the Chief Minister underscored the importance of collaboration with private and public entities to stimulate economic activity. He emphasized the need for transparent resource distribution, vocational training for local youth and creation of employment opportunities for local youth. Sarfraz Bugti expressed optimism that the partnership with PPL would unlock new avenues for economic and social development, not only in Sui but across the entire province of Balochistan. Meanwhile, Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has expressed strong optimism that the province is on the verge of achieving its long-standing goal of becoming polio-free. He expressed these remarks as a coordinated anti-polio campaign officially launched across all 36 districts of Balochistan. In a post shared on X (formerly Twitter), Sarfraz Bugti confirmed that a com-

prehensive and integrated vaccination drive is underway, aimed at protecting every child from the crippling disease. The Chief Minister announced that the campaign aims to administer polio drops to more than 2.6 million children over the next seven days. He emphasized that this effort is a national duty and called for the active participation of parents, teachers, religious scholars, and civil society to ensure no child is left vulnerable. Sarfraz Bugti expressed satisfaction with the province's progress that no polio case has been reported from Balochistan this year. He credited this achievement to the joint efforts of the provincial government, the Health Department, and frontline field workers, whose dedication has kept the virus at bay.

Reaffirming his government's resolve, CM Bugti added "We are determined that the dream of a 'Polio-Free Balochistan' will soon become a reality." He directed all relevant departments to ensure full logistical support for field teams and to guarantee that no child in any district or union council is missed during the campaign. The Chief Minister praised the critical role of field workers, volunteers, religious scholars, and local representatives, noting that their hard work and dedication are propelling Balochistan toward a healthier, polio-free future.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Workers of local administration are busy in removing the containers at D-Chowk after several days of closures in Federal Capital.

Afghans working details in Peshawar Cantonment sent to Centre

PESHAWAR: Details of Afghan nationals working and residing in Peshawar's Cantonment area have been sent to the federal government. The information includes data on Afghan refugees, traders, employees and residents operating in the city's commercial zones. According to sources on Tuesday, detailed records have been compiled for thousands of Afghan refugees involved in various businesses in areas such as Liaqat Bazaar, Khyber Bazaar, Shuba Bazaar, Dabgari Garden, Shafiq Bazaar, and Jinnah Street. The data covers Afghans engaged in the cloth trade and other commercial sectors. In the first phase, preparations have been completed for a possible large-scale operation against illegal Afghan residents across all cantonment areas of the province. Sources indicate that a strict policy has been formulated regarding Afghan refugees living or conducting business in these zones. It said efforts are ongoing across the country to facilitate the repatriation of Afghan nationals. The process has seen varying levels of speed, with some phases progressing rapidly while others face delays. So far, hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees, including men, women and children, have returned to Afghanistan. Authorities indicate that the upcoming phase may involve tougher enforcement measures, following the submission of comprehensive refugee data to the federal government.—APP

Sindh to introduce legislation for poultry sector

KARACHI The Sindh government plans to promote the poultry sector through legislation to make the province self-sufficient in poultry production. This was stated by Sindh Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Muhammad Ali Malkani and Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Public Health Saleem Baloch during an important joint meeting on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Secretary Livestock and Fisheries Kazim Hussain Jatoti, DG Dr Nazir Kalhoro, DG Poultry Dr Munawar

Rana, Director Poultry Dr Kabir Ahmed, Chairman Poultry Association Chaudhry M Ashhad, Senior Vice Chairman Ghulam Khaliq, Lal Bakhsh Kolachi, and other office-bearers from the poultry production sector. Malkani said that the government intends to introduce legislation soon and attract investors to the poultry sector across Sindh. He added that consultations will also be held with the Law Department in this regard. The minister announced the establishment of a Registration Authority that will issue licenses to

investors in all areas of the poultry sector, allowing them to invest across Sindh. He further proposed that the authority should be able to issue licenses to investors within one month. Malkani added that the Poultry Production Act 2025 has been prepared in consultation with stakeholders and with relevant suggestions. After further review by the Law Department, it will be finalized and presented for approval, so that investment opportunities in the poultry sector can be provided as soon as possible.—APP

SBP, SCCI hold seminar to empower women entrepreneurs

SIALKOT: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in collaboration with the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), organized a seminar aimed at promoting financial inclusion and expanding business opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Representatives from the Bank of Punjab and other financial institutions briefed attendees on various schemes, including the "Aasaan Karobar Finance," and offered guidance on business management and accessing finance. SCCI Vice President Salman Sheikh described the initiative as a positive step toward empowering women economically. SBP Chief Manager Waqas Kashif Bajwa stated that the seminar's goal was to raise awareness about banking services and easy loan options available to women-led businesses.—APP

Danyal terms Sharm El-Sheikh agreement historic move

RAWALPINDI: PML-N leader and Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry welcomed the permanent ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel, finalized at an international summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt on October 13, as a positive development for restoring peace in Gaza and opening paths to regional stability, growth, and prosperity. Talking to APP, Barrister Danyal said that the agreement, mediated by President Trump, reflects a historic turning point that ends the genocide in Gaza and delivers hope to the oppressed.—APP

Murad launched tech-based student attendance monitoring

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah, presiding over a meeting regarding the launching ceremony of the Student Attendance Monitoring and Redress System (SAMRS), emphasised the importance of improving education as the foundation of a strong and capable human resource in the province. He instructed the School Education Department to make full use of technology to monitor student attendance, reduce dropout rates, and address causes of absenteeism. The CM directed education officials to ensure that the new system not only identifies absentees but also investigates underlying issues in teaching environments and ensures timely interventions. The meeting at CM House was attended by Minister for Education Syed Sardar Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secre-

tary School Education Zahid Abbasi, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh and others. SAMRS, a landmark initiative of the School Education and Literacy Department (SELD), has been developed under the Sindh Early Learning Enhancement through Classroom Transformation (SELECT) Project. Supported by the Government of Sindh, the World Bank, and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), this system aims to leverage technology for strengthening the education sector. Briefing the meeting, Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah described SAMRS as a technology-driven solution to lower dropout rates by not only addressing absenteeism but also identifying broader issues relating to school environment, teacher performance, and student learning outcomes. Sardar Shah said that the system of-

fers real-time data collection through an offline mobile application and dashboard, recording attendance and key indicators directly from schools daily. Launched initially in 600 schools across 12 districts, the program is intended to cover all schools in Sindh in phases. Syed Sardar Shah called this initiative a pioneering step for Sindh, not just in Pakistan but as a model for the Global South, Africa, and Latin America, where technology is being increasingly used to improve educational systems and support student retention. The provincial launch ceremony, scheduled shortly, will be attended by Ms Bolormaa Amgaabazar, Country Director of the World Bank, along with representatives from global development agencies, local education stakeholders, and delegations from Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan.—DNA

Call for reducing dependence on foreign medicines

Other speakers, including Dr Nabeela Ruhi, Dr Farhat Jabeen, and Dr Ahmad Islam, also addressed the conference

LAHORE :Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir has urged researchers to play their role in addressing Pakistan's public health challenges and reducing the country's reliance on foreign medicines and vaccines. He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the 8th International Conference on Applied Zoology (ICAZ-2025) organized by the Punjab University Institute of Zoology in collaboration with the Applied Zoological Society of Pakistan and Government College University, Faisalabad, at Al-Razi Hall here on Tuesday. The event was attended by PU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Ali, GCUF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Raufi-Azam, Vice Chairperson of the Applied Zoological Society of Pakistan Dr Farhat Jabeen, Director Institute of Zoology Dr Nabeela Ruhi, Organizing Secretary Dr Azhar Rasool, Registrar Dr Ahmad Islam, researchers, scientists, and students. Khawaja Imran Nazir congratulated the organizers for holding an informative and meaningful conference aligned with Pakistan's development needs. He said Pakistan had overcome serious economic challenges and emerged stronger through difficult reforms. The minister noted that the government had prioritized national interest over politics and steered the country toward stability. He said the country's global standing had improved due to effective governance and national unity, adding that the sacrifices of the armed forces had ensured peace and security. He emphasized that the youth of Pakistan are highly capable and must be provided with hope and encouragement. The minister called for promoting a positive image of Pakistan on social media and discouraging negativity. PU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Ali said the conference aimed to provide a dynamic platform for scientists to collaborate on solutions for national challenges, especially in food security, health sciences, and cotton research. He said Pakistan's development and defense were deeply connected with education and knowledge. GCUF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Raufi-Azam highlighted the need for greater research funding, stressing that universities must take the lead in generating new knowledge and fostering academic cooperation. Other speakers, including Dr Nabeela Ruhi, Dr Farhat Jabeen, and Dr Ahmad Islam, also addressed the conference. As part of PU's 144th Founders' Day celebrations, a cake-cutting ceremony was held to mark the occasion.—DNA

Dengue cases rise to 994, polio campaign touches 28% on day 1st

"This high household penetration signals strong team access and operational readiness," Says Dr. Waqar. He said that total of 54,343 missed children were recorded with 28,628 covered on the first day of the drive which makes 53% success regarding the missed cases. During the out-of-house (OOH) strategic drive, 76,656 children in total were vaccinated

RAWALPINDI: A total of 994 confirmed cases for the year so far, have been reported, as per the latest health data. Hospitals across Rawalpindi have screened 14,744 patients for dengue symptoms throughout the year of which, 994 cases have been confirmed, including 22 new cases reported in the last 24 hours. The data released by the District Health Authori-

ty (DHA), currently, 56 confirmed patients are admitted for treatment, but the district reports zero deaths. "Our hospital-based monitoring ensures timely detection and care," said DHA Spokesman, Dr. Waqar while highlighting the importance of community awareness in curbing transmission. A total of 1,361 teams have been deployed since which have inspected

5,723,535 houses and detected 1,81,234 positive houses with potential breeding sites. Moreover, they checked 1,584,783 spots, such as water containers and drains, and have identified identifying 24,514 positive locations and destroying a total of 205,748 larvae. As of the updated data, 4,509 FIRs have been filed, 1,858 premises sealed, 3,521 challans

issued and fines totaling Rs. 10.986 million have been imposed for larva detection and SOP breaches. In a parallel move of polio drops drive, the day 1 performance summary shows out of the targeted 989,924 children, the drive reached 272,696, achieving 28% coverage. The polio teams have reached out to 2,07,427 houses attaining an 88% rate. "This high house-

hold penetration signals strong team access and operational readiness," Says Dr. Waqar. He said that total of 54,343 missed children were recorded with 28,628 covered on the first day of the drive which makes 53% success regarding the missed cases. During the out-of-house (OOH) strategic drive, 76,656 children in total were vaccinated.—APP

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Oct 01/Nigeria
Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea
National Day

Oct 03/Germany
Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea
National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia
Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt
Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda
Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain
National Day

Oct 23/Hungary
National Day

October 24/United Nations
United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania
Armed Forces Day

Oct 26/Austria
National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan
Independence Day

Oct 28/Czech Republic
National Day

Oct 29/Turkey
Republic Day



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PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



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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

Azerbaijan to facilitate ‘Asan Khidmat Markaz’ in Islamabad

The Azerbaijani delegation, representing the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, assured full technical cooperation for the project, including assistance in design and the integration of IT-based service delivery systems

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday met with a delegation of architects and consultants from Baku, Azerbaijan, here, to discuss bilateral cooperation on the establishment of the Asan Khidmat Markaz – a one-stop citizen service centre planned for Islamabad. The discussions focused on areas of mutual interest and potential technical collaboration in designing and implementing the Asan Khidmat Markaz project. Chairman Randhawa said the initiative aligns with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Federal Minister for Interior to enhance service delivery for citizens through modern, efficient, and technology-driven solutions. “The Asan Khidmat Markaz aims to bring all public services under one roof, ensuring convenience, transparency, and efficiency for Islamabad’s residents,” he said. Randhawa confirmed that a suitable site for the centre has already been selected, adding that the project would also support the Government of Pakistan’s cashless economy policy. He noted that advanced technology will be integrated to establish the centre on modern lines. The Azerbaijani delegation, representing the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, assured full technical cooperation for the project, including assistance in design and the integration of IT-based service delivery systems. The delegation appreciated the CDA’s vision for citizen facilitation and expressed readiness to provide expertise and technical support for the project’s construction and implementation. Chairman Randhawa said the project would not only mark a milestone in Pakistan-Azerbaijan relations but also represent a transformative step in improving public service delivery in Islamabad. The meeting was attended by Member Engineering, DG Services, and DG Building Control.

IHC directs CDA to decide C-13 affecttees’ grievances

ISLAMABAD:The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to decide the applications within one month filed by the affecttees of Shah Allah Ditta and C-13 of the capital. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, hearing the case, remarked that the officer who works is worthy, the one who does not should go home. The court rejected the miscellaneous petition to stop the transfer of a deputy commissioner of the CDA involved in the case, expressing its anger over

the lawyer’s request. The lawyer requested that a deputy commissioner involved in the case is being transferred, and the transfer of this officer should be stopped until the final decision is made. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked that you are recommending an officer to the court. It is not the job of the court to recommend any officer. The court has no sympathy for any officer. Why not send the matter to the Prime Minister that you are seeking a recommendation in the court? Justice Mohsin Akhtar said that

if someone is going on deputation, let him go. Don’t talk about such things here. He is a public servant, there is no special feature in an officer. Have you come here for your work or have you come to save the job of an officer, the court asked. The court rejected the miscellaneous application for the transfer of the CDA Deputy Commissioner and directed the CDA to decide on the applications of the C-13 victims within a month and adjourned the hearing of the case till next month.—DNA

Excitement builds as Lok Mela preparations continue

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad is brimming with color and anticipation as preparations for the much-awaited Lok Mela are in full swing at Lok Virsa, promising another grand celebration of Pakistan’s cultural diversity and unity. Organized annually by the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa), the festival brings together artisans, folk musicians, dancers, and performers from every province, transforming the federal capital into a vibrant hub of traditional art, craft, music, and cuisine. Scheduled to take place from November 7 to 16 at Lok Virsa, this year’s Lok Mela invites visitors to ‘celebrate Pakistan’s colors, crafts, and culture—all in one place. According to Lok Virsa’s official announcement, the event will feature captivating cultural pavilions representing Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, along with an expanded international pavilion showcasing global

cultures side by side with Pakistan’s heritage. Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khichi, announced that this year’s Lok Mela will host pavilions from around 12 foreign countries which is twice as many as last year, reflecting the growing international interest in Pakistan’s cultural showcase. He reaffirmed that his ministry would extend all possible support to initiatives that promote the soft image of the country and foster cultural exchange and understanding. Each provincial pavilion will highlight the region’s distinctive traditions through folk performances, handicrafts, and local cuisines. From Punjab’s lively rhythms and Sindh’s intricate ajrak prints to Balochistan’s artistic expressions and the charm of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir, the event will offer visitors a vivid glimpse into Pakistan’s rich cultural tapestry. Beyond cultural displays, the mela will feature musical evenings, storytelling sessions, and interactive craft

workshops, allowing visitors to experience the creative process firsthand. Traditional food stalls will offer an array of regional specialties, giving attendees a true taste of Pakistan’s culinary diversity. Lok Virsa officials said arrangements are being made to ensure a welcoming, family-friendly environment, with special attention to crowd management and security. Since its inception in 1981, Lok Mela has served as a cultural bridge, celebrating the spirit of unity in diversity and promoting Pakistan’s rich folk heritage at home and abroad. The event is expected to draw large crowds, including foreign tourists and culture lovers, eager to experience the colors, crafts, and rhythms that define the essence of Pakistan. As Islamabad gears up for the festivities, the air is already alive with excitement – and soon, the city will once again echo with traditional beats, laughter, and the vibrant spirit of Lok Mela.—APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry talking to Rwandan Ambassador Harerimana Fatou, who called on the Minister at his office. – DNA

Biryani remains one of Capital’s most beloved dish

ISLAMABAD: As the capital’s food scene continues to expand, one thing remains certain – the love for biryani is here to stay. The aromatic rice dish continues to hold a special place in the hearts – and on the plates – of the people of the capital. Despite the growing popularity of fast food and international cuisines, traditional biryani remains one of the city’s most cherished meals. From small roadside stalls to upscale restaurants, the aroma of steaming biryani fills the air across markets and food streets. Some of the most popular destinations for biryani lovers include Al-Naz Biryani in Sector G-6 Aabpara, Chaman Biryani in Blue Area, Biryani Hut in Jinnah Super, Karachi Biryani House in Bani Gala, and Hot n Chilli Chilmam Biryani in Sector F-10. Biryani stalls have also been set up across the capital, offering authentic flavors that attract people from all walks of life. Talking to APP, Aqeel, who has been running a biryani stall for over a decade in Sector G-6, said the dish was traditional and everyone’s favorite. “The demand for biryani exists in all four seasons – it rarely dips, no matter the weather,” he shared, adding that biryani was a profitable business throughout the year. “I strongly recommend this business to anyone wishing to pursue it,” he added. Maryam, a frequent buyer, told APP that she often ordered biryani, calling it one of her all-time favorites “I can eat biryani every single day if it were provided to me – without complaint,” she said with a smile. Residents of all ages agree that biryani offers comfort, flavor, and a sense of togetherness. In conversation with APP, Zarmina, a university student, said that whether it’s a family dinner or an office lunch, biryani is always on the menu. “It’s one of those dishes that brings everyone together – the aroma, the flavors, and the excitement when the lid is lifted just make every gathering special. You can never go wrong with biryani!” she remarked. Food experts believe the dish’s enduring appeal lies in its perfect balance of spice, aroma, and tradition. Culinary writer Amna noted that biryani connects people to their roots. “It’s not just food – it’s a story of heritage and flavor passed down through generations,” she said. According to local delivery services, biryani remains the most frequently ordered dish in the capital, particularly during weekends and festive seasons.—APP

Rs 1.366b to clear PSM retired employees dues

ISLAMABAD: The government has provided funds amounting to Rs 1.366 billion to clear the dues of 411 retired employees of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM). According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the allocated amount covers gratuity, provident fund and leave encashment payments. The disbursement is expected to conclude within the month of October, providing the long-awaited financial relief to the retired employees. According to the documents, 899 employees still remain on PSM’s payroll, with salaries being financed through the government loans to the PSM to sustain operations and maintain essential functions while restructuring of the facility continues. Meanwhile, in an effort to protect this precious state enterprise, the management has intensified its anti-theft campaign, registering 26 FIRs and making multiple arrests linked to copper and other material thefts. The recovered materials will be auctioned off to generate revenue and offset operational losses. —APP

Enabling youth to learn, earn, and lead our mission

ISLAMABAD: In a groundbreaking initiative to equip Pakistan’s youth with digital skills, educational access, and employment opportunities, the Prime Minister’s Digital Youth Hub has emerged as a transformative platform. Launched on March 27, 2025, by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif under the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme (PMYP) led by Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, the Hub provides students, graduates, and young entrepreneurs with a one-stop online gateway to learn, apply, and grow through multiple national youth schemes. It is marking a new era of education-linked empowerment in Pakistan. The Digital Youth Hub serves as a central digital ecosystem, connecting youth to a wide range of opportunities in education, skill development, entrepreneurship, and freelancing. It allows users to access AI-based career guidance, technical training, internships, scholarships, and funding opportunities tailored to their interests and qualifications – all through a single online profile. Applicants can easily visit www.pmyp.gov.pk, register on the Digital Youth Hub, and create a verified dashboard to apply for multiple programs. The process is free and fully digital, ensuring inclusivity for students and young professionals across Pakistan. The platform is open to all Pakistani citizens aged 18 to 35, including university students, diploma holders, freelancers, and graduates. Only a valid CNIC and internet access are required for registration, ensuring accessibility even for youth in underserved areas. Through this portal, young people can access flagship programs such as: Prime Minister’s Youth Skill Development Program (PMYSDP) is providing training in Artificial Intelligence, IT, Green Technology, and Entrepreneurship. Prime Minister’s Laptop Scheme is aiming to enable students to enhance learning through digital access. Youth Business and Agriculture Loans initiated to support young entrepreneurs to start or expand their ventures. National Innovation Awards designed to recognise youth-led innovations in science, technology, and social enterprise. Green Youth Movement looking to encourage participation in environmental and climate resilience projects. E-Rozgar and Freelancing Centers determined to build capacity for remote and digital employment. Internship and Apprenticeship Schemes oriented to connect graduates with hands-on industrial experience. Since its launch, the Digital Youth Hub has received over half a million registrations, underscoring the enthusiasm among Pakistan’s youth to transform their education into opportunity. Using AI-driven analytics, the platform recommends personalized training and job pathways, making it the first of its kind in Pakistan. In an exclusive interview with APP, Chairman PMYP Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said the initiative represents a fundamental shift from traditional education to applied learning. “Education must not stop at degrees, it should translate into opportunity, innovation, and empowerment,” he stated.—APP

Briefs

**Pakistani
handmade
cutlery gains
popularity in
China**

ISLAMABAD: In the first eight months of 2025, Pakistan's handmade cutlery and metal implements have seen a notable surge in demand from China, according to a China Economic Net's report. Exports of tools, implements, cutlery, and similar items made of base metals amounted to \$5.11 million, marking a modest increase of 2% compared to the same period last year, when exports totaled \$5 million, according to the General Administration of Customs. The biggest contributor to this growth is the export of pliers, pincers, tweezers, and similar tools, which saw a significant boost in both volume and value. In 2025, Pakistan shipped 135,191 kg of these tools, worth \$2.44 million. This represents a remarkable 30% increase from the \$1.88 million worth exported in the previous year, signaling growing demand for these products in China's expanding manufacturing and industrial sectors. Furthermore, scissors, tailors' shears, and similar cutting tools have been well-received, with exports reaching \$1.19 million in 2025. While this figure is stable compared to last year's performance, the consistent demand for these precision tools further illustrates the increasing popularity of Pakistani-made cutlery in China. Experts believe the rise in exports can be attributed to the superior craftsmanship of Pakistani artisans, whose handmade products are known for their durability and quality. As China's appetite for premium, handmade metal products continues to grow, Pakistan's cutlery and tools sector is expected to maintain its upward trajectory in the coming years.—APP

**Pakistani
scholar
champions AI-
driven green
transition**

ISLAMABAD: Prof Abdul Rauf, a Pakistani academic at China's Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology highlighted the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in advancing sustainable development and fostering inclusive growth under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at the CRID International Scholars Research Workshop in Nanjing. Addressing an audience of over 70 scholars from 10 countries including Pakistan, Russia, Morocco and Bangladesh, alongside international experts from Chinese institutions, Prof. Abdul Rauf detailed his team's pioneering work in climate-finance modeling at the gathering organized by the Center for Research Innovation and Development (CRID), Gwadar Pro reported. "As a key member of the AI for Sustainable Finance Research Group, we're building dynamic models to simulate climate change impacts on financial markets," explained the Master Supervisor from the School of Management Science and Engineering. "Our TCDF-aligned research helps institutions develop resilience strategies while directing capital toward renewable energy and low-carbon technologies across BRI partner nations." Prof Abdul Rauf presents on Academic Writing and Research in the Era of AI at the CRID International Scholars Research Workshop, photo provided to GP The Pakistani scholar further highlighted China's decade of "dynamic and tremendous progress" in green technology development. "China has demonstrated excellence across technology, AI, and robotics while actively encouraging international collaboration. Our research explores how AI can reduce brown energy consumption and accelerate the transition to sustainable economies." Connecting his academic work to wider development objectives, Prof Abdul Rauf drew on his PhD research on the energy-economy-environment nexus in BRI countries. "The initiative represents a model of shared prosperity that benefits all participants, not just one country. I deeply appreciate this approach to international cooperation.—DNA

ICCI delegation, Sri Lankan HC to enhance eco ties

Ambassador Senevirathne also shared that two direct flights between Karachi and Lahore have already started operations, and work is underway to launch a direct flight from Islamabad in the near future

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), led by Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President ICCI, along with Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG), Tahir Ayub, Senior Vice President ICCI, and Choudhry Irfan, Vice President ICCI, visited the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, H.E. Fred Senevirathne, to extend congratulations on his appointment and discuss avenues for enhancing bilateral economic and trade relations. During the meeting, Ambassador Fred Senevirathne briefed the delegation on Sri Lanka's recent economic and political developments. He noted that the country faced significant challenges following the 2019 Easter bombings, the COVID-19 pandemic, and governance issues, which collectively led to an economic crisis. However, he added that with the new government's anti-corruption measures and economic reforms, Sri Lanka's situation has now stabilized, and its political and economic conditions are improving. The High Commissioner emphasized the need to revitalize the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. He proposed the establishment of secretary-level and ministerial-level dialogues to strengthen cooperation, particularly in the pharmaceutical, agriculture, potato, rice, and cutlery sectors, and to explore new opportunities for trade enhancement. He also encouraged ICCI to organize a business delegation to Sri Lanka, highlighting potential opportunities in the finance, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors. He assured that the Sri Lankan High Commission would facilitate connections between Pakistani and Sri Lankan businesses and promote B2B, cultural, and political ex-



changes. Ambassador Senevirathne also shared that two direct flights between Karachi and Lahore have already started operations, and work is underway to launch a direct flight from Islamabad in the near future. He said this initiative would further strengthen connectivity, tourism, and business relations between the two countries. Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President ICCI, appreciated the High Commissioner's efforts to strengthen bilateral relations and said that both countries have immense potential to expand trade in the agricultural sector, particularly in the export of potatoes and other farm products. He mentioned that Pakistan's economy and stock exchange

are showing positive growth trends and emphasized the need to overcome existing trade barriers for mutual benefit. He also invited the High Commissioner to visit the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to meet Pakistani entrepreneurs and explore joint ventures. Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of UBG, lauded the historic friendship between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, recalling that Sri Lanka was the first country to send its cricket team to Pakistan when international teams had suspended tours. He said this gesture reflected the deep-rooted friendship and mutual trust between the two nations. He further expressed hope that bilateral trade vol-

ume could reach up to USD 1 billion in the near future, emphasizing that both countries should work together more closely to achieve this target. Tahir Ayub, Senior Vice President ICCI, highlighted the importance of strengthening agricultural collaboration and exploring export opportunities. He noted that Pakistan's economy is showing signs of improvement and stressed that both nations can benefit through enhanced trade partnerships. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to further promote bilateral trade, economic cooperation, and cultural ties between Pakistan and Sri Lanka through active engagement of both the public and private sectors.

President highlights rights of visually impaired

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, reiterating the government's commitment to protect the rights of visually impaired persons, urged society's role for their facilitation through considerate acts or accommodations, respecting their independence and by offering assistance and integrating their talents into country's social and economic uplift. The president, in his message on White Cane Safety Day, annually observed on October 15, said that the Day was meant to recognise and celebrate the extraordinary resilience, determination, and spirit of visually impaired persons. "On this White Cane Safety Day, I extend a heartfelt call to action to every citizen, as well as all public and private institutions across Pakistan. I urge you to actively facilitate persons with visual impairments in your daily interactions, whether through simple acts of consideration or more substantial accommodations. Respect their independence and autonomy, recognising that assistance should be offered but never imposed," he remarked. He also called for integrating the remarkable talents and capabilities of visually impaired persons into the social and economic development of the country as their perspectives, skills, and contributions were invaluable assets to collective progress. He said that the white cane, besides being a mere mobility tool, stood as a powerful symbol of courage in the face of adversity, confidence in one's abilities, and self-reliance in navigating a world often designed without consideration for diverse needs. President Zardari said that the instrument also reminded society that a truly civilised and progressive society was measured not by its tallest buildings or strongest economy, but by its commitment to ensuring that every individual, regardless of physical ability, enjoyed the freedom to move safely through their communities and had equal access to opportunities in all spheres of life. He reiterated that the Government of Pakistan, working in close collaboration with various relevant stakeholders, continued to implement strategic measures and initiatives to create a more inclusive society. "We are systematically improving physical accessibility in public spaces, enhancing educational opportunities through specialised programmes and resources, expanding employment prospects through both public sector initiatives and private sector partnerships, and developing facilities that accommodate diverse needs." President Zardari said that the government's efforts were grounded in its firm belief that an inclusive environment and genuine equal opportunities were not merely aspirational goals but essential foundations of a fair, just, and harmonious society. "When we empower all citizens to participate fully in national life, we unlock untapped potential and strengthen the very fabric of our nation," he commented. Calling the term "handicap" very relative from person to person and from one age group to another, he said that no handicap can, or should, be an obstacle to achieving greater individual and collective goals, citing Pakistan's visually impaired diplomat Saima Saleem at the United Nations as a shining example who has made the country proud through her intellect and performance, becoming a true role model for others. "Let us embrace a vision of Pakistan where diversity is celebrated, where barriers, both physical and attitudinal, are systematically dismantled, and where no one is left behind in our journey towards prosperity and national development," the president said and called for building a society with white cane truly standing as an enduring symbol not of limitation, but of confidence, equality, and dignity for all. He said while moving forward with hope and determination, the nation should remember that its strength lies in unity and commitment to uplifting every citizen and concluded his message with the slogan of "Pakistan Zindabaad."—DNA

No compromise on PR drivers' safety, passengers' convenience: Hanif

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Tuesday reaffirmed that there would be no compromise on the safety and comfort of Pakistan Railways' drivers, emphasizing that passenger convenience remained a top government priority. Chairing a meeting to review the performance and ongoing initiatives of the Peshawar Railway Division, the minister also instructed strict monitoring and enforcement against ticketless travel to ensure compliance and transparency. Hanif Abbasi said Pakistan Railways has entered a new era of modernization, transparency, and public service, reiterating the Ministry's commitment to providing safe, clean and comfortable travel facilities for passengers across the country. Divisional Superintendent (DS) Peshawar Furman Ghani gave an online briefing covering key operational areas, including maintenance, anti-encroachment efforts, cleanliness, and passenger amenities. During the briefing, it was highlighted that

train punctuality in the Peshawar Division has reached an impressive 99 percent, reflecting significant operational improvements. The minister was also informed that no complaints regarding bedbugs, mosquitoes, or cockroaches had been received over the past three months, due to a successful fumigation campaign and improved sanitation measures at stations and on trains. Additionally, the DS reported that nine railway stations in the division have been fully converted to solar energy, while the solarization and metering of 1,400 railway quarters have also been completed. Minister Hanif Abbasi appreciated the efforts of the concerned officials and reiterated that the anti-encroachment drive must continue vigorously, with no compromise on the protection of railway land. Expressing satisfaction with the overall performance of the railway divisions, the minister directed that similar detailed briefings be conducted regularly across all divisions.—APP

Prof Dr. Riaz appointed as Int'l advisor to RCPSG

RAWALPINDI: Professor Dr. Riaz Ahmad, a distinguished orthopedic surgeon of Rawalpindi Medical University (RMU) and its allied hospitals, former Dean, and Head of the Departments of Orthopedics, Neurosurgery, and Trauma, has been appointed as International Advisor to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow (RCPSG). Professor Dr. Riaz Ahmad completed his graduation from Rawalpindi Medical University and pursued professional specialization in Pakistan, United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and Singapore, among other countries. He began his career as a Consultant in 1992 and, through his dedication, compassion, and

advanced clinical expertise, has helped thousands of patients recover over the years. Dr. Riaz Ahmad is not only an accomplished surgeon but also a compassionate teacher. As a supervisor for MS and FCPS programs, he has trained numerous post-graduate students. Under his guidance, several research papers have been published and acclaimed nationally and internationally. On this occasion, former Provincial Health Minister of Punjab, Dr. Jamal Nasir, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Professor Dr. Riaz Ahmad. He stated that Dr. Riaz Ahmad is a hardworking, sincere, and highly skilled professional who is a source of pride for the nation. Dr. Jamal Nasir added that this

appointment is an honor not only for Rawalpindi Medical University but for the entire country. He expressed confidence that Dr. Riaz Ahmad will continue to play a vital role in aligning Pakistan's medical institutions with international standards through his visionary leadership. Even after retirement, Professor Dr. Riaz Ahmad remains closely associated with his alma mater. He continues to serve Rawalpindi Medical University as Advisor to the Vice Chancellor, Director of Artificial Intelligence, and Chairman of the Ranking Committee, all on an honorary basis. In recognition of his lifelong contributions, the university awarded him the Lifetime Achievement Award

in 2024. Dr. Riaz Ahmad is among the few Pakistani experts who have brought global recognition to the country through their knowledge, research, and professional excellence. He is also an active member of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, the International College of Surgeons, and AO Trauma. His appointment as International Advisor to the RCPSG marks a significant milestone in strengthening academic, research, and professional collaborations between Pakistan and this prestigious global institution. Professor Dr. Riaz Ahmad has expressed his commitment to creating international opportunities for Pakistani surgeons.—APP

**DG PAA to hold
E-Kachehri
today for
public
complaints**

ISLAMABAD: The Director General (DG) of the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) will hold an E-Kachehri (online public hearing) on Wednesday at the PAA Headquarters in Karachi. The initiative aims to directly address public complaints and improve service delivery across the country's airports. According to a statement issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority, the DG and his team will personally listen to complaints submitted by citizens during the live session. Complainants will have the opportunity to register their issues in real time through the Authority's Facebook page, where the E-Kachehri will be broadcast live. The Authority has advised participants to include their full name, contact number, airport name, and complete details of their complaint. It further encouraged the public to attach any supporting documents to facilitate quick and effective resolution. The PAA added that providing accurate and complete information in the comments section during the live broadcast will help ensure timely redressal of grievances. This initiative reflects the Authority's ongoing commitment to transparency, public engagement and efficient complaint handling within Pakistan's airport network.—APP

**All roads
across Capital
cleared for
traffic**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) announced that all roads across the federal capital have been reopened for traffic flow, following earlier diversions and partial closures. An official told APP on Tuesday that Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Hamzah Humayun confirmed the clearance of all major routes, including Red Zone entry points, Srinagar Highway, Expressway, Jinnah Avenue, Margalla Road, and Faisal Avenue. He said ITP teams worked throughout the day to restore smooth movement across the city. CTO Hamzah appealed to citizens not to create a sudden rush on the roads, saying: "All corridors are now open, but motorists should proceed with patience to avoid unnecessary congestion." He added that the Islamabad Traffic Police remains active round the clock in the service of citizens and continues to facilitate them through advisory broadcasts on FM 92.4 and updates on official platforms.—APP

**Gwadar Free Zones
likely to be exempted
from Dollar conversion**

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar Free Zones are likely to receive a waiver from the existing Foreign Exchange Policy, as the government has formed a high-level committee to exempt both the Gwadar South Free Zone and the Gwadar North Free Zone from the current Foreign Exchange Policy Framework. This significant move will allow all companies operating in the Gwadar Free Zones to directly convert RMB into Pakistani rupees, effectively eliminating the role of the U.S. dollar once and for all, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Tuesday. At present, export-oriented companies—mostly Chinese enterprises—operating in both Gwadar Free Zones must first convert RMB into U.S. dollars, and then convert those dollars into Pakistani rupees for local payments. This double conversion results in two rounds of exchange deductions—first from RMB to dollar, and then from dollar to rupee—causing substantial financial losses to companies in the Gwadar Free Zones. A Gwadar Port Authority official told Gwadar Pro that if the government approves the committee's recommendations, in line with the directions issued by the Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives during the 82nd CPEC Progress Review Meeting held last month regarding the agenda item "Foreign Currency Pilot Project in Gwadar Free Zone," all Chinese companies operating in the Gwadar Free Zones will be able to directly convert RMB into Pakistani rupees. They will no longer be required to convert RMB into U.S. dollars first. "This will eliminate the double conversion process and protect companies from unnecessary financial losses," he added. When asked about the committee's composition, he said it includes representatives from the Gwadar Port Authority, the Ministry of Industries and Production, the CPEC Secretariat, the Federal Board of Revenue, the State Bank of Pakistan, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, the Board of Investment, and the Ministry of Finance.—DNA

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Shehbaz praises Trump at Sharmel-Sheikh: A diplomatic tightrope

Editorial

PRIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif joined U.S. President Donald Trump at a joint press conference on October 13, 2025 during the peace and development summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, where global leaders gathered to witness signing of the Gaza peace deal. The event took an interesting turn when President Trump invited Prime Minister Shehbaz to address the audience a gesture that made Shehbaz Sharif perhaps the only foreign leader to speak on the occasion. During his remarks, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif showered praise on Donald Trump, describing him as “a genuine man of peace” and once again nominating him for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Prime Minister lauded Trump’s “bold leadership and remarkable diplomatic acumen,” crediting him for “achieving what others could not in fostering peace and economic cooperation.” The conference was attended by several world leaders, including British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the Presidents of Türkiye, Indonesia, and representatives from the European Union and the Gulf region. Interestingly, while Trump had invited the Indonesian President to also speak, but he was not available, leaving Shehbaz Sharif as the sole guest from the Muslim world to address the gathering alongside Trump. The Pakistani Prime Minister’s remarks were met with polite applause, but also with raised eyebrows among diplomatic observers. While Shehbaz’s effusive praise may have been intended as a gesture of goodwill and an effort to strengthen ties with Washington under Trump’s renewed global influence, seasoned diplomats view such unrestrained admiration as risky. In diplomacy, balance is often the key. Excessive praise particularly in a multilateral setting can sometimes be interpreted as political alignment or even endorsement of an individual’s policies, which may not always align with Pakistan’s long-term strategic interests. Observers note that diplomacy is rarely about absolute truths or unfettered admiration. It is, rather, an artful balance a calculated blend of truth, tact, and subtlety. In this context, Prime Minister Shehbaz’s unguarded enthusiasm for Trump’s leadership may have crossed a line of diplomatic prudence. Trump, known for his unpredictability, has often shifted positions dramatically from warm praise to sharp criticism depending on his evolving political agenda. This makes any overt alignment with him a potential diplomatic gamble. Should Trump alter his stance toward Pakistan in the future, today’s praise might appear awkward or even politically costly. While the gesture may have earned Pakistan a moment of spotlight and perhaps goodwill in Trump’s circle, experts suggest that measured diplomacy rather than open adulation would have served the country’s interests better.



The doctrine of reciprocity: Pakistan’s emerging deterrence logic

T.M. Awan

The sharper tone of ISPR’s warning must also be understood against the backdrop of India’s evolving political and ideological environment. New Delhi’s increasingly militant rhetoric, amplified by Hindu nationalist influences within its military and political elite, has reinforced Islamabad’s perception that India’s strategic posture is being driven by ideology rather than prudence. Analysts believe that India’s growing diplomatic isolation — particularly in the Middle East and the Global South — has incentivized such aggressive posturing as a means of domestic distraction. For Pakistan, this requires both vigilance and clear signaling — hence the ISPR’s explicit reference...

IN a week defined by regional tension and intensifying rhetoric, Pakistan’s Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) released one of its most assertive statements in recent memory — warning India that any act of aggression would invite an “unrestrained” response. The communiqué, couched in formal diplomatic tone yet brimming with strategic meaning, marks a clear shift in Pakistan’s defense posture — from restraint to deterrence. For years, Pakistan’s national security messaging revolved around the principle of restraint — a deliberate choice to prevent escalation while safeguarding its core interests. The latest ISPR statement, however, re-frames this approach. Restraint, it asserts, is no longer a permanent posture but a conditional response. The statement, responding to “highly provocative” remarks by India’s Defence Minister and senior military leadership, declares, “We shall resolutely respond without any qualms or restraint.” In essence, Pakistan’s new policy signals a transition from restraint to reciprocity. For years, Islamabad exercised strategic patience, attempting to defuse tensions even when provoked. But the new language implies that patience has limits. According to ISPR, India’s “new normal” — cross-border strikes, targeting of urban centers, and exaggerated claims of downing Pakistani aircraft — has redrawn the boundaries of engagement. Under such conditions, Pakistan’s response, the statement emphasizes, will now align with this new normal. This is not merely a restatement of deterrence; it is the formal articulation of a doctrine of reciprocity — “We will respond as you act.”

At the heart of this evolving deterrence framework lies Pakistan’s newly established Rocket Command Force — a specialized arm of the military designed to enhance precision-strike capability through advanced, potentially hypersonic systems. Described as a bridge between conventional and nuclear deterrence, this force provides Pakistan with credible retaliatory options below the nuclear threshold. Operationally, it ensures rapid, high-precision responses to aggression; politically, it reflects modernization and resolve; and strategically, it demonstrates that Pakistan’s security doctrine now extends beyond traditional nuclear deterrence to encompass flexible, high-tech warfare. The sharper tone of ISPR’s warning must also be understood against the backdrop of India’s evolving political and ideological environment. New Delhi’s increasingly militant rhetoric, amplified by Hindu nationalist influences within its military and political elite, has reinforced Islamabad’s perception that India’s strategic posture is being driven by ideology rather than prudence. Analysts believe that India’s growing diplomatic isolation — particularly in the Middle East and the Global South — has incentivized such aggressive posturing as a means of domestic distraction. For Pakistan, this requires both vigilance and clear signaling — hence the ISPR’s explicit reference to “cataclysmic consequences” in the event of renewed hostilities. Yet the statement’s real strength lies not just in what it says, but in what it leaves unsaid. The phrase “by all means necessary” introduces deliberate ambiguity — keeping adversaries uncertain about the

scale and method of Pakistan’s potential response. This echoes the logic of Cold War deterrence, where uncertainty itself served as a stabilizing force. By blurring the line between conventional, cyber, and tactical responses, Pakistan enhances deterrence without explicit escalation. The timing of this warning is equally significant. The Middle East is once again in turmoil — the Gaza war, the interception of the Global Samud Flotilla by Israel, and shifting political winds in Washington and London have all deepened global volatility. As right-wing populism surges across the West — from Donald Trump’s comeback in the U.S. to the rise of Reform UK — multilateral restraint is giving way to unilateral assertiveness. For Islamabad, this means one thing: self-reliant deterrence. The challenge now is balance — demonstrating resolve without risking miscalculation. A doctrine of reciprocity, if mismanaged, can quickly spiral into escalation. Pakistan must therefore complement its strong military signaling with parallel diplomatic engagement, doctrinal clarity, and institutional safeguards. As Pakistan steps into this new strategic phase, its greatest test will be maintaining equilibrium — projecting power without inviting peril. The new normal it defines must not become the next flashpoint. True strength lies not merely in matching aggression, but in managing it — with clarity, confidence, and control. — T.M. Awan is a senior media and strategic communication professional and an international relations scholar. He can be reached at hasilekalaam@gmail.com or on LinkedIn @[tahirmawan](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tahirmawan)

The World’s Failure in Yemen

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



A serious strategy would begin with Aden. The port city, blessed with a natural harbor, has been a logistics hub for centuries. The British recognized its value when they established their presence there in the 19th century. Today, it could serve as the anchor for a renewed international commitment to Yemen’s stability. A U.S. joint base in Aden similar to existing ones in Iraq, Qatar, and Turkey would change the dynamics overnight

THE war in Yemen has become a tragic case study in how international neglect, regional appeasement, and internal divisions can empower an extremist movement. The Houthis not only survived years of conflict but are steadily growing. At the heart of the imbalance is technology. The international community, particularly the United States and its Western allies, has refused to provide anti-Houthi forces with the drones and drone defenses necessary to level the battlefield. Meanwhile, Iran supplies the Houthis with advanced systems. These drones have been used not just against Israel in headline-grabbing attacks but also against Yemeni rivals such as the Southern Transitional Council (STC) arguably the most competent and effective military force resisting the Houthis. The STC governs much of southern Yemen and maintains more legitimacy among locals than Al-Alimi’s Saudi-dependent council. Yet when it comes to military aid, it is starved of the tools it needs. The STC is left buying low-grade commercial drones, none of which can match Houthi systems. To make matters worse, manufacturers often report serial numbers of these purchases to China or the United Nations, creating a paper trail that undermines the very forces fighting on behalf of the “internationally recognized government.” This hypocrisy is glaring. The U.N., in theory, opposes the Houthis. In practice, however, its mechanisms from the Stockholm Agreement to the actions of member states like Iran, China, Russia, and Oman have shielded Houthi supply lines and offered the group international breathing space. The cost of this neglect is visible on the ground.

In Aden, locals whisper that Houthi drones routinely fly over government buildings, conducting surveillance and signaling their ability to strike at will. Even if these flights are not always offensive, they serve as psychological warfare, undermining the already fragile confidence in southern governance. The refusal to provide drone defenses contradicts the rhetoric of Washington, Abu Dhabi, and even Tel Aviv, all of whom regularly declare the Houthis a regional menace. The analogy is simple: doctors warn patients to finish the full course of antibiotics to prevent infection from roaring back stronger. Firefighters know never to extinguish only 90% of a wildfire. Yet when it comes to countering the Houthis, the world seems content to let the flames smolder, ensuring that they flare back more dangerously than before. A serious strategy would begin with Aden. The port city, blessed with a natural harbor, has been a logistics hub for centuries. The British recognized its value when they established their presence there in the 19th century. Today, it could serve as the anchor for a renewed international commitment to Yemen’s stability. A U.S. joint base in Aden similar to existing ones in Iraq, Qatar, and Turkey would change the dynamics overnight. It would provide a platform for drone operations, intelligence sharing, and naval protection in the Bab el-Mandab strait, one of the world’s most critical maritime chokepoints. Just as importantly, it would send an unmistakable message to Saudi Arabia, Oman, and others who continue to play both sides: the Houthis cannot be appeased into moderation. Strengthening the

STC’s coast guard would also pay dividends. It would curb weapons smuggling along the coast and assure local populations that international powers are invested in their security. Unlike other Yemeni factions, the STC has shown openness to cooperation with external partners. Unlike Al-Alimi, it does not derive its legitimacy from Riyadh but from its ability to govern on the ground. What Yemen needs is not another U.N.-sponsored signing ceremony but a concrete shift in how the world addresses the conflict? True peace comes from preparation—strengthening legitimate local forces, cutting off Houthi supply lines, and ensuring that extremist groups cannot use drones to terrorize populations or disrupt shipping lanes. President Donald Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth now face a critical test. If they are serious about defeating the Houthis, they must stop treating Yemen as a side issue and begin investing in practical measures: supplying drones, providing drone defense systems, and establishing a permanent U.S. presence in Aden. Anything less is not just negligence but also an invitation for the Houthis and their Iranian backers to expand their reach. The world has ignored Yemen for too long. However, failure to act decisively now will not just doom Yemenis to continued suffering. It will embolden Iran, destabilize the Red Sea, and threaten one of the world’s most strategic waterways. Peace will not be achieved through empty speeches at the United Nations. It will come only through denying the Houthis the oxygen they thrive on and empowering those willing to fight them effectively.

Briefs

Pak sees staff deal on \$1.2 bn IMF payout soon

FROM PAGE 01

sale of at least \$1 billion, though details were still to be decided. "Euro, dollar, Sukuk, Islam Sukuk - we're keeping our options open," he said. Meanwhile the privatisation push - part of a long-delayed sale of state assets under an economic reform and fiscal stabilisation agenda - was expected to gain traction in the fiscal year to end-June after disappointing results last year. "This is something which is very important as part of our economic roadmap," he said. Pakistan was also making progress on the sale of three power distribution companies and national carrier Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). "We are quite hopeful," Aurangzeb said, citing prospects for qualified bidders for PIA after lucrative routes to Europe and Britain were opened, which made it "a very good proposition for the investors." The transaction would mark the country's first major privatization in about two decades. A previous attempt collapsed last year after a single low-ball offer was received, but the government has since drawn interest from five domestic business groups including Airblue, Lucky Cement, investment firm Arif Habib and military-backed Fauji Fertilizer. Final bids are expected later this year.

Iran says Trump's call for peace...

FROM PAGE 01

Israel, during which the US struck the key nuclear facilities in Iran, detailed high-level nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington. Iran retaliated with missile and drone attacks that killed dozens in Israel. A ceasefire between Iran and Israel has been in place since June 24. During a Monday speech at the Israeli Knesset, Trump said he wanted a peace deal with Iran and that the ball was in Tehran's court for any agreement to come to pass. In its statement, Iran dismissed the call. "How can one attack the residential areas and nuclear facilities of a country in the midst of political negotiations, kill more than 1,000 people including innocent women and children, and then demand peace and friendship?" the foreign ministry asked. Trump also said "nothing would do more good" for the region than for Iran's leaders "to stop threatening their neighbours, quit funding their militant proxies, and finally recognise Israel's right to exist".

SC judges debates formation of full court

FROM PAGE 01

the committee will form benches. However, Justice Mandokhail pointed out that nowhere in these rules is it written that benches will be formed by the chief justice. Meanwhile, the court adjourned the hearing for Wednesday. The tweaks in the constitution, which have since come into effect, require the legislature to pick the chief justice, fixing the top post's tenure, and forming constitutional benches.

- Chief Justice of Pakistan's (CJP) tenure fixed at three years.
- Constitutional benches to be established at the SC and high courts.
- Senior-most judge of each bench to serve as presiding officer.
- Parliamentary committee to nominate new CJP from panel of three most senior judges.
- Committee to propose name to PM, who will then forward it to president for final approval.
- JCP, led by CJP and three others, responsible for appointment of SC judges.
- JCP to monitor judges' performance, report any concerns to Supreme Judicial Council.
- Complete eradication of Riba (interest) from country by January 1, 2028.

Women's World Cup

South Africa defeat Bangladesh by three wickets*Proteas defeat Bangladesh by three wickets to register third consecutive victory*

DNA

VISAKHAPATNAM: South Africa registered their third consecutive victory by defeating Bangladesh in another successful run chase during the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 at Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium, Visakhapatnam, on Monday. A collective bowling effort, followed by half-centuries from Marizanne Kapp and Chloe Tryon, led South Africa to a narrow victory. Chasing a modest 233-run target, the Proteas were made to do hard yards as they eventually knocked the winning runs for the loss of seven wickets and three balls to spare. Leading the way for them was the all-rounder duo of Tryon and Kapp, who smashed vital half-centuries before Nadine de Klerk gave the final touches with an unbeaten 37-run cameo, coming off just 29



deliveries and featuring five boundaries, including a six. Tryon remained the top-scorer for the Proteas, scoring 62 off 69 deliveries, laced with six fours and a six, while Kapp made a

76-ball 51. Earlier, top-order batters Wolvaardt and Anneke Bosch made handy contributions with 31 and 28, respectively. The duo also shared a 55-run partnership for the second

wicket, recovering South Africa from 3/1 in 1.1 overs. Nahida Akter was the pick of the bowlers for Bangladesh, taking two wickets for 44 runs in 9.3 overs, while Rabeya Khan and Fahima

Khatun both struck once. Put into bat first, Bangladesh could accumulate 232/6 in their allotted 50 overs despite half-centuries from Shorna Akter and Sharmin Akhter.

Shorna top-scored for Bangladesh with an unbeaten 51 off just 35 deliveries, laced with three sixes and as many fours, while Sharmin made a cautious 77-ball 50, featuring six fours. Besides them, skipper Nigar Sultana (32) made a notable contribution. Openers Fargana Hoque and Rubya Haider chipped in with 30 and 25, respectively, but conceded a combined 128 deliveries, which eventually barred Bangladesh from amassing a defendable total. For South Africa, Nonkululeko Mlaba picked up two wickets, while de Klerk and Tryon chipped in with one apiece. The three-wicket victory, which marked South Africa's third on the trot, lifted them to the third position in the ICC Women's World Cup standings with six points in four matches, while Bangladesh remained sixth with two points in as many games.

England playing for 'moral' Ashes victory**David Warner predicts Australia will win the Ashes 4-0 because England will only be concerned about a "moral victory"**

NEWS DESK

FORMER Australia opener Warner competed in his final Ashes series in 2023, when his side retained the urn with a 2-2 draw in England. Before the final Test, England batsman Harry Brook suggested that England levelling the series would represent a "moral victory" for his side. Asked whether Australia's playing style or England's Bazball approach would come out on top in next month's series, Warner referenced Brook's comments, saying: "The Australian way, because we're playing for the Ashes and they're playing for a moral victory. 'I think [Australia will win] 4-0. There's going to be a

washout somewhere, generally Sydney. If the captain doesn't play they might win one game." Warner referred to the fitness doubts over Australia skipper Pat Cummins, who faces a race against time to be fit for the first Test in Perth on 21 November. Reports in Australia last week said Cummins had been ruled out of the first Test and was a doubt for the remainder of the series. The 32-year-old has been struggling with a back stress injury and last played a competitive match in July. Though Cummins has resumed running, bowling is yet to feature in his rehabilitation. "I wouldn't put a percentage on it, but I'd say probably less likely than likely, but I've still got a bit

of time," said Cummins. "We get into bowling preparation I think next week, so probably a couple of weeks away before actually putting on the spikes and bowling out on turf. "But it's been a good couple of weeks, each session feels better and better." Australia coach Andrew McDonald said on Friday that Cummins would likely need a minimum of four weeks of bowling preparation to have any chance of featuring in the first Test. Cummins agreed, saying: "You'd want at least probably a month in the nets. "If you play a Test match, you want to make sure you're right to bowl 20 overs in a day and you don't have to really think about it. "So four weeks is pretty

tight. But I think somewhere around that mark." Given Cummins' timeframe, there is also no guarantee he will be fit for the second Test in Brisbane on 4 December. "The first step is trying to kind of give me a shot at being right, and then we'll work it out," said Cummins. Should Cummins miss the first Test, former skipper Steve Smith is likely to captain the side - with Scott Boland stepping in for Cummins in attack.

Australia have held the urn since 2018, while England are without a Test win down under since 2011. England have their own doubts over captain Ben Stokes, who has been troubled with a shoulder injury since the Test series against India. Warner says Australia's chances of winning the series would improve if they avoid antagonising Stokes. "I had the fortunate privilege to share a change room with him when he was younger and he has evolved into a serious cricketer and a fantastic leader," he said. "If we can sort of not poke that bear and get him up and about, I think that will help the Australians enormously."

Belgium loss leaves Wales facing play-off challenge**Matches against Belgium have provided defining moments for Wales and their golden era of the past decade**

DNA

MOST notably, there was the Euro 2016 quarter-final triumph - the greatest night in Welsh football history - and the qualifying win in Cardiff a year earlier. Monday's reunion had the ingredients of another classic but, unfortunately for Wales, their 2015 meeting remains the last time Belgium were defeated in a World Cup or European Championship qualifier. That remarkable 46-game unbeaten run was under threat as Wales exploded out of the blocks, though Belgium soon had things back under control and looked a class apart as they sat back and chose their moments to pick off their desperate opponents. Now, after this 4-2 defeat, Wales' hopes of qualifying automatically for the 2026 World Cup are effectively over. The play-offs will have to suffice, as they did in 2022. Head coach Craig Bellamy was unbeaten after his first eight games in charge but, having lost four of his past five matches, he is starting to face a little more scrutiny. And while Wales are still capable of accomplishing Bellamy's stated aim of getting to next summer's tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico, the route they must take there is looking more convoluted than they would have hoped. "We knew we needed to win. We were here to win," Bellamy said.

Bronze in first England squad since Euro 2025 win**Lucy Bronze has been named in the England squad for this month's friendly matches despite only returning from injury on Sunday**

DNA

IT is the first squad Sarina Wiegman has selected since England won Euro 2025 in July and there are several key players missing because of injury. But Bronze, 33, has recovered from the fractured tibia she played with during Euro 2025 and was a late substitute in Chelsea's 1-0 win over Tottenham on Sunday - her first appearance this season. Captain Leah Williamson is not in the squad because of a knee injury while Chelsea forward Lauren James also misses out with an ankle issue. Williamson and James have yet to play this season as a result of injuries picked up during Euro 2025. Forward Lauren Hemp is also missing after suffering an ankle injury in Manchester City's win over Tottenham on 19 September. Chelsea captain Millie Bright, 32, retired from international football on Monday after winning 88 caps and Wiegman has called up 19-year-old Arsenal centre-back Katie Reid for the first time. Reid's club-mate Taylor Hinds, who joined from Liverpool in the summer, is also included. The 26-year-old had previously switched her allegiances to Jamaica but has not represented them in a competitive fixture and is therefore eligible for the Lionesses. Hinds' featured in a 3-0 friendly defeat by France on 24 October 2024 for Jamaica having previously played for England's youth teams.

IHC extends stay order against auction of 20 playgrounds

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday extended the stay order on the auction of 20 cricket and football grounds in the federal capital. The CDA had issued an advertisement to auction the sports grounds for Rs 50 million, on which the Sports Journalists Association has approached the court. Justice Raja Inaam Ameen Minhas heard the petition wherein the IHC issued notices again to the CDA and the Metropolitan Corporation and sought their response. The petitioner said that the sports grounds are for the common citizens, which the CDA cannot auction for a huge amount. According to the law, the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MC) can take over the management of the sports grounds, not the CDA. - Agencies

Dodgers edge Brewers, Mariners rout Jays in MLB playoffs*Seattle's Julio Rodriguez and Jorge Polanco each smashed three-run home runs to power the Mariners over host Toronto 10-3 earlier Monday for a 2-0 lead in the NLCS with game three on Wednesday in Seattle*

TORONTO: Blake Snell baffled batters for eight innings but the Los Angeles Dodgers nearly squandered his heroic effort before taking a 2-1 victory at Milwaukee on Monday in their Major League Baseball playoff series opener. Snell surrendered only one hit over eight shutout innings. The 32-year-old American left-hander delivered a playoff career high 10 strikeouts with no walks and faced the minimum 24 batters, retiring the last 17 he faced. "If you can 'locate' the fast-ball, it sets everything else up," Snell said. But after Japanese closer Roki Sasaki surrendered a run and loaded the bases in the ninth, it took reliever Blake Treinen striking out Brice Turang with the bases loaded to preserve a tension-packed victory for the defending World Series champions. "I trust Roki. I trust Blake. You've just got to attack the zone better," Snell said. "They had a lot of walks there, had one hit, but those guys are going to figure it out. They're really good."

Freddie Freeman's solo homer to right field in the sixth inning off Brewers reliever Chad Patrick gave the Dodgers a 1-0 lead and Milwaukee closer Abner Uribe's bases-loaded walk to Mookie Betts in the ninth gave the Dodgers the deciding run. The Dodgers seized a 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven National League Championship Series, which continues Tuesday at Milwaukee. The NL champion will face the American League champion, either the Seattle Mariners or Toronto Blue Jays, in the World Series, which begins on October 24. Seattle's Julio Rodriguez and Jorge Polanco each smashed three-run home runs to power the Mariners over host Toronto 10-3 earlier Monday for a 2-0 lead in the NLCS with game three on Wednesday in Seattle. The Dodgers are trying to become the first team to repeat as World Series champion since the New York Yankees won the 1998-2000 crowns. The Brewers, who led MLB with 97 wins this season, reached their only World Series in 1982, losing to St. Louis in seven games. In the ninth, Sasaki walked Isaac Collins and allowed Jake Bauers to bounce a ground-rule double over the centerfield fence. Jackson Chourio's sacrifice fly allowed Collins to score from third and Bauers to reach third. - DNA

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JUI F chief offers mediation

FROM PAGE 01

It said clashes began "on the night of Oct 11/12, 2025, after Afghan Taliban and India-sponsored Fitna-al-Khawarij launched an unprovoked attack on Pakistan, along the Pak-Afghan border." Fitna-al-Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). "In the past, I played a role in reducing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and I can do it now, too," Fazl told reporters in Islamabad. The JUI-F chief, the only Pakistani political leader who has met the Taliban supreme leader, Shaikh Hibatullah, has an influence on the Afghan Taliban. "I have been in contact with the Afghan leadership, and they want to resolve the issues through understanding," the JUI-F chief said. Fazl said that with a ceasefire now in place between Pakistan and Afghanistan, both sides should refrain from blaming each other for the recent hostilities. "Both countries should try to cool things down instead of provoking each other, including on social media," he added.

Zelensky to visit Trump in Washington

FROM PAGE 01

Zelensky highlighted that he had two phone calls with Trump over the weekend, during which they discussed the "challenges" Ukraine faces as Russian strikes target the country's energy infrastructure, and the situation on the battlefield. "We discussed some sensitive issues. That conversation was not enough, even though it was substantive," the Ukrainian leader said, as he hosted a visit to Kyiv by the EU's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas. He said the Ukrainian delegation which has already left for the United States included Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko as well as the heads of his presidential office and of the national security council, and diplomatic representatives. When Zelensky joins them, he said he planned to have more meetings, including with US military companies, senators and congressmen.

Levies cop shot dead in KP

FROM PAGE 01

the martyred Levies constable was performing his duty along with a police team comprising two female health workers. "The workers were administering vaccines inside a house while the constable was standing guard outside when he was attacked," he said. "The assailants fled the scene after the incident." Khan added that police and law enforcement officials had reached the area and launched an investigation. "The area has been cordoned off, and a search operation is underway to arrest the culprits. No anti-state elements will be allowed to sabotage peace in Swat," he said, adding that those involved in the attack would be brought to justice. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the incident and paid tribute to the official who was martyred in the shooting. In a statement, he expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family of the deceased.

PHC directs Kundi...

FROM PAGE 01

The PHC's order came after a petition was filed by the members of the provincial assembly, including the KP Assembly Speaker Swati, under Article 255 of the Constitution, seeking the immediate swearing-in of the new chief executive. The petition urged the court to nominate an alternative authority, such as the speaker or another official, to administer the oath if the governor is unavailable. Speaking to journalists, Kundi - who is currently in Karachi - said that he never refused administering the oath to CM-elect, while affirming that he would reach KP today. "I have requested the Sindh CM for his plane. My response has also been submitted to the high court," he said.

Major champions teeing off as LPGA makes lone annual S. Korea stop this week*The sixth edition of the BMW Ladies Championship will start Thursday at Pine Beach Golf Links in Haenam, some 330 kilometers south of Seoul in South Jeolla Province*

SPORTS DESK

SEOUL: The LPGA Tour will make its annual stop in South Korea this week, with a scenic course on the country's southern coast hosting major champions and home-grown stars over four days. The sixth edition of the BMW Ladies Championship will start Thursday at Pine Beach Golf Links in Haenam, some 330 kilometers south of Seoul in South Jeolla Province. There will be no cut in the 72-hole tournament featuring 78 players, who will vie for the US\$2.3 million purse. The champion will take home \$345,000. This will be the

first edition held at Pine Beach Golf Links, famous for having several greens and tee boxes sitting along the beach and atop seaside cliffs. It has long been regarded as one of the best courses in South Korea thanks to its scenic backdrop and the challenges it presents with sloping fairways and intimidating bunkers. The LPGA and BMW Korea have moved the tournament around the country since the southeastern port city of Busan held the first two editions in 2019 and 2021. The 2020 event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The tournament was held in Wonju, about 85 km east of Seoul, in 2022, before Paju, northwest of Seoul,

hosted the next two editions.

A South Korean player won each of the first two editions, Jang Hana in 2019 and Ko Jin-young in 2021, and then two players of Korean descent, Lydia Ko of New Zealand and Minjee Lee of Australia, were the champions in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Last year, another Australian player, Hannah Green, won for the first time in South Korea. Green is back this week as she tries to become the first repeat champion of the tournament. She is one of three former champions in the field, joined by Lee and Ko Jin-young. Lee, who won the KPMG Women's PGA Championship in June, is also one of four

players with a major title this season, alongside U.S. Women's Open champion Maja Stark, Amundi Evian Championship winner Grace Kim and AIG Women's Open champ Miyu Yamashita. The South Korean contingent, in addition to Ko Jin-young, world No. 18 with two major titles, will feature Kim Hyo-joo, the top-ranked South Korean player at No. 8; Ryu Hae-ran, world No. 12 and the 2023 LPGA Rookie of the Year; and Kim A-lim, the 2020 U.S. Women's Open champion. Kim Hyo-joo, Kim A-lim and Ryu have all won an LPGA tournament this season, while Ko will be seeking her first title since May 2023.

Briefs

80 S Koreans missing in Cambodia scam center row: Seoul

SEOUL: Eighty South Koreans who were possible victims of fake jobs or scam centers were unaccounted for in Cambodia, South Korea's foreign ministry told AFP Tuesday.

A foreign ministry official said that between January and August this year, 330 South Koreans were reported to have gone missing or been held against their will after entering Cambodia.

As of August, "The safety of about 80 people has yet to be verified," a foreign ministry official told AFP.

The ministry added that they are cross-checking the figures with police data at home to avoid overlap.

While there were around 21 cases of kidnapping or confinement involving South Koreans in Cambodia in 2023, the figure jumped tenfold to 221 last year and further surged to fifteenfold as of August, lawmaker Yoon Hui-duk said in a parliamentary hearing.

The recent death of a Korean college student in Cambodia — reportedly kidnapped and tortured by a local crime ring — has shocked South Korea, APP

Gold hits all-time high at Rs 435,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of per tola 24 karat gold reached an all-time high on Tuesday, rising by Rs 6,900 to Rs 435,100 compared to Rs 428,200 on Monday, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 5,916 to Rs 373,028 from Rs 367,112, while 10 grams of 22 karat gold rose to Rs 341,954 from Rs. 336,531 with an increase of Rs 5,423. In the international market, gold prices also strengthened by \$69 to reach at \$4,140 compared to the previous day's \$4,071. Likewise, the price of per tola silver and 10 grams of silver remained unchanged and closed at Rs 5,247 and Rs 4,498, respectively. International silver prices also remained stagnant at \$51.60.—APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 281.15, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 281.16.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.75 and Rs 282.95, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.27 to close at Rs 324.89 against the last day's closing of Rs 326.16, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.84, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound decreased by Rs 1.82 to close at Rs 373.05, compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 374.87.—APP

PSX turns bullish, gains 7,032 points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 7,032.60 points, a positive change of 4.44 percent, closing at 165,476.02 points against 158,443.42 points last trading day. A total of 1,179,987,121 shares were traded during the day as compared to 1,365,703,374 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 59.201 billion against Rs 62.465 billion on the last trading day. As many as 483 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 391 of them recorded gains and 69 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 100,722,438 shares at Rs 34.63 per share, PTCL with 79,832,584 shares at Rs37.05 per share and Pace (Pak) Limited with 74,773,664 shares at Rs 18.60 per share.—APP

Finance minister applauds US tariff deal negotiation success

the Finance Minister briefed the Treasury officials about the legislation to regulate virtual assets in Pakistan. He also invited US companies to invest in the oil & gas, mineral, agriculture and IT sectors in Pakistan

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has welcomed successful negotiations with the US administration leading to a tariff deal.

He expressed these sentiments during a meeting Mr. Robert Kaproth, Assistant US Treasury Secretary for International Finance and Counselor Jonathan Greenstein here in Washington D.C., where he has arrived to attend the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB).

During the meeting, the Finance Minister highlighted strong economic fundamentals of the country underpinned by the IMF programme. He briefed the Treasury officials about the legislation to regulate virtual assets in Pakistan. He also invited US companies to invest in the oil & gas, mineral, agriculture and IT sectors in Pakistan. Later in the day, Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb was hosted by the leadership and members of the US-Pakistan Business Council. Speaking on the occasion, the Finance Minister briefed the participants about improvements in the macroeconomic indicators of Pakistan. He also underlined that the private sector has to lead the country. The Finance Minister reiterated that the Government of Pakistan was conscious of the challenges being faced by the businesses and working to provide maximum relief. He highlighted the trade deal negotiated with the US authorities, saying he looked forward to enhanced G2G and B2B engagements with US companies in priority sectors including mines & minerals, agriculture, IT, and pharmaceuticals. He concluded the session with a Q&A assuring to address the genuine concerns raised. Meanwhile, Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb met with representatives of Citi Bank. During the meeting, the Minister acknowledged Citi's long-standing partnership with Pakistan and appreciated its continued engagement. He also provided an overview of Pakistan's stabilizing macroeconomic indicators driven by ongoing structural reforms, validated by all international credit rating agencies. He further highlighted Pakistan's emergence as a growing hub for digital innovation and financial services. Assured that Government would review all proposals presented by the Bank. Earlier, the Finance Minister began his official engagements of the day



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with a meeting with Mr. Riccardo Puliti, Regional Vice President, IFC for the Middle East, Central Asia, Türkiye, Afghanistan & Pakistan. During the meeting, the Minister highlighted strong macroeconomic indicators of the country. Senator Aurangzeb appreciated IFC's partnership with Pakistan, its role in scaling up private sector investment including through multi-billion-dollar investments in support of the 10-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF). He agreed to achieve early financial closure of the IFC's flagship Reko Diq project. He also welcomed the new regional set-up of IFC with a regional office in Islamabad. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb also

held a productive meeting with Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al-Jasser, President, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). The Minister thanked the Bank for its longstanding assistance and support to Pakistan. He reviewed the current portfolio of the Bank projects in Pakistan and underscored the importance of faster project implementation. Minister Aurangzeb thanked the President IsDB for IsDB board approval of financing of two sections of M-6. He said he looked forward to a continued cooperation in polio eradication efforts of Pakistan and Oil financing facility. Both sides agreed on the need to have a new Country Engagement Framework for Pakistan (CEF).

Embattled French PM faces opponents in parliament

PARIS: Embattled French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu was preparing to give a high-stakes speech to a divided parliament on Tuesday, with two parties already trying to topple his government. France, the eurozone's second-largest economy, is in a political crisis that has spooked markets and raised concern about its minority government's ability to govern and pass measures to ease the country's debt burden. After a week of drama that saw Lecornu resign only to be re-appointed days later, the 39-year-old prime minister has urged his new cabinet to do everything to help France overcome the deadlock. Lecornu was on Tuesday morning meeting Macron, who has returned from a summit in Egypt aiming to find an end to the Gaza war. All eyes will be on Lecornu from 1300 GMT when he gives his policy speech in parliament, where opponents have threatened to vote his cabinet out. The hard-left France Unbowed party and far-right National Rally have already filed motions to topple Lecornu's new cabinet. The Socialists have said they will not back the motions, giving them little chance of succeeding, but will file their own motion if Lecornu does not immediately suspend a reform that raised the retirement age from 62 to 64. The reform, which the government forced through parliament without a vote in 2023, sparked months of angry protests. In a bid to gain opposition backing, Lecornu earlier this month promised not to use that measure, and allow all bills to be debated in the lower house. But Lecornu, the seventh prime minister of Macron's mandate, has also said his priority was to get a budget approved by the end of the year. Lecornu told his new cabinet on Monday he was counting on them to "show the utmost restraint and humility". "Service is something that requires putting egos aside," said Lecornu. Lecornu's two immediate predecessors were ousted in a standoff over an austerity budget, and his immediate task is to put together a 2026 budget plan. The new cabinet is expected to present a draft budget on Tuesday that aims for a deficit below five percent of GDP, according to government spokesperson Maud Bregeon. The government must give parliament the constitutionally required 70 days to scrutinise the plan before the end of the year. Macron has come under unprecedented pressure in recent days. Some opposition leaders are urging him to call snap elections or resign, and even key allies such as former prime minister Edouard Philippe have distanced themselves from the 47-year-old president. Macron sought to shift all responsibility for the turmoil to political rivals as he travelled to Egypt on Monday, saying those who had sought to destabilise Lecornu were "solely responsible for this chaos". "It is everyone's duty to work towards stability," he said. France has been locked in political deadlock ever since Macron gambled on snap elections in the summer last year. He had hoped the polls would consolidate his power, but they instead ended up in a hung parliament, with the National Rally gaining ground and becoming the chamber's single largest party. The far right senses its strongest chance to seize power in the 2027 presidential elections, when Macron's second and last term runs out.—APP

From vision to action PPRA drives procurement reform

ISLAMABAD: Aligned with the Prime Minister's vision for transparency, efficiency, and good governance, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), under the leadership of Managing Director Hasnat Ahmed Qureshi, has transformed the country's public procurement landscape by implementing an e-procurement system, introducing regulatory reforms, and launching a robust capacity-building program for procurement professionals. In a media briefing here, Qureshi highlighted the global significance of procurement reform, noting that public procurement accounts for 15–20% of GDP in developing countries, with global procurement valued at approximately \$13 trillion. "Manual procurement systems are prone to inefficiencies and leakages, whereas e-Procurement offers savings of up to 25%, as reported by the Asian Development Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development", he added. At the heart of PPRA's digital transformation is the implementation of the e-Pakistan Acquisition and Disposal System (EPADS), a fully digitized platform that offers free supplier registration, real-time alerts, customized bidding documents, dynamic bid evaluation, and end-to-end digitization of procurement processes. "Since its launch in March 2023, EPADS has been rolled out across 9,314 federal and provincial procuring agencies, including key ministries.—APP

Argentina ready to share expertise in food security

LAHORE: Ambassador of Argentina Sebastian Sayus has said that Argentina is ready to share its expertise in agriculture, livestock and food security "Our goal is to help Pakistan strengthen its production capacity, storage systems and overall food chain," he stated this while talking to business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday. LCCI President Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol, Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, Mrs. Erica Lucero and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Argentina's also spoke on the occasion. LCCI Executive Committee Members Firdous Nisar, Amir Ali, Irfan Ahmad Qureshi, Asif Malik, Ali Imran, Shouban Akhter, Ahad Amin Malik, former EC Member Sheikh Sajjad Afzal and Imran Asghar were also attended the meeting. The Ambassador said that Argentina and Pakistan enjoy a relationship built on friendship and mutual respect. Argentina is committed to take this partnership to new heights through deeper cooperation in trade, culture and technology. "We are launching discussions on a pilot project for modern grain silos, which will help enhance Pakistan's storage capacity and reduce post-harvest losses, the Ambassador added. He said that technical cooperation in biotechnology and agricultural innovation can transform both our economies and create new opportunities for our farmers and industries. He said that there is a great potential for collaboration in information technology and industrial development, areas where Argentina has made remarkable progress. He said that Argentina is a reliable partner for Pakistan in sectors like meat processing, agriculture machinery, sports goods and surgical instruments, all of which hold great promise for bilateral trade." LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said, "I am a sports lover and a great admirer of Maradona and Messi, who played a pivotal role in making Argentina the World Champion in football more than once." He said that we are well aware of the importance of Argentina as one of the largest economies in Latin America with a GDP of over 630 billion dollars — according to the World Bank. Argentina is known for its vast natural resources in energy and agriculture. He said that both countries are not just maintaining good diplomatic relations, but they are also regular trading partners. I pin great hopes on today's meeting with regard to opening new avenues for business partnerships and investment collaboration. "As per figures taken from State Bank of Pakistan, the volume of total bilateral trade reached 394 million dollars in 2024-25. Pakistan's exports to Argentina were almost 51 million dollars while imports were worth 343 million dollars. The balance of trade is in favour of Argentina, however, we are keen to increase the volume of exports so that both countries may benefit out of international trade", Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol said.—DNA

Pak, Vietnam initiate negotiations on PTA with pledge to deepen bilateral coop

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Vietnam on Tuesday officially signed and launched negotiations on a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) aimed at strengthening trade, investment and economic cooperation between the two countries. The announcement and signing took place during a high-level bilateral meeting and the Pakistan–Vietnam Business Forum, held in Islamabad, co-chaired by Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Vietnam's Minister of Industry and Trade Nguyen Hong Di n, according to a news release. The Business Forum was attended by Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Hussain Magsi, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Industries Rana Tanveer Hussain, and Nawabzada Mir Zarain Khan Magsi, Parliamentary Secretary for Culture and Tourism, along with senior officials, diplomats, and leading members of the business communities from both sides. In his address, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal welcomed the Vietnamese Minister and delegation, terming their visit as a reflection of the shared resolve of both nations to transform their longstanding friendship into a robust and future-oriented economic partnership. He noted that Pakistan and Vietnam enjoyed cordial relations built on mutual respect, political understanding, and people-to-people linkages, and that the Business Forum represented a major step forward in

expanding commercial and investment cooperation. Jam Kamal highlighted that although bilateral trade between Pakistan and Vietnam has shown steady progress, it has remained below its potential. He identified promising areas for collaboration, including textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, food processing, fisheries, construction materials, and information technology, urging the business communities to take full advantage of these opportunities. The most significant outcome of the event was the formal signing of the Joint Statement on the Launch of Pakistan–Vietnam PTA Negotiations by both ministers. The signing marked a historic milestone in bilateral trade relations and set in motion a structured process to agree by the end of 2025. The PTA would provide a comprehensive framework to enhance market access, diversify trade baskets, and remove tariff and non-tariff barriers. It is expected to foster a balanced and mutually beneficial trading partnership, boosting competitiveness and export potential for both economies. Nguyen Hong Di n welcomed the initiative, emphasizing that the PTA would diversify export markets, strengthen resilience against global economic challenges, and create new opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth. He underscored the importance of conducting negotiations transparently and ensuring balanced benefits for both countries. Jam Kamal encouraged the private sectors of both nations to view each other as long-term collaborators rather than short-term

trading partners, highlighting Pakistan's strategic location, enabling business environment, and young, skilled workforce as key strengths. He invited Vietnamese investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for joint ventures, manufacturing partnerships, and re-exports. Both sides also agreed to enhance connectivity and people-to-people linkages, including the establishment of direct flight routes between Pakistan and Vietnam to promote trade, tourism, and business travel. They also discussed improved visa facilitation for citizens of both countries to encourage greater mobility of entrepreneurs and tourists. Highlighting the shared cultural and spiritual heritage, Minister Jam Kamal spoke about the potential for religious and cultural tourism, particularly in relation to Pakistan's Gandhara and Taxila civilizations, which are home to some of the most sacred Buddhist heritage sites in the world. The Vietnamese Minister acknowledged Pakistan's efforts in promoting Buddhist tourism and termed pilgrimages to these sites as journeys to the spiritual roots of the Buddhist faith. Referring to Vietnam's remarkable economic transformation, Jam Kamal stated that Pakistan sought to learn from Vietnam's success in value-added manufacturing, industrial modernization, and trade facilitation, applying those lessons to expand its own export base.—Agencies

Pope urges Italy to remain open to migrants

ROME: Pope Leo XIV thanked Italy on Tuesday for its efforts to combat human trafficking but urged the country to remain open to welcoming and integrating migrants as he took part in a pomp-filled meeting with the Italian president.

Leo completed the rite of passage for every new pope by traveling across Rome to the Quirinale Palace for a meeting with President Sergio Mattarella. Escorted by the presidential horse honor guard into the palace courtyard, Leo thanked Italy especially for its welcome of pilgrims during the 2025 Holy Year, which has seen millions of extra tourists pouring into the Eternal City.

Wearing his formal red cape and brocade stole, Leo thanked Italy for its "generous assistance" to migrants and its efforts to combat human trafficking.

"I encourage you to keep alive your attitude of openness and solidarity," he said. "At the same time, I wish to emphasize the importance of constructive integration of newcomers into the values and traditions of Italian society, so that the mutual gift realized in this encounter of peoples may truly enrich and benefit all."

It was a reference to Italy's role at ground zero in Europe's migration debate, given its proximity to North Africa — making it the preferred destination for smuggling operations setting off from Libya and Tunisia.

The right-wing government of Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni has made cracking down on illegal migration a priority, including by sending migrants back home or to detention facilities in Albania and prosecuting alleged smugglers. Meloni and her hard-line minister Matteo Salvini were in the front row of the audience, held in a gilded reception room of the palace with extra-tall palace guards standing at attention.—APP

North Macedonia nightclub fire toll rises to 63

SKOPJE: The death toll from a North Macedonia nightclub fire rose to 63 on Tuesday, when a musician died of his injuries almost seven months after the blaze, the country's prosecutor said. Vladimir Blazev-Panco, a 46-year-old singer with the band DNK, died in Skopje early in the day after being hospitalized due to serious injuries, the prosecutor confirmed. On March 16, a fire at a hip-hop concert in the eastern town of Kocani triggered a stampede in the overcrowded nightclub, leaving dozens dead and injuring nearly 200. Eight musicians from the band were among the victims of the club fire that caused shock in the small Balkan country. The blaze was sparked by fireworks in the venue.

Prosecutors alleged the club met almost no safety standards.—APP

Western govts waging sustained attack on right to protest: Study

LONDON: Western governments are waging a sustained attack against the right to protest, the International Federation for Human Rights has warned, citing the growing criminalization of pro-Palestine demonstrations. Governments in the UK, US, France and Germany have "weaponized" domestic counterterrorism legislation and fears of antisemitism to suppress public anger over the Gaza war, the study found, drawing on open-source research, eyewitness testimonies and reports from international organizations. "This trend reflects a worrying shift towards the normalization of exceptional measures in dealing with dissenting voices," said Yosra Fawes, head of the Maghreb and Middle East desk at FIDH. The study, which was conducted between October 2023 and September 2025, highlights concerns over the censorship of elected politicians, violations of media rights, and the silencing of civil society and academic freedom in the four major Western countries.—APP

Briefs

Defence minister slams Afghanistan's mixed stance

Khawaja Asif says a state has right to respond when it is attacked

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Monday criticised the Taliban-led Interim Afghan Government's mixed approach of issuing threats and, on the other hand, calling for talks. Asif's remarks come against the backdrop of heightened tensions along the frontier and follow a series of cross-border incidents. In the border skirmishes, Pakistani forces killed more than 200 Afghan Taliban and affiliated terrorists in self-defence action responding to an unprovoked overnight attack by the Taliban forces and India-backed terrorists, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. Speaking on Geo News' programme "Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Sath", Asif questioned Kabul's credibility following its foreign minister's statement amid the recent Pakistan-Afghanistan escalation.

The defence czar said a state has the right to respond when it is attacked and insisted that Pakistan did not target civilian populations but instead destroyed militant hideouts and sanctuaries. He warned that Afghanistan's soil has become a haven for various terrorist organisations. The minister stressed that safeguarding the country's borders is a federal responsibility, not a provincial one, though he welcomed cooperation from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government if it wished to assist.

Mohsin Naqvi condemns firing incident

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the recent firing incident in which Levies of ficer Abdul Kabir embraced martyrdom while performing his duty. Expressing deep sorrow over the tragic loss, the minister paid glowing tribute to the martyred officer for his courage, dedication, and commitment to protecting the nation. In his statement, Minister Naqvi said that Levies of ficer Abdul Kabir attained the high status of martyrdom while serving in the line of duty, demonstrating exemplary bravery and devotion. He offered his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, assuring them that the nation stands with them in this difficult time. "The entire country is proud of our brave security personnel who lay down their lives in the defense of peace and security," the interior minister said. He emphasized that the attackers who targeted the team working to safeguard the future of our children are not deserving of any leniency and will be brought to justice at all costs. — APP

There is no insurgency in Balochistan: CM

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday dismissed the presence of an insurgency in the province, blaming "India-backed so-called separatist movements" for the worsening security situation. In recent months, Balochistan has witnessed a rise in terrorist attacks. The outlawed Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), in particular, has adopted new tactics to inflict higher casualties and directly target Pakistani security forces. Addressing participants of the 17th National Workshop in Quetta, the chief minister maintained that there was "no insurgency in Balochistan but so-called separatist movements" in the province. "The purpose of these anti-state elements is to harm and divide Pakistan," he said. He added that the Indian spy agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was behind the deterioration of the security situation in the province. "The Indian agency RAW has a clear role behind the deteriorating situation in Balochistan," he said. "Separatists are pleased with India but want to harm Pakistan."



CM Bugti added that the war against terrorism was not only the armed forces' prerogative but "the whole nation's joint fight". He added that a "false impression of uneven development" was deliberately created in the province to sow division, adding that terms like "disgruntled Baloch" were coined to justify terrorism. "A person who resorts to violence and takes up arms is not angry but a terrorist," he said. The chief minister also said that distances were created between the youth and the state through social media propaganda. "The government is going to universities and every forum to hear the grievances of the youth," he maintained. Bugti said that in order to improve the security situation in the province and deal with terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD)'s capacity was being enhanced. "For this purpose, Rs100 million has been allocated. Security forces are conducting operations in areas where it is difficult to distinguish between friends and foes," he said. According to recent reports issued by Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) and the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), the first three quarters of 2025 in the country saw nearly as much violence as witnessed in all of 2024.

US mediation to ensure world peace hopes: Pakistan

The Mission, the Pakistani envoy said, must be strengthened — not weakened — to ensure, among other of its task, ceasefire verification and civilian protection

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has welcomed the United States' facilitation of a peace agreement between Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, who were engaged in a prolonged conflict, and Qatar's efforts that led to the Doha Declaration and a prisoner exchange mechanism, saying these moves raise hopes for a ceasefire in the country's troubled eastern region. "Recent diplomatic initiatives offer a fragile but real opening for peace," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council on Tuesday. Speaking in a debate on the situation in Africa's Great Lake region, he emphasized that the sovereignty and territorial integrity

of the DRC must be fully upheld. For decades, armed groups have plagued the eastern DRC. However, the situation has sharply deteriorated since January 2025, when M23 rebels, backed by Rwanda, captured key cities in the Kivu provinces. Rwanda has denied that it provides military support to the rebels. Since the start of the year, more than 1.6 million people have been newly displaced, with over 68% of these displacements attributed to ongoing conflict, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy said, "The Great Lakes region stands at a decisive juncture." He also commended the mediatory role of Togo's President Faure Gnassingbe who was tasked with facilitating talks between the DRC, Rwanda and the M23 rebels, with

a focus on implementing peace agreements and achieving a sustainable ceasefire. "Sustained peace also requires tackling root causes: illicit resource exploitation, governance gaps, and cross-border criminal networks," Ambassador Asim Ahmad said. "Transforming the region's mineral wealth into shared prosperity is essential to breaking the cycle of conflict". The Pakistani envoy also called for strengthening MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping mission in DRC, to enable it to perform its vital mandate which was being eroded by resource constraints. The Mission, he said, was already impacted by the budget cuts, and further reductions might irreversibly cripple it. The Mission, the Pakistani envoy said, must be strengthened — not weakened — to ensure, among other of its task, ceasefire verification and civilian protection. "M23

(rebels) must also lift all restrictions on the freedom of movement of MONUSCO." (The Pakistani 'Blue Helmets', who formed the bulk of the UN peacekeeping mission in DRC, departed earlier this year after 20-years of service in the country.) Pakistan, he said, remains steadfast in its support for international and African-led initiatives with UN engagement for peace in DRC. Briefing the Security Council, a senior United Nations official told ambassadors that there is "real hope" for a ceasefire in eastern DRC, outlining several key priorities, including addressing the root causes of conflict, such as illegal resource exploitation and weak governance. Huang expressed hope that talks between the Congolese authorities and the 23 March Movement (M23) would resume soon and result in a comprehensive peace agreement.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Ms. Sahiba Gafarova, speaker of the Mili Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan. — DNA

'La Nina' may trigger coldest winter in decades in Pakistan

UN-OCHA report says La Nina occurs when sea surface temperatures in Pacific Ocean cool abnormally

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is likely to experience one of its coldest winters in decades due to the La Niña climate phenomenon, according to the report published by the Inter-sector Coordination Group (ISCG). The latest situation report on Pakistan's monsoon floods warns that the La Niña pattern could bring colder-than-usual temperatures across much of the country, further straining the coping mechanisms of flood-affected households, particularly in the mountainous areas of KP and GB. A La Niña occurs when sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean drop abnormally, disrupting global weather systems and often leading to extreme temperature shifts. In its October forecast, the report published by UN-OCHA says marginally negative phases of both the El Niño Southern Oscillation and the Indian Ocean Dipole are expected to influence rainfall across Pakistan. "Northern Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan may experience below-normal rainfall, while southern regions, including Sindh, Balochistan, and southern Punjab, are likely to receive near-normal precipitation," it noted. "Expected impacts include possible disruptions to Kharif crop harvesting due to isolated storms, increased risk of dengue outbreaks in stagnant water conditions, higher chances of glacial lake outburst floods in upper areas, reduced river inflows affecting irrigation, elevated smog and air pollution in plains, and adverse effects on livestock health and fodder availability due to above-normal temperatures," the report added. It further said that Pakistan faces a deepening post-flood crisis marked by reduced response capacity and growing risks to food security and health. The report noted "a diminishing response capacity both by government and humanitarian partners," stating that while local and international actors had mounted a strong initial response, their presence and resources on the ground had since declined.

After uprising, Nepal's Gen Z rush to register to vote

KATHMANDU: In Nepal's capital, young would-be voters line up enthusiastically to register for the first elections since deadly anti-corruption protests toppled the government, the worst unrest in decades. For many, it will be their first time participating in an election, and they see it as a chance to shape the future of their country of 30 million people, burdened by deep economic woes. At least 73 people were killed in the September 8-9 protests that left parliament, courts and government buildings in flames. The unrest was triggered by a brief ban on social media but fuelled by long-standing frustration over economic hardship and corruption. Within days of the government's collapse, 73-year-old former chief justice Sushila Karki was appointed interim prime minister to steer the Himalayan nation until elections on March 5, 2026. "The pillar of this new government is built on the dead bodies of students," said student Nirajan Bhandari, 21, as he waited to provide biometric data to complete his registration. "That's why, in the upcoming election, we want to uproot the old faces who have been clinging to power for too long," he added. "I'm here to register for my new voter identity card for that very reason." Nepal's political future hangs in the balance. The challenges ahead to ensure elections pass off smoothly

are huge — including deep public distrust in Nepal's established parties. It remains unclear whether protesters and youth will try to form their own party, or if old politicians will seek to return. The government has imposed a travel ban on KP Sharma Oli, the 73-year-old Marxist who served as prime minister four times before he was forced from power, as a commission investigates the unrest. But Oli remains outspoken, calling for the reinstatement of the parliament "that was unconstitutionally dissolved", in an address to supporters earlier this month. The unrest also battered Nepal's already fragile economy, where the World Bank estimates a "staggering" 82 percent of the workforce is in informal employment, with GDP per capita at just \$1,447 in 2024. The bank this month updated its economic assessment for Nepal, warning that "recent unrest and heightened political and economic uncertainty are expected to cause growth to decline" to 2.1 percent. But at a district Election Commission office in Kathmandu, the excitement among the younger generation is clear. "I'm really excited," 20-year-old student Sambiddhi Gautam told AFP. "This will be my first time participating in an election." Gautam, who is studying to be a chartered accountant in neighbouring India, said she had returned to register to make sure she can take part. — Agencies

Trump to attend signing of Thailand-Cambodia 'peace deal'

KUALA LUMPUR: US President Donald Trump will attend the ceremonial signing of a peace agreement between Thailand and Cambodia at an upcoming summit of Southeast Asian nations, the foreign minister of host Malaysia said Tuesday. Tensions between Thailand and Cambodia erupted in July into the deadliest military clashes in decades, killing more than 40 people and forcing around 300,000 to flee their homes. The two sides

agreed to a ceasefire — brokered in part by Trump — after five days of fighting, and have since repeatedly traded accusations of truce violations. Donald Trump "is looking forward to witness the Thailand-Cambodia peace deal," Mohamad Hasan told reporters at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur. The US leader is expected to attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in the Malaysian capital from October 26-28. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet has said he nominated the US president for a Nobel Peace Prize, crediting him with "innovative diplomacy" that ended the clashes. Thailand's prime minister Anutin Charnvirakul said last week that he received a letter from Trump, with the US leader saying he wanted to see the two fighting neighbours resolve tensions. — Agencies

TLP chief Saad Rizvi 'traced, to be arrested soon,' say sources

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD/RAWALPINDI: As life in Islamabad and Rawalpindi returned to normal after the police crackdown on TLP protesters who were marching towards federal capital, the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have traced TLP chief Saad Hussain Rizvi and leader Anas Rizvi, the sources said on Tuesday. Noting that the leaders will be "arrested soon", sources said leaders should immediately surrendered themselves to the LEAs so that they can be given due medical attention. "Nothing can be said about the injuries of Saad [Rizvi] and Anas [Rizvi] at this time," the sources added. The TLP's protest had intensified as TLP workers insisted on continuing their march, citing similar demonstrations in Europe. At the heart of the crackdown was Muridke — the flashpoint of the confrontation. A case was registered there, with police alleging that a rifle found with TLP leader Anas Rizvi was used for firing rounds during the protests. Despite social media claims of "numerous casualties," hospital sources reported few admissions. According to the police report, three people — a TLP worker, a bystander, and a police officer — were confirmed dead. Other claims remain unverified, with officials describing the higher figures circulated online as "exaggerated." Speculation swirled about the whereabouts of TLP chief Saad Rizvi and other senior leaders. During negotiations with the government, the TLP delegation included Shafique Amini, Ghous Baghdadi, and Faizi, who met Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, Punjab IG Usman Anwar, and Allama Tahir Ashrafi, among others.

Johar Cup hockey: Pak-India match ends in a draw

DNA

JOHOR BAHRU: In a high-intensity encounter at the 13th Sultan of Johor Cup 2025, traditional rivals Pakistan and India played out a thrilling 3-3 draw, showcasing exceptional skill and determination from both sides. Pakistan's goals were all scored through penalty corners. Team captain Hanan Shahid opened the scoring in the 5th minute, followed by Muhammad Sufyan Khan, who netted goals in the 39th and 55th minutes. India responded with goals from Arjit, Anand, and Manmeet Singh, contributing one goal each. India was awarded a penalty stroke during the match, while penalty corner statistics showed Pakistan earning 6 and India 9. Pakistan made full use of its penalty corners, converting three out of six, whereas India was unable to capitalize on any of its nine penalty corner opportunities.

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