



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan, France strengthen academic relations, says envoy

Detailed News On Page-08

Aurangzeb holds talks with the Chinese officials

Detailed News On Page-08



Terrorism needs to be fought jointly: Kundi

Detailed News On Page-02



Field Marshal also attends the meeting

Afghan refugees repatriation to continue: PM

Prime Minister Shehbaz directed that elderly persons, women, children, and minorities be treated with dignity during repatriation

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chaired a high-level meeting on Friday to review progress regarding the repatriation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff, federal ministers, the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, chief ministers of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as senior federal and provincial officials. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was represented by Muzammil Aslam in place of Chief Minister Sohail Afridi. Welcoming the participants, the Prime Minister reiterated the federal government's commitment to working closely with all provinces, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for the welfare and development of their people. He emphasized that Pakistan has stood by Afghanistan through decades of hardship, but expressed deep concern over the increasing number of terrorist attacks originating from Afghan soil. The Prime Minister noted that Pakistan had suffered thousands of casualties and billions in economic losses in

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Pakistan exercised its right to self defence: FO Spox

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan, in his final weekly media briefing on Friday announced key diplomatic developments, including Pakistan's re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the implementation of a temporary ceasefire along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, and the country's active participation in the recent Gaza Peace Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh. Delivering his last official briefing as spokesperson, Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan reaffirmed Pakistan's "unwavering commitment to regional peace, sovereignty, and constructive diplomacy," emphasizing that Pakistan had "effectively repulsed unprovoked assaults by the Afghan Taliban" along the border earlier this week. He said the temporary ceasefire, agreed

upon with the Taliban regime, took effect on October 15 for 48 hours to allow dialogue-based resolution of tensions. "Pakistan exercised its right to self-defense and responded in a targeted and precise manner, avoiding civilian harm," the spokesperson said, adding that Pakistan expected "concrete and verifiable actions" by the Taliban against terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil. He strongly rejected "baseless assertions" made by the Afghan interim foreign minister in India, calling them an attempt to deflect attention from the presence of terrorist networks in Afghanistan. Ambassador Shafqat also revealed that Pakistan had lodged strong reservations over the recent India-Afghanistan joint statement, which referred to Jammu and Kashmir as part of India. "This reference violates UN Security Council resolutions and

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates the upgradation of Geoscience Advanced Research Laboratories (GARL). – DNA

GST, taxes on solar panels being mulled

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Following the rejection of proposals to increase tax rates on fertiliser and pesticides, Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are considering alternative options – raising taxes on rooftop solar panels, internet services and other sectors – as contingency measures in case of a revenue shortfall. The News reported on Friday. The identified contingency measures are expected to be part of the IMF's second review report, to be released after the approval of a \$1 billion tranche under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The tax measures would only be triggered under two conditions i.e.,

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Earthquake jolts parts of Pakistan

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and other northern areas were jolted by tremors on Friday, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). The PMD's data showed that the quake was registered with a magnitude of 5.6 at a depth of 120 kilometres at 5:15pm. Tremors were felt in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Peshawar, Swat and Chitral. The PMD stated that the quake's epicentre was in the Hindu Kush mountains in Afghanistan. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) registered a 4.7 magnitude quake less than 30km from the western Pak-Afghan border,

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Security forces 'kill 108 terrorists' in four days

IBO conducted in Sultan Khel area on reported presence of terrorists

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan armed forces have killed at least 108 Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists over the past four days, the security sources said on Friday. The heavy losses suffered by Afghan Taliban proxy terrorists follow intensified counter-terrorism operations by security forces. Earlier today, the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Sultan Khel area of District Lakki in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, killing eight terrorists. Pakistan forces have eliminated as many as 108 Afghan Taliban-backed terrorists in the last four days as forces remain dedicated to eradicate terrorism. Security forces have conducted multiple IBOs in several areas of Balochistan and KP in the last four days. Around 50 Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists were killed in a single operation a day earlier as Pakistan forces foiled an infiltration attempt in KP amid border tensions with Afghanistan. Pakistan has been demanding the Afghan

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TLP ban summary sent to Centre

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab government has sent a summary to the Centre seeking a ban on Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) in the wake of a fresh protest call by the religious party, days after violent demonstrations in the province left many dead and scores injured. The move is aimed at restoring public order and reinforcing the writ of the state and rule of law after last week's clashes between TLP supporters and law enforcement agencies in Muridke and other cities. The unrest began when police dismantled a TLP protest camp in Muridke, prompting confrontations that led to the death of a police station

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Briefs

Hamas calls for implementation of truce deal

NEWS DESK

GAZA: The Palestinian group has expressed "deep appreciation for the sincere efforts" made by Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye over the past two years to reach an agreement to stop Israel's war on Gaza, Al Jazeera reports. "This effort included hosting meetings, working to bring viewpoints closer together, bridging the gap between positions, and their insistence on overcoming obstacles, which ultimately resulted in ending the insane war on Gaza," a statement on Telegram said. The group called on the mediating countries Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye to follow up on the implementation of the remaining provisions of the agreement.

UK to lift ban on Israeli fans

DNA

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government was holding urgent talks on Friday to overturn a ban on Maccabi Tel Aviv fans attending a match at Aston Villa that Israel's government branded "shameful". Birmingham-based Villa said the club had been informed by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG), responsible for issuing certificates for matches, that no away fans would be permitted at the Europa League match on November 6.

Holiday Notice

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

IHC also moved

CM Afridi moves SC, seeks meeting with jailed PTI founder

Meeting is essential for provincial cabinet formation and "important" decisions, CM tells CJP

FAISAL SHEIKH

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi approached the Supreme Court, seeking a meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) jailed founder Imran Khan. In a letter written to Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi, the chief minister maintained that he is "under constitutional and moral obligation" to consult with the PTI founder, who is also the party's patron-in-chief, at Adiala jail for seeking instructions on the provincial cabinet formation. CM Afridi, who was recently elected to the top office, maintained that he had already approached the federal interior secretary, as well as the Punjab home secretary, for arranging a meeting with Imran, adding that despite repeated communications and follow-ups, the request was not fulfilled. Afridi – who replaced Ali Amin Gandapur as the chief minister this week – added

that he needs to meet Imran to discuss matters relating to law and order, critical economic challenges, and policy matters regarding the people of the province. "There is a pressing need to seek direction from the Founder Chairman/ Patron in Chief Mr Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi, regarding the above matters and others, including relations regarding certain important matters with the Federation and other provinces," the letter read. "The seeking of direction is extremely essential, even presently the province of Punjab has stopped the inter-provincial trade of wheat," CM Afridi said. Afridi – a young PTI leader – hails from Bara tehsil of Khyber district and held the portfolio of provincial minister for higher education before becoming the CM. He is regarded among the party's most ideological and grassroots-based workers, having been associated with the Imran Khan-founded party since his student years.

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4 envoys present credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Four newly designated envoys presented their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari at a ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Those who presented their credentials included Mr. Tarik Ali Khan, High Commissioner-designate of Canada; Mr. Abdulaziz Issa, Ambassador-designate of Republic of Lebanon; Mr. Robert-Jan Siebert, Ambassador-designate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; and Mr. David Pine, Non-Resident High Commissioner-designate of New Zealand (based in Colombo). Upon arrival at the Presidency, the envoys were presented

Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Armed Forces. Welcoming the newly accredited envoys, the President congratulated them on their appointments and expressed confidence that their tenures would further strengthen Pakistan's bilateral relations with their countries. The President highlighted Pakistan's longstanding and friendly relations with Canada, emphasising enhanced economic, trade, and investment cooperation, particularly in the IT, energy and minerals sectors. He noted the importance of people-to-people linkages and lauded the role of the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in Canada in

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Kundi calls for united fight against terrorism

Governor Kundi said that political leadership, the armed forces, and the people must stand united to restore peace and stability in the country

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday visited the Police Training School and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) office in Dera Ismail Khan, which were recently targeted in terrorist attacks. During the visit, District Police Officer Sajjad Ahmad Sahibzada briefed the governor about the incidents and the overall security situation. Speaking to the media after the visit, the governor made it clear that no talks could be held with elements who reject Pakistan's Constitution and state institutions. He stressed that an operation against terrorists had become inevitable, emphasizing the importance of supporting the proposed National Peace Operation to ensure lasting peace across the country. Governor Kundi said that political leadership, the armed forces, and the people must stand united to restore peace and stability in the country. He added that a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister with all four provincial chief ministers was being held to discuss key decisions on national security and counterterrorism measures. He reiterated that those who challenge

the writ of the state would face action according to the law rather than negotiations. "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has suffered the most from terrorism, and the province's development is directly linked with peace," he remarked. The governor underlined that the merged districts were rich in oil and gas reserves, and exploration could only be possible if peace and stability were ensured in the region. He said that companies like OGDCL were willing to invest in these areas, but such progress depended on a sustainable security environment. Highlighting the findings of the recent attack, the governor revealed that one of the assailants was a local resident while the others were Afghan nationals who maintained direct contact with handlers in Afghanistan. He alleged that India and Israel were using Afghan soil against Pakistan, adding that some Afghan elements were involved in anti-Pakistan activities at the behest of foreign forces. Kundi said that the timing of the attack, coinciding with an Afghan delegation's visit to India, was indicative of this nexus. He further stated that Pakistan had carried out intelligence-based operations but had also observed a ceasefire

upon the request of friendly countries. The governor also confirmed that he had an informal meeting with the newly elected Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the PTI delegation, expressing optimism that all issues would be settled through dialogue and that both the federal and provincial governments would work jointly for the province's development. He emphasized that peace, resource management, and good governance required all political parties to work together in the larger national interest. He appreciated JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's political wisdom, saying the veteran leader always believed in democratic struggle and constructive engagement with all parties. Later, Governor Kundi met with the families of the martyrs of the Police Training School attack and offered condolences. He paid rich tribute to the courage and sacrifices of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, saying that the brave personnel had averted a major tragedy by laying down their lives. He lauded the pivotal role of police in maintaining law and order and said that the people of Dera Ismail Khan were proud of their police force's commitment in safeguarding peace.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Yahya Afridi presiding over the 55th meeting of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Hazara varsity, Bacha Khan varsity inks MoU for research coop

MANSEHRA: Hazara University Mansehra and Bacha Khan University Charsadda have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen bilateral cooperation in academic, research, and technical fields. The MoU was signed by Vice Chancellor Hazara University Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan and Vice Chancellor Bacha Khan University Professor Dr. Khan Alam during a formal ceremony held at Hazara University. Under the agreement, Hazara University will provide campus management systems, IT solutions, and other technical services to Bacha Khan University, while its teaching departments will benefit from the expertise of Bacha Khan University's Agriculture Department and other academic units. Speaking on the occasion, VC Dr. Ikramullah Khan said that Hazara University is already collaborating with various universities and research institutions across the country on several projects related to scientific research, IT services, training workshops, and student exchange programs. He added that the new partnership with Bacha Khan University will further enhance educational and research opportunities for students and faculty members of both institutions. VC Bacha Khan University Professor Dr. Khan Alam praised Hazara University as one of the leading higher education institutions in Pakistan, known for its commitment to education, research, and student support. He termed the MoU a significant step toward expanding collaboration in technology, agriculture, linguistics.—APP

Sindh to spend Rs 55.9b to promote wheat cultivation

In the next phase, the Sindh government would issue Benazir Hari Cards to millions of additional farmers to extend the benefits of the programme, he added

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has said that the Sindh government will spend Rs 55.9 billion on farmers under the Benazir Hari Card Programme to promote wheat cultivation. He said that in the first phase, four lakh farmers are being included in the programme, and financial assistance will be provided for 2.26 million acres of land. Memon said that 50,000 Benazir Hari Cards would be issued through Sindh Bank in the last week of this month. Registration for the cards has already started. Farm-

ers, who already possess Benazir Hari Cards have been asked to complete their registration, while those without the Benazir Hari Cards can register by showing their CNIC or land record. He said that complete transparency would be ensured through biometric verification, while land records would also be verified through a digital system. Under the Wheat Growers Programme, priority is being given to farmers owning between one and 25 acres of land. Farmers are being provided one bag of DAP and two bags of urea fertiliser for wheat cultivation. The Senior Minister

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government was encouraging farmers to cultivate wheat to increase production, which would bring prosperity and help achieve self-sufficiency in the country. He said that the decision would effectively support small farmers, as the initiative aimed not only to provide financial assistance but also to make them self-sufficient in a dignified manner. In the next phase, the Sindh government would issue Benazir Hari Cards to millions of additional farmers to extend the benefits of the programme, he added.—APP

Afghan PO killed in Mansehra police encounter, weapon recovered

MANSEHRA: An Afghan robber and proclaimed offender was killed in a police encounter in the jurisdiction of Police Station Saddar Mansehra here on Friday while his three accomplices managed to flee the scene under the cover of darkness. According to police sources, a general hold-up was being conducted in the area when two motorcycles carrying four individuals were signaled to stop for a routine search. Instead of complying, the suspects attempted to escape and opened indiscriminate fire on the police party with intent to kill. Police retaliated in self-defense, resulting in the death of one assailant identified as Yousaf ali as Cheechee, son of Zari Khan, an Afghan national and resident of village Jalu, within the same police jurisdiction. Upon verification, the deceased was found to be a notorious proclaimed offender, wanted in murder case No. 951 dated December 19, 2023, under sections 302/34 of the Pakistan Penal Code, registered at Police Station Saddar Mansehra. He had allegedly entered a house in Shahiyya along with accomplices for the purpose of robbery and shot dead a 26-year-old man named Shoaib before fleeing. Police recovered the weapon used in the crime from the dead suspect's possession, while a comprehensive search and strike operation has been launched in the surrounding areas to trace and arrest his absconding accomplices.—APP

Leadership Development Programme concludes successfully at NSPP

LAHORE :A two-day 'Leadership Development Programme' concluded successfully at the Executive Development Institute (EDI) of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) on Friday. The program, held from October 16 to 17, brought together senior officials and decision-makers from both public and private sectors to enhance leadership capacity and professional excellence. A diverse group of 50 participants attended from across Pakistan, representing federal and provincial government departments, private enterprises, and academia. Among the institutions represented were the Senate of Pakistan, National Assembly, Establishment Division, Ministry of Law and Justice, PEMRA, PEC, WAPDA, HEC, EOBI, ML&C, CSA, LWMC, NPPMCL, Peshawar High Court, Forman Christian College University, Lahore Garrison University, Sindh Bank, and NSPP-Lahore, among others.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Naveed Elahi, Dean EDI, emphasized that the Leadership Development Program aims to strengthen professional leadership skills, focusing on team dynamics, motivation, innovation, and emotional intelligence. He said the initiative encourages learning through interaction and collaboration. Dr. Jamil Afaqi, Rector NSPP, welcomed participants and highlighted the institute's commitment to promoting leadership excellence and effective governance. He urged participants to reflect on their leadership styles and engage wholeheartedly for a meaningful learning experience. Mr. Kamran Ahmad, Director EDI, presented an overview of the Institute's strategic goals and highlighted its inclusive approach in selecting expert facilitators from professional, academic, and training backgrounds to ensure a holistic perspective

on emerging challenges. Distinguished guest speakers on the first day included Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik, Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Mr. Kamran Lashari, and Prof. Dr. Sa'ad B. Malik, who discussed themes such as team dynamics, leadership in the public sector, innovation, communication, and emotional intelligence. The second day featured insightful sessions by Dr. Muhammad Abdur Rahman Malik from LUMS on "Conflict Management & Negotiation Skills," Air Commodore (R) Khalid Chishti on "Leadership Styles & Team Effectiveness," and Dr. Rizwan Basharat on "AI and Emerging Technologies for Leaders." In his closing remarks, Rector Dr. Jamil Afaqi underscored the importance of vision, influence, and collaboration as essential elements of effective leadership. He commended the participants for their enthusiasm and encouraged them to lead with integrity.—DNA

Weekly inflation up by 0.49%

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), increased by 0.49 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on October 16, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 334.39 points against 332.75 points during the previous week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 4.57 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16-100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs17,732 increased by 1.07 percent, going up to 329.37 points from last week's 325.88 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs17,733-22,888; Rs22,889-29,517; Rs29,518-44,175 and above Rs44,175 increased by 0.92 percent, 0.71 percent, 0.59 percent and 0.29 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 24 (47.06%) items increased, 08 (15.69%) items decreased and 19 (37.25%) items remained stable. The commodities which recorded a major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included chicken (6.38%), bananas (4.70%), pulse gram (2.20%), petrol (2.09%), diesel (0.55%), rice basmati broken (0.51%), pulse moong (0.49%), and rice irri-6/9 (0.03%). The items which recorded a major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (33.20%), onions (8.70%), eggs (2.18%), wheat flour (1.42%), garlic (0.85%), potatoes (0.71%), vegetable ghee 2.5kg (0.63%), vegetable ghee 1kg (0.56%), firewood (0.40%), lpg (0.18%), washing soap (0.08%), and shirting (0.07%). On year-on-year basis, the commodities which recorded a decrease in their average prices included onions (33.55%), chicken (29.81%), pulse gram (28.86%), garlic (28.48%), electricity charges for q1 (26.26%), tea lipton (17.93%), pulse mash (17.55%), potatoes (16.97%), pulse masoor (4.11%), and LPG (3.44%). On year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed an increase in prices included tomatoes (121.38%), ladies sandal (55.62%), sugar (36.94%), gas charges for q1 (29.85%), wheat flour (16.92%), gur (15.90%), beef (12.95%), vegetable ghee 1kg (12.39%), vegetable ghee 2.5kg (12.10%), firewood (11.71%), diesel (9.75%), and eggs (9.02%).—APP

Govt committed to eradicate poverty through inclusive growth: Ahsan

We are building a Pakistan where every citizen enjoys decent employment, quality education, better healthcare, and a secure future," the minister said. "Through the vision of Uraan Pakistan, we will collectively build a prosperous, strong, and dignified Pakistan," he remarked

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to eliminating poverty and building a society where no citizen was left behind, hungry or deprived of hope. The minister said the government has made poverty alleviation a central pillar of its national development agenda. "The priority of the Government of Pakistan is to create a society where

no one suffers from deprivation, hunger or despair," he added. Under the Uraan Pakistan framework, he said, a comprehensive plan has been formulated to ensure sustainable development, social inclusion and prosperity for all segments of society. "When the economy stabilizes, its benefits reach every section of the population," he said, adding that economic stability generated employment opportunities, raised incomes, and gradually lifted

people out of poverty. He said the government's development planning kept the poor and vulnerable segments at its core, ensuring that growth translates into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary citizens. Highlighting the role of youth in driving progress, the minister said the government was equipping young people with technical and vocational skills to enable them to earn a dignified livelihood. "I particularly want to tell

our youth that education and skills are the greatest keys to overcoming poverty," he said. Ahsan Iqbal said the government's Knowledge Economy initiatives were opening new doors of innovation, entrepreneurship, and employment for the younger generation. "Every young person should strive to improve their life through knowledge, hard work, and determination," he urged. He added that during the second phase of the Chi-

na-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the government was focusing on the industrial and agricultural sectors to promote inclusive growth and job creation. "We are building a Pakistan where every citizen enjoys decent employment, quality education, better healthcare, and a secure future," the minister said. "Through the vision of Uraan Pakistan, we will collectively build a prosperous, strong, and dignified Pakistan," he remarked.—APP

National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

Oct 01/China
National Day

Oct 01/Cyprus
National Day

Oct 01/Republic of Korea
Armed Forces Day

Oct 01/Nigeria
Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea
National Day

Oct 03/Germany
Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea
National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia
Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt
Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda
Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain
National Day

Oct 23/Hungary
National Day

October 24/United Nations
United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania
Armed Forces Day

Oct 26/Austria
National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan
Independence Day

Oct 28/Czech Republic
National Day

Oct 29/Turkey
Republic Day



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UK based group keen to bring huge investment

During the meeting with ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, and Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry, the two sides discussed potential areas of cooperation in real estate, food, education, and entrepreneurship development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A high-profile business delegation from the Adam Mercer Group of Companies (AM Group), led by its Chairman Chaudhry Shafiq Ur Rehman, who is also a Corporate Member of the UK-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, paid a visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) to explore avenues for trade and investment in Pakistan. The delegation included Amman Rehman, Chief Executive Officer of the Group in London; Ihsaan Rehman, Chief Executive Officer of the Group in Pakistan; Farhaan Rehman, the youngest Councillor of the London Borough of Hounslow; and Chaudhry Liaquat Ali, Director of the Group in the UK and Pakistan. During the meeting with ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, and Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry, the two sides discussed potential areas of cooperation in real estate, food, education, and entrepreneurship development. A large number of ICCI Executive Members and business leaders were also present on the occasion. Speaking to the attendees, Chairman Chaudhry Shafiq Ur Rehman said that AM Group, which is already successfully operating in hoteling sector in Islamabad, is now keen to make substantial investments in diverse fields in Pakistan. He added that the Group aims to empower youth through entrepreneurship training so they can become job creators instead of job seekers.



Welcoming the delegation, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood lauded the Group's resolve to bring major investments to Pakistan and assured ICCI's full support and facilitation to ensure a smooth process for the noble initiative. Congratulating Farhaan Rehman for being elected the youngest Councillor of the London Borough of Hounslow, the ICCI President said, "Farhaan is a source of pride for the entire Pakistani nation.

Our youth is immensely talented and only needs the right opportunities to shine globally." Sardar Tahir further highlighted ICCI's strong focus on Chamber-academia linkages to promote entrepreneurial skills among the youth, noting that rapid urbanization in Pakistan presents vast opportunities in the housing and commercial sectors. Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub and Vice President Mohammad Irfan Chaudhry also emphasized that ICCI, being the premier platform of the business com-

munity, is fully committed to supporting local and overseas investors, particularly through guidance, facilitation, and coordination to boost economic development. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen bilateral business cooperation and pave the way for new investment ventures between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Those present also included ICCI Executive Members Zulqurnain Abbasi, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Aqeel Malik, and Dr. Raja Amjad Pomi.

Ombudsman directs action to control vehicular pollution

ISLAMABAD: On the directives of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Islamabad District Administration have finalized and submitted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to control vehicular emissions and reduce environmental pollution in the federal capital, said a Press release issued here on Friday. According to the report submitted to the Ombudsman, vehicular smoke and carbon emissions are the primary causes of air pollution and pose serious risks to human health, including heart disease. To address this issue, the EPA and district administration have prepared a comprehensive action plan divided into two phases: a short-term plan of 18 months and a long-

term plan of five years. Under the SOPs, priority will be given to the inspection of smoke-emitting and diesel vehicles. Special focus will also be placed on public transport, old vehicles, trucks, and tractors that contribute significantly to pollution. The long-term plan includes proposals to promote the use of electric vehicles to make Islamabad a pollution-free city. The report further stated that the EPA had introduced National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) in 2008-09 for the inspection and clearance of vehicles, in collaboration with the Islamabad Police and the Capital Territory Administration. During 2024-25, a total of 215 vehicles were fined, and 32 vehicles were sealed for serious violations of environmental standards.

It is pertinent to mention that the Federal Ombudsman had recently taken notice of public complaints regarding long queues of vehicles at D-Chowk for environmental clearance. He summoned officials of the EPA and the District Administration and appointed the Registrar of the Federal Ombudsman, Muhammad Saqib Khan, as the Investigation Officer. Following the intervention, the issue of long queues was resolved. The Federal Ombudsman further directed both institutions to ensure better coordination and prepare clear SOPs for vehicle inspection so that the public is not inconvenienced in the future. In compliance with these directions, the EPA and the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad have now submitted the finalized action plan and SOPs to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat.

Islamabad Symposium concludes at NUST

ISLAMABAD: The two-day Islamabad Symposium 2025, themed "Balancing Relationship Between Global North and Global South: Challenges and Opportunities," concluded at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) main campus on Friday. The symposium offered unique deliberations over diverse subjects, such as the present-day regional and global issues, particularly conflicts and wars, the need for technological advancement and accessibility, climate change preparedness, iron-clad relations of Pakistan and China, and the need for accountability measures for the rogue states promoting an utter disregard for international law. Speaking at the closing session, Rector NUST, Dr Muhammad Zahid Latif, thanked the esteemed speakers and audience, and complimented NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS) for their efforts to organise the event at

the university. He shared the NUST vision of nurturing young minds into competent and responsible citizens, and developing partnerships through knowledge diplomacy and collaborations. The chief guest of the closing ceremony, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, noted that global affairs are now more complex than ever. He highlighted that Pakistan shares the spirit of multilateralism and equality, evidenced by its repeated calls for peace, responsible conduct, and dialogue. Talking to young scholars, he emphasised the role of academia and appreciated NUST for the success of the Islamabad Symposium 2025. Dr Atia Ali Kazmi, President Global Peace Strategy Forum, masterfully chaired the symposium's last plenary session titled "From Challenges to Solutions: Roadmap for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Global Order." She succinctly

discussed the plethora of issues raised in the previous plenaries and reiterated that united action and shared will are the building blocks for creating a road to an inclusive and sustainable world order. Mr Victor Gao, Vice President, Center for China and Globalization, echoed the tale of decades of unequal exchange between the Global North and South, and emphasised the importance of inclusive cooperation to alleviate the fault lines that divide the world into two blocs and hinder global unity. Per Albert Ilseas, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Pakistan, elucidated that contemporary times require multilateralism with greater urgency than ever. Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi reiterated the significance of pragmatic diplomacy, citing the Iran nuclear deal, the ceasefire efforts between Israel and Hamas, as well as the diplomatic efforts to stop the four-day conflict between India and Pakistan.—DNA

PM&DC starts institutional restructuring process

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has announced a comprehensive institutional restructuring and digital transformation initiative. According to PM&DC, the restructuring process was started with an aim to modernize its systems, enhancing transparency, and improving service delivery across all operational domains. The reform seeks to align PM&DC's functions with international best practices and reinforce its role in upholding excellence in medical and dental education, licensing, and professional regulation in Pakistan. President PM&DC, Prof Dr Rizwan Taj, termed the initiative a "new era of institutional excellence and transparency," noting that the Council has completed an extensive review and redesign of its organizational structure. "Job descriptions for every position have been clearly defined to ensure clarity in roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines, thereby promoting accountability and eliminating

redundancy," he stated. As part of the restructuring, PM&DC is filling all key vacant positions to strengthen financial discipline, legal compliance, and administrative efficiency. The timely induction of qualified professionals will further boost digital governance and institutional capacity, he added. To ensure performance-based accountability, the Council has introduced monthly and annual performance assessment mechanisms, including Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) and structured evaluations that will guide promotions and career progression. A performance-based monetary reward system will also recognize and incentivize outstanding employees. Recognizing that institutional excellence depends on skilled human capital, PM&DC has launched extensive training and capacity-building programs for its employees. These included workshops and professional development sessions conducted by leading experts to enhance technical, administrative,

and leadership competencies. In line with its vision of a fully digital ecosystem, PM&DC is implementing a robust Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to streamline all processes — from registration and licensing to accreditation and HR management. The ERP rollout will ensure data accuracy, faster service delivery, and improved user experience for all stakeholders. To reinforce good governance, the Council has established a comprehensive internal control system to prevent procedural lapses and strengthen financial and administrative oversight. A new user-friendly digital interface is also being launched, offering secure and accessible online services for applicants, institutions, and practitioners. Examination registration systems for MDCAT, NRE, and NEB have been fully digitalized, enabling seamless online registration, real-time tracking, and automated processing to ensure transparency and efficiency.—APP

FIA handcuffs NAB-wanted offender

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration staff at Islamabad International Airport arrested a proclaimed offender wanted by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in connection with a massive fraud case exceeding Rs3 billion. An FIA official told APP on Friday that the accused, Abdul Latif, was taken into custody upon his arrival from Qatar through flight EY303. His name had been placed on the stop list, which enabled immigration officials to intercept him immediately after landing. The official added that Abdul Latif had been wanted by NAB for several years in corruption and fraud cases involving the manipulation of financial records and the misappropriation of billions of rupees. Following the arrest, FIA Immigration Islamabad handed the suspect over to NAB authorities for further legal proceedings. The FIA official reiterated that the agency will continue its robust crackdown against fugitives, proclaimed offenders, and those involved in financial crimes, fraud, and corruption, ensuring no offender escapes accountability.—APP

NA body wants security boost in railways affairs

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Standing Committee on Railways Friday, directed to bolster railway security, expedite removal of encroachments, and ensure transparency in land leasing and project execution to strengthen efficiency and safety across Pakistan's rail network. The session, chaired by MNA Ramesh Lal in the absence of the Chairman, focused on the Jaffer Express blast, land encroachments, and the Karachi-Pipri Freight Corridor Project. Following a briefing on the 7 October Jaffer Express attack near Sultan Kot Railway Station in Sindh, the Committee directed Pakistan Railways to enhance security patrols in vulnerable areas and install three signal jammers in every train to safeguard passengers against future incidents. On the issue of land encroachments in the Sukkur Division, members expressed concern over the large-scale illegal occupation of railway property and instructed the Ministry to submit a detailed report on the criteria and procedure for leasing railway land across the country. The Committee also reviewed progress on the US\$400 million Karachi-Pipri Freight Corridor Project, which aims to link Karachi Port with the M-9 Motorway. The project's first phase is expected to be completed within six months, with 17 freight trains operating daily once operational. Attendees included MNAs Ibrar Ahmad, Waseem Qadir, Haji Jamal Shah Kakar, Sadiq Ali Memon, and Ahmed Saleem Siddiqui, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Railways and Pakistan Railways.—APP

LJCP & AJDP meeting held at the SCP

ISLAMABAD: The Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (L&JCP) has underscored the importance of legal reforms, particularly in the Code of Criminal Procedure and Family Laws, highlighting that these reforms are crucial for ensuring that the justice system remains relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of society. These reforms will help streamline legal processes, protect citizens' rights, and promote fairness and justice in the dispensation of justice. 46 Meeting of the LJCP was held here today at the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP), while Justice Yahya Afridi, the Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chairman, LJCP, was in the chair. The meeting was attended by Chief Justices of the Federal Shariat Court, all the High Courts, the Attorney General for Pakistan, the Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice and the Interim Chairperson of National Commission on the Status of Women. Khawaja Haris Ahmed, Mr. Kamran Murtaza, and Mr. Muhammad Munir Paracha Senior Advocates of the Supreme Court of Pakistan also participated. The Commission appreciated the proposed legislative amendments in the family laws and acknowledged that these amendments would facilitate early resolution of family disputes and improve service delivery of family courts. The Commission also emphasized the need to amend the Qanoon-e-Shahadat Order, 1984, to ensure the admissibility of evidence procured through modern devices and technologies. The Commission also considered the issue of conflicting judgments on a subject and observed that such judgments create confusion and undermine the principle of precedents, which subordinate courts are required to follow. The Commission also reviewed the draft LJCP Employees (Terms and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2025, and constituted a committee comprising the Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court and Muhammad Munir Paracha, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and Member of the Commission, to review the proposed rules and present its report to the Commission. Earlier, the Chief Justice of Pakistan / Chairman, Governing Body, Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF) chaired the 21st meeting of the Governing Body, AJDF. The Governing Body, AJDF, reviewed the Fund's overall performance, implementation status of previous decisions, and funds released under various windows of the Fund. The Governing Body was informed that since inception of the Fund in 2005, Rs. 904.7 million were released to the High Courts for infrastructure development of the district judiciary and Rs 166.5 million for execution of special projects in underdeveloped Districts.—DNA

Traffic HQ licensing hall inspected

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Farhan Aslam on Friday paid a surprise visit to the licensing hall at the Traffic Headquarters to review the working procedures and facilities for citizens. He examined the licensing system and issued directions to further improve efficiency. He also ordered that one counter be reserved for senior citizens, women, and transgender persons to ensure convenience for all applicants. Farhan Aslam interacted with visitors and said citizens could meet him personally during the public hour from 11 a.m. to 12 noon in case of any complaint. He affirmed that the vision of Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar would be implemented in its true spirit, adding that all licensing services were being provided under one roof using original national identity cards only.—APP

Seafood exports grew 27.81%

ISLAMABAD: Fish and fish preparations exports from the country during the first quarter of the current financial year grew by 27.81 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. During the period from July to September, 2025, over 40,534 metric tons of fish and fish products valued at \$89,600 million were exported as compared to the exports of 33,144 metric tons worth of \$70.106 million of the same period of the last year. Meanwhile, the meat and meat preparations exports from the country during the period under review grew by 5.59 per cent as over 27,297 metric tons of above mentioned commodities worth \$122.199 million were exported as compared to the exports of 27,286 metric tons valued at \$115.730 million of the same period of the last year.—APP

Two nabbed in firing, robbery cases

RAWALPINDI: Police in Sadiqabad and New Town areas of Rawalpindi have arrested two suspects wanted in separate cases of firing and robbery, recovering cash, a motorcycle and weapons from their possession. According to a Rawalpindi Police spokesperson on Friday, the Sadiqabad Police arrested a man accused of shooting and injuring a citizen and assaulting his son and daughter four days ago over an old enmity. The accused was traced and apprehended through technical and human intelligence sources. In another operation, the New Town Police caught a suspect allegedly involved in multiple robbery incidents. The police recovered a snatched motorcycle, Rs32,000 taken at gunpoint, and a weapon used in the offenses. Superintendent of Police Rawal Division Saad Arshad said that the accomplices of both arrested men would be captured soon, adding that the cases would be challaned with solid evidence to ensure exemplary punishment.—APP

Briefs

Gilani
commends
security forces

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Friday, lauded the security forces for successfully thwarting the terrorist attack in Mir Ali. He said that the nation takes great pride in the professionalism, courage, and resolve of its valiant soldiers who have once again defeated the nefarious designs of the enemies of peace. The Chairman Senate stated that the continuous efforts, vigilance, and unwavering determination of the security forces in the fight against terrorism are a source of pride and reassurance for the entire nation. He said this successful operation has once again reaffirmed that Pakistan's security institutions will never allow the enemies of peace and stability to succeed in their malicious objectives. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani further said that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its security forces, whose bravery, discipline, and patriotism symbolise the unity and strength of the country. He expressed the hope that with the same resolve and solidarity, the nation will succeed in completely eradicating terrorism and extremism from the country.—APP

Pakistan close to
emerge as tiger
of Asia soon:
Kashmiri leader

ISLAMABAD: Visiting Overseas Kashmiri Leader Malik Ishfaq Awan has said that Pakistan, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir was going to emerge as the tiger of Asia, particularly in acknowledgement of the outstanding performance of the valiant armed forces of Pakistan resorting to convincing defeat to India in May this year war. Talking to journalists at the Kashmir Press Club here, he said that under the ambitious leadership of the Prime Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan was rapidly progressing. Awan, also frontline leader of Britain Chapter of PML (N), said "Pakistan has not only regained its high image and position the world over, but also a distinguished power, since it resorted to a befitting reply to the unprovoked Indian aggression shooting down seven fighter jets of the enemy in the brief 5-day war. Overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris were proud of this unprecedented success of Pakistan resorting to historic defeat to the enemy in this year conflict, he said. The Overseas Kashmiri leader said the Pakistani and Kashmiri expatriates dwelling abroad would not hesitate from any sacrifice standing united shoulder to shoulder the Pakistan's valiant armed forces for the defense of inch after inch of the motherland, he added.—APP

ICT reports 34
Dengue cases

ISLAMABAD: In the ongoing anti-dengue campaign across Islamabad, the district administration inspected more than 40,000 sites, carried out fogging at 2,683 locations, and conducted spraying in 1,210 houses, while 34 new cases were reported during the past 24 hours. The Islamabad district administration has intensified its anti-dengue drive as part of its daily monitoring and control activities. According to the latest report, inspection teams visited 40,088 sites across the capital under the ongoing campaign. The teams conducted spray operations in 1,210 houses and fogging at 2,683 locations to control the mosquito population. Surveillance teams identified 566 sites with dengue larvae, while eight locations tested negative during the inspection. In the last 24 hours, 34 new dengue cases have been confirmed in the federal capital. Of these, 20 cases were reported from rural areas, and 14 from urban localities. Currently, 66 patients are under treatment in various hospitals across the city. The district administration has directed all field teams to increase daily surveillance in high-risk areas to prevent the further spread of dengue. Authorities said that both fogging and public awareness activities are being intensified across residential and commercial zones. Officials added that strict action will be taken against individuals or premises found violating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for dengue prevention.—APP

Jane, Kayani discuss
economic cooperation

Both sides expressed satisfaction over the growing partnership between Pakistan and the United Kingdom and reiterated their resolve to maintain close contact to further deepen bilateral ties for mutual benefit

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, accompanied by Senior Government Adviser Matt Clancy, called on Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani at the Ministry of Finance on Friday. During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations and enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest, particularly in macroeconomic development and economic reform. Minister Kayani briefed the High Commissioner on Pakistan's economic priorities and the government's efforts to achieve sustainable growth. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision focuses on transforming economic stability into long-term prosperity. Highlighting the progress in the railways sector, the Minister said the government is working diligently to modernize Pakistan Railways and convert it into a reliable and efficient transport



system equipped with modern facilities. High Commissioner Marriott appreciated Pakistan's ongoing reform efforts and reaffirmed the United Kingdom's commit-

ment to expanding cooperation with Pakistan in areas such as trade, investment, and infrastructure development. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the

growing partnership between Pakistan and the United Kingdom and reiterated their resolve to maintain close contact to further deepen bilateral ties for mutual benefit.

Singh- Pakistan
universities ink MoU

ISLAMABAD: Ghazi University (GU), Dera Ghazi Khan, and TANG Chinese International Education & Technology (Pvt.) Ltd. (TANG Pakistan) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote Chinese language learning, cultural exchange, and academic cooperation. The agreement was formalized during a signing ceremony at TANG House in Islamabad, held, marking a new chapter in China-Pakistan educational collaboration, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. The MoU was signed by Prof. Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of GU, and Mr. Song Jianying, CEO of TANG Pakistan. Senior representatives from both sides, including Dr. Sagheer Atta, Director of the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), and Mubeel Nasir, Regional Head of TANG Pakistan, attended the event. Under the MoU, the two sides will collaborate on China-Pakistan joint education programs under the CCTE Mode, offer Chinese language demonstration courses through the TANG Cloud Platform, and organize faculty and student exchange programs. They also plan to hold joint academic symposia and conferences to deepen scholarly engagement. The partnership underscores GU's commitment to academic internationalization and aligns with Pakistan's broader vision of fostering mutual understanding and cooperation under the China-Pakistan framework.—DNA

Chairman Senate felicitates
Asma Jahangir group

ISLAMABAD:Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Friday extended heartfelt congratulations to the Asma Jahangir Group on their victory in the elections of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA). In his congratulatory message, the Chairman Senate conveyed best wishes to the head of the Independent Group, Ahsan Bhoon, newly elected President Haroon-ur-Rashid, Secretary Zahid Aslam Awan, and other office-bearers. He expressed confidence that the newly elected leadership would continue their dedicated efforts for the welfare and empowerment of the legal fraternity. Gilani stated that Parliament has always regarded the legal community as an important partner in the process of national reform and institutional strengthening. He lauded the significant role lawyers have played in upholding the rule of law, protecting constitutional values, and promoting democratic principles in Pakistan. The Chairman Sen-

ate expressed hope that the newly elected President of SCBA, Haroon-ur-Rashid and his team will further strengthen the mission of ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution, independence of the judiciary, and the well-being of the legal community. Highlighting the contributions of lawyers in Pakistan's democratic journey, Gilani said that the legal fraternity has always stood shoulder to shoulder with political leaders in safeguarding democracy and advancing constitutional governance. He said that lawyers represent the most conscious and vibrant segment of society, whose role in fostering civic awareness, defending human rights, and promoting justice is indispensable. The Chairman Senate further emphasised that the partnership between Parliament and the legal fraternity is vital for the promotion of democratic values, rule of law, and access to justice for all citizens.—APP

AJK begins preparations for 78th
govt anniversary celebration

ISLAMABAD: The brisk preparations have begun to celebrate the 78th founding Anniversary of government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir on October 24 in a befitting manner with the renewal of pledge to continue Kashmir freedom movement till its logical end - besides to utilize all possible due resources for ensuring progress and prosperity of the liberated territory. This year too, the anniversary of the emergence of the AJK government is being observed when India, through its shameful, forced, sinister unlawful action of August 5, 2019 had scrapped the special status of the internationally-acknowledged disputed Himalayan state of Jammu & Kashmir through abrogating article 370 and 35-A of its own constitution by blatantly defying the United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir which determine the grant of right of self determination to the people of the disputed Jammu & Kashmir state through a free and fair plebiscite granting Kashmiris the above right to decide about their destiny, under the auspices of the United Nations, the official sources have said. The Founding Day of Azad Jammu Kashmir government is observed on October 24 every year to celebrate the founding anniversary of AJK government formed this day 77 years ago on October 24, 1947 after the AJK territory had been gotten liberated by the valiant sons of the soil from the clutches of the India-backed despotic Dogra regime. Highlighting the programs scheduled for celebrations to observe the day in Azad Jammu Kashmir, the sources told APP that special ceremonies would be held in all ten districts of Azad Jammu Kashmir to celebrate the day with simplicity. The speakers will highlight the historic significance of the founding day. Besides 'Fateha' will be offered for the Kashmiri martyrs and special prayers for the early success of the Jammu &

Kashmir freedom movement. Since the Kashmiris struggle for freedom in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) has reached at climax amidst the pro freedom and anti india street agitation across the bleeding occupied Jammu Kashmir state (for past over five years) and the reign of state terrorism unleashed by the Indian occupying forces for the last 78 years, the government in the liberated territory (AJK) has started due preparations to chalk out special programs to observe the founding anniversary of the state government with due zeal and fervor. This year too the AJK government's founding day anniversary will be observed with prime focus to elaborate the due role of this base camp of the Kashmir freedom movement for raising the Kashmiris indigenous struggle for freedom at international level besides to reiterate complete solidarity with the people of the IIOJK in their just and principled struggle for liberation of the motherland from Indian clutches. The day will dawn with special prayers for the early success of Kashmir freedom movement, as well as for the stability and prosperity of Pakistan, the ultimate destination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who (Kashmiris) had attached their destiny with it, the day they raised their voice against the India-backed Dogra regime over seven decades ago. It will be followed by rallies in various parts of AJK being organized by public and private organizations to commemorate the day. In Mirpur special ceremonies to observe the Foundation Day of AJK government, will be hosted under the auspices of various social, political and public representative organizations under the fold of the National Events Organizing Committee on October 24 with the due collaboration of the Mirpur district administration.APP

Digital Nexus, Pach
Int'lsign agreement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A cooperation agreement has been signed between Digital Nexus and the Chinese company Pach International in Islamabad. The agreement was signed by Chairperson Sabohi Hussain on behalf of Digital Nexus, and by President Wing Pang, Director of Industry Development at the Chinese company, who is also the Vice Presi-



dent of the World Federation of Chinese Entrepreneurs. Under this agreement, both parties will collaborate to enhance industry development, cooperation, and B2B relationships. They aim to establish new trade opportunities in Pakistan and strengthen the trade relations between Pakistan and China. The Chinese company will assist in providing market access for the Pakistani business community.

Meta and PTA
collaborate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Meta in collaboration with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) educational platform, EYEYAH!, has launched a social campaign and interactive online experience named "Is This Legit?" to raise awareness for common scam traps within Pakistan. This initiative is part of a broader APAC-wide campaign rolling out across more than 15 countries, promoting safer digital experiences.

The campaign educates users on seven prevalent scam types, including romance, shopping, impersonation, investment, job, account hacking and messaging scams through engaging and gamified content designed to build awareness of scam indicators and red flags. Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, HI (M) SI, commended the collaboration, emphasizing PTA's ongoing commitment to fostering a secure and informed digital environment. He highlighted the initiative as a continuation of PTA and Meta's joint efforts to enhance digital literacy and protect users from fraudulent activities. Dania Mukhtar, Head of Pakistan Public Policy at Meta, said, "At Meta, we are deeply committed to safeguarding our community in Pakistan by proactively removing scammers from our platforms.—APP

Fake insurance
payouts threaten
sector's stability

ISLAMABAD: The insurance industry in Pakistan is not just facing pressure, but a significant threat from the surge in fake claims. This has led to a call for urgent action to strengthen verification systems and tighten regulatory oversight. Insurers have reported a rise in suspicious claims over the past year, with fraudulent payouts estimated to have cost the sector billions. Several firms have launched internal audits and referred cases to the authorities for investigation. A senior executive at a leading insurer, requesting anonymity, said, "Fraudulent claims have become organized and technology-assisted. Fake documents, duplicate medical bills, exaggerated accident reports and factory fires are now routine. This not only drains company reserves but also raises premiums for genuine customers." Small and medium insurers appear particularly vulnerable as they lack advanced digital verification tools and depend on manual processes. Insiders have urged the authorities to fast-track a centralised claim verification system and enhance penalties for internal collusion.—APP

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Lebanon, Yemen and Iran after Gaza

ABDULRAHMAN AL-RASHED

THE war in Gaza has ended but the same cannot be said of Israel's other conflicts. Three fronts remain open. In Lebanon, a fragile truce holds, while sporadic exchanges of fire continue with Yemen's Houthis. Meanwhile, Iran remains the major front, having been on alert since June following the 12-day war. All eyes are on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Will the latest developments after the Sharm El-Sheikh conference sweep him out of office? It is more likely that he will try to complete the missions he pledged to carry out, which may reignite clashes on all three fronts. The October 2023 attacks happened on his watch and he bears responsibility for them. He likely believes that achieving full victories will place him above accountability. However, if his rivals succeed in toppling him, the region's situation will hang in suspense as Israel awaits a new leader and a new policy. Still, Netanyahu might instead choose de-escalation and end two years of turmoil. The likelihood of Netanyahu remaining in power is strong, given his well-known political skills within a complex parliamentary system, in which he can craft coalitions that extend his rule. He has governed Israel for more than 17 years – longer even than David Ben-Gurion – and still enjoys enough popularity after the wars he has led, which brought Israel its biggest victories since the 1967 war. Anxiety looms in Lebanon, as expressed by President Joseph Aoun, who warned that Israel might turn its attention to his country once it finishes with Gaza, describing this as “political profiteering.” Israel will certainly have surplus strength after withdrawing most of its troops from Gaza. And, since Hezbollah is maneuvering to evade implementing what it agreed with Israel when the ceasefire was established – handing over its weapons to the Lebanese army – the Israeli northern front remains open. US President Donald Trump

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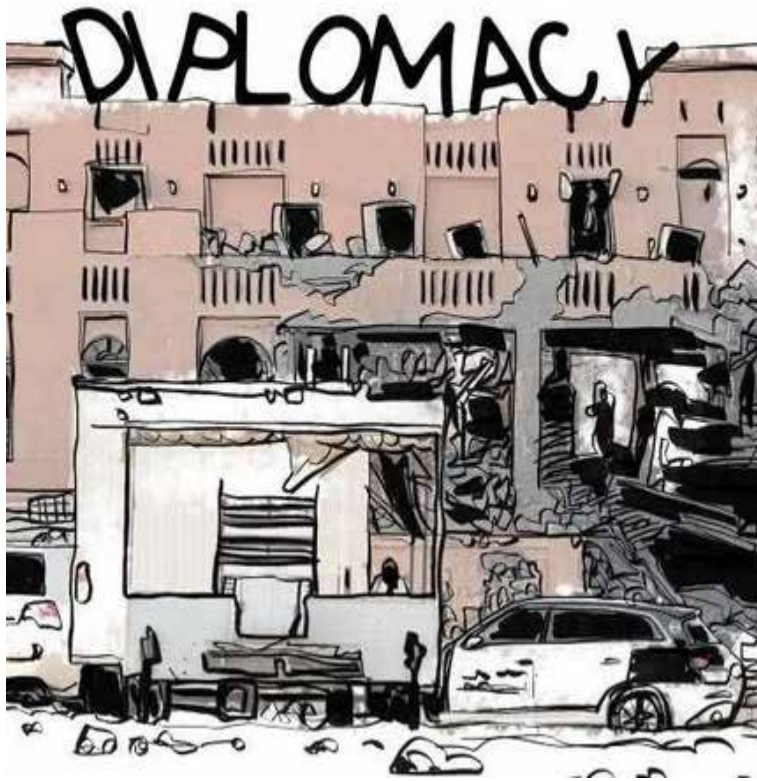
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will not be able to restrain Netanyahu this time, as both the Americans and the French were witnesses and guarantors of the agreement. The ball is now in the court of the Lebanese president, who is avoiding confrontation with Hezbollah to preserve the civil peace and stability achieved since the beginning of the year. According to Israel, it will not withdraw from southern Lebanon or stop its attacks unless Hezbollah hands over its weapons, or perhaps new arrangements will be made to provide the necessary guarantees. The confrontation with Yemen's Houthis depends on the behavior of the Iranian-backed group and what it does now that the Gaza war is over. Israel has the military capability to weaken the Houthis and prepare Yemeni forces on the ground to complete the mission of overthrowing the Houthi regime in Sanaa. The renewed enthusiasm among these forces shows their readiness for the next phase. The most difficult and dangerous front – with the widest regional repercussions – is Iran. Trump was the one who stopped the June fighting that lasted just under two weeks. He had previously entered the war and ordered attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities; it was his first war, after which he announced a ceasefire. Netanyahu was dissatisfied at the time, having failed to secure a green light to continue his planned military operations. The US president skillfully used that position against Tehran, warning it that he would unleash Netanyahu upon it if it resumed uranium enrichment or military activities. That is why Iran's armed forces are now on high alert – and Netanyahu will not lack cunning or pretexts to resume his war if he wishes. Should a clash break out between these two regional powers, it would be devastating. The countries surrounding the conflict are watching anxiously and remain on alert. Politicians in Lebanon and Iran must realize that the dangers have not ended – and will not end – with the Gaza ceasefire agreement. That bloody war concluded with a bilateral deal, while the situation on the other fronts remains unresolved. The significant international presence that supports negotiations, exerts pressure and provides aid in Gaza gives the other three threatened parties an opportunity to arrange their situations and agreements. They must not settle for temporary truces, for a truce is nothing more than a ticking time bomb.

Dividend of Gaza–Israel Peace for the Rest of the World

Qamar Bashir



This war, conceived by Israel and prosecuted with staggering ferocity, has ended in exhaustion rather than triumph. For the people of Gaza and the West Bank, the devastation is almost indescribable. United Nations and World Bank assessments estimate that Gaza alone faces over fifty billion dollars in reconstruction needs, with nearly seventy billion required to restore what has been lost. More than fifty-five million tons of rubble bury homes, schools, and hospitals, enough to fill thirteen pyramids of Giza

THE world has finally witnessed an extraordinary development: the guns in Gaza have fallen silent. After months of relentless bombing, destruction, and the slow suffocation of a besieged population, Donald Trump's unprecedented peace plan has brought at least a temporary halt to the horror. Aid is now trickling into Gaza, families that had endured starvation are receiving a semblance of relief, and the hope of survival, however fragile, is returning to a battered land. Yet the relief is tempered by the rhetoric of Benjamin Netanyahu, who insists that Israel's objectives remain unchanged. His refusal to admit defeat conceals an anger at failing to persuade Trump to bless a complete annihilation of Gaza and its annexation into Israel's expanding dream of territorial conquest. This war, conceived by Israel and prosecuted with staggering ferocity, has ended in exhaustion rather than triumph. For the people of Gaza and the West Bank, the devastation is almost indescribable. United Nations and World Bank assessments estimate that Gaza alone faces over fifty billion dollars in reconstruction needs, with nearly seventy billion required to restore what has been lost. More than fifty-five million tons of rubble bury homes, schools, and hospitals, enough to fill thirteen pyramids of Giza. Electricity grids, water systems, hospitals, and telecommunications have been flattened. The human cost is greater still: tens of thousands dead, many more maimed, families erased, and an entire generation displaced. Yet despite these horrors, the end of open conflict has already produced ripples felt far beyond the Levant. Perhaps the most immediate effect has been on global energy markets. During the war, the mere fear of disruption in Middle Eastern supply lines, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea trade routes, added a risk premium to oil. Brent crude had soared above eighty dollars a barrel, driving fuel and shipping costs higher across the globe. With hostilities ending, oil prices have tumbled to around sixty-one dollars a barrel, their lowest in five months. In the United States, gasoline prices that averaged four dollars a gallon only weeks ago are now edging closer to two dollars in some states, a correction that promises relief not only at the pump but across every layer of the economy. Energy is the bloodstream of modern commerce. When oil and gas prices fall, every input cost—from transport to manufacturing to food distribution—drops in tandem. Lower energy costs ease inflationary pressure, reduce the consumer price

index, and expand household purchasing power. For American families struggling with high costs of living, this decline may prove transformative. The dividend will be shared across the industrialized world, lowering inflation in Europe and Asia, reducing transport costs for global trade, and calming volatile markets that had priced in the risk of an expanded Middle Eastern war. The greatest beneficiaries, however, may be in the developing world. Countries like Pakistan, Egypt, and those across Sub-Saharan Africa, which import most of their energy needs, have been spending much of their export earnings and foreign reserves on oil bills. High prices pushed them toward debt crises, leaving little for infrastructure or social spending. Now, with energy costs receding, these economies will regain some fiscal breathing space. Foreign exchange reserves will stabilize, debt servicing will become less crushing, and scarce resources can be redirected to development and poverty alleviation. For Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India—together home to over two billion people—the respite in energy costs is no less than a lifeline. Add China, the world's largest energy importer, and the region accounts for nearly four billion people now benefiting directly from the dividends of this peace. Equally important is the impact on trade. During the war, insurance premiums for ships passing through Middle Eastern waters soared, freight costs climbed, and global supply chains faced unpredictable delays. The ceasefire reduces these risks almost overnight. Cheaper shipping and lower risk premiums will improve the competitiveness of exporters, stabilize imports of food and essential goods, and ultimately lower costs for consumers worldwide. The IMF has already noted that a durable peace in Gaza could improve regional growth prospects by as much as one percentage point, a significant gain for struggling economies. Peace also reshapes politics. Governments that were facing unrest from rising food and fuel prices suddenly have a cushion. Political leaders in fragile states can buy time, enact reforms, or at least ease the burden on citizens. This in turn creates a measure of stability, the very foundation of legitimacy and governance. The dividends of peace, therefore, are not only economic but also political, strengthening societies at their weakest points. Still, there remains the urgent question of responsibility. Who will pay for Gaza's reconstruction? It is not enough for wealthy states to open their treasuries out of charity while those who

unleashed destruction escape unscathed. International law and morality demand that blame be apportioned. Israel, Hamas, regional actors, and global powers that contributed to the devastation should be compelled to shoulder the costs. Without such accountability, the precedent would be disastrous: that any powerful nation may devastate its weaker neighbor and walk away without consequence. Gaza must not become a template for impunity. Compensation must also reach families of innocent victims—children, women, doctors, and journalists—whose lives were shattered. The road ahead is perilous. The peace is fragile and could collapse under renewed aggression. Donor pledges may falter, leaving reconstruction incomplete. Funds may be captured by elites or foreign contractors, breeding resentment rather than renewal. Regional tensions—whether in Lebanon, Syria, or Iran—could reignite conflict and restore the risk premium to oil markets. The dividends of peace are real but remain precariously balanced on the commitments of guarantors like the United States, which must enforce its plan with vigilance. For Donald Trump, the Gaza ceasefire is not only a diplomatic achievement but also a political claim. He has boasted of stopping eight wars and now turns his gaze toward Russia and Ukraine, pledging to end that grinding conflict as well. Should he succeed, he would enter history as the president who halted nine wars in a single year of office. Whether this is bravado or foresight remains to be seen, but the Gaza experience proves that even entrenched conflicts can yield when backed by resolve and pressure from the most powerful office on earth. In the final analysis, the dividends of Gaza–Israel peace are vast. Lower energy costs, subdued inflation, revitalized trade, fiscal space for fragile economies, and a political reprieve for leaders facing unrest all stem from this fragile truce. But the greatest dividend may be moral: the reminder that peace, even imperfect, enriches humanity far more than war, which impoverishes all. If the world seizes this moment to rebuild Gaza with justice, fairness, and accountability, it may set a precedent that aggression must pay and that peace, not conquest, yields the truest victory.

—The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC | Macomb, Michigan, USA

Losing the Language of Civility

Dr. Muhammad Anwar Farooq

The way we treat one another shapes our daily lives more deeply than any policy or political slogan ever could. Walk through a crowded market or a government office and you'll see what I mean. People shout instead of speak, push instead of wait and suspect each other before they trust. Traffic jams turn into shouting contests. Customer service feels like combat. Even classrooms, which were once safe places for curiosity

SOMETHING Important has slipped out of our public life, and it's not just money, electricity, or jobs, though those are often missing too. What has truly vanished is basic civility which is the simple art of treating others with respect, speaking kindly and showing patience. It's not a small thing. The way we treat one another shapes our daily lives more deeply than any policy or political slogan ever could. Walk through a crowded market or a government office and you'll see what I mean. People shout instead of speak, push instead of wait and suspect each other before they trust. Traffic jams turn into shouting contests. Customer service feels like combat. Even classrooms, which were once safe places for curiosity and discussion, are turning into spaces of defiance and ego. Somewhere along the way, we stopped seeing politeness as strength and started confusing aggression with confidence. This collapse of manners isn't unique to Pakistan, but it feels sharper here. Sociologists call civility the invisible glue that holds a society together. When that glue weakens, trust falls apart and when trust disappears, fairness becomes a myth. Political turmoil, economic anxiety and constant frustration have eaten away at our sense of social balance. You can see the evidence everywhere: talk shows that reward shouting over substance, political debates that rely on insults rather than ideas and social media where outrage has become a national sport. Rudeness now feels normal. Many people even defend it by saying, "I'm just being straight-forward." But being straightforward isn't the same as being cruel. Honesty doesn't mean humiliating others. When a shopkeeper cuts off a customer mid-sentence, when a student mocks a teacher, or when a driver screams at a traffic warden, it's not confi-

dence but it's a lack of discipline and empathy. The erosion of manners begins at home. The family, once the first school of character, has changed dramatically. Parents are busier, weighed down by economic pressures or lost in their phones. The quiet art of teaching respect through tone, patience, and example often disappears. Children now pick up their cues from social media, where quick sarcasm and mockery are rewarded with likes. We've ended up with a generation that's fluent in wit but poor in courtesy. Education hasn't filled the gap. Schools are obsessed with grades, exams and competition, while moral development quietly slips off the agenda. The word tarbiyat (moral upbringing) has almost vanished from our vocabulary. Teachers, overworked and underpaid, struggle to model the very values society demands from them. And when students watch politicians shouting in parliament or anchors turning every discussion into a fight, why would they think civility still matters? Culture has changed too. Our grandparents lived in communities where neighbors knew one another and elders had authority. There was a shared sense of accountability, not out of fear but mutual respect. Now, high walls separate homes and online anonymity separates people. The internet has given everyone a voice, but also permission to insult strangers without consequence. Urban life gives us privacy but it steals the empathy that comes from knowing the people around us. Economic stress only adds to the decline. When people are constantly struggling to survive, good manners start to feel like a luxury. Yet civility isn't just about comfort, it's about sanity. When hardship turns into rudeness, and rudeness fuels more frustration, we create a cycle of bitterness that makes everyday life harder for everyone. Even so, hope isn't gone. You still see flashes of kindness: a driver letting

another car pass, a student helping a teacher carry books, a stranger returning a lost wallet. These moments are reminders that decency hasn't disappeared, it's just quieter now. Good manners have nothing to do with status or education; they're about recognizing the dignity of another human being. Rebuilding civility doesn't require a national campaign. It starts with ordinary choices: speak softly even when you're angry, listen before you reply, say thank you even when you don't have to. These gestures seem small but they're the seeds of a better society. Schools can play their part by teaching empathy and teamwork. Media outlets can reward calm and thoughtful debate instead of celebrating outrage. And our leaders, if they truly wish to lead, must show restraint and humility in their words and conduct. Civility is more than politeness, it's the foundation of progress. A nation that cannot speak to itself with respect cannot solve its problems. We can build highways and skyscrapers but if anger becomes our common language, those achievements will rest on fragile ground. What Pakistan needs most urgently is not just infrastructure made of concrete but a moral infrastructure built on empathy and respect. We live in an age of speed and uncertainty, caught between the pull of tradition and the rush of modern life. But manners never go out of style. They cost nothing, yet they elevate everything. The way we speak to a waiter, disagree with a colleague, or argue online shows what kind of society we're becoming. If we want that society to be kinder, wiser and more humane then we'll have to begin with something simple: learning once again how to be polite.

—The writer is serving as Director of the Institute of Humanities and Arts at Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

Briefs

Afghan
refugees
repatriation...

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the war against terrorism. He said the Afghan government had been repeatedly urged – through diplomatic channels and senior-level visits – to prevent the use of Afghan territory for attacks against Pakistan. The forum was informed that the phased repatriation of Afghan refugees is already underway. As of October 16, 2025, a total of 1,477,592 Afghans have been repatriated. The government has decided not to grant any further extensions and emphasized that only Afghans holding valid Pakistani visas will be allowed to remain. Exit points along the border are being expanded to facilitate a smoother process. The meeting was also briefed that sheltering undocumented Afghans or allowing them to stay in guesthouses constitutes a criminal offense. Citizens will be encouraged to support the government's repatriation policy, ensuring the process is conducted lawfully and respectfully.

Pakistan
exercised
its right to...

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disregards the legal and historical status of Jammu and Kashmir," he said. Highlighting Pakistan's humanitarian approach, the spokesperson said Islamabad continues to host around four million Afghan nationals and will regulate their stay in line with international norms and domestic laws. "Pakistan desires a peaceful, stable, friendly, inclusive, and prosperous Afghanistan," he noted. Ambassador Shafat announced that Pakistan was elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2026–2028 with an overwhelming majority of 178 votes. "This marks Pakistan's sixth election to the Council since its establishment in 2006 and reflects the global community's confidence in our commitment to human rights and consensus building," he said. Pakistan, he added, will continue to spotlight human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine.

CM Afridi
moves
SC, seeks...

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In his maiden speech in the KP Assembly, CM Afridi called himself "a champion of confrontational politics", hinting at the continuation of his predecessor's efforts to release the PTI founder Khan with new energy. The young politician further warned that if the PTI founder was moved from Adiala jail without consulting his family and the party, they would paralyse the whole country in protest.

4 envoys
present
credentials...

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promoting goodwill between the two nations. In his conversation with the Ambassador of Lebanon, the President reaffirmed Pakistan's deep solidarity with the Government and people of Lebanon, strongly condemning Israel's aggression against civilians. He assured Pakistan's continued support for Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and emphasised the need to enhance bilateral trade, security and counter-terrorism cooperation.

Earthquake
jolts parts...

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at a depth of 10km at 4:53pm. However, USGS also registered a 5.5 magnitude earthquake less than 10km Pakistan's northern border with Afghanistan. This one was registered at 5:15pm at a depth of 10km. A screenshot of a map showing two earthquakes registered north and west of Pakistan. — Screenshot via USGS
Last week, a magnitude 5 earthquake struck close to Punjab's Layyah on Saturday night, according to the PMD.

Govt steps in on Arshad Nadeem coach ban issue

The move follows public backlash over the AFP's controversial action against Salman Butt, a respected figure credited with grooming Arshad Nadeem into an Olympic and world-class athlete

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has taken strong notice of the Athletics Federation of Pakistan's (AFP) decision to impose a lifetime ban on Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem's coach, Salman Butt, and has ordered a high-level inquiry through the Pakistan Sports Board. According to official sources, the government has expressed serious concern over the AFP's "shocking and widely criticized" decision, directing the PSB to investigate the motives behind the ban, assess its impact on Pakistan's athletics, and submit a detailed report to the

Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination. The move follows public backlash over the AFP's controversial action against Salman Butt, a respected figure credited with grooming Arshad Nadeem into an Olympic and world-class athlete. Officials said the decision has created a negative impression internationally, affecting Pakistan's sports reputation. Coach Salman Butt, however, has categorically rejected the allegations leveled by the federation, terming them baseless. He reaffirmed his commitment to continue mentoring Arshad Nadeem, saying his focus remains on helping Pakistan achieve further glory on the global stage.

'Major milestone' as Baseball United to bring game to Indian audiences

DUBAI: Baseball United, the first professional league focused on the Middle East and South Asia, has announced a partnership with Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd., the leading media and entertainment company, to deliver games live to millions in India. The collaboration with Z includes coverage of all 21 of Baseball United's Season One games this November and December, and several primetime matches featuring the Mumbai Cobras, India's first professional franchise. Baseball United's games will air on three of Z's leading linear channels – Zee Cafe SD, &Flix SD and &Pictures HD – and stream on the Zee 5 app. Broadcasts will be in English and Hindi. Baseball United's inaugural season will include the league's four founding franchises – Arabia Wolves, Mid East Falcons, Karachi Monarchs, and Mumbai Cobras. The partnership includes full supplementary content on Zee 5, including player features, ballpark highlights, Baseball 101 clips, behind-the-scenes segments, and an original documentary on the building of the league.

Z will support the partnership with four weeks of promotion across its network, with teasers, ad spots, lower-thirds, and additional branded content. Both Baseball United and Z will also collaborate on social media posts and campaigns. The league's season begins with a historic matchup, as Mumbai takes on Karachi for a three-game "Subcontinent Series" on Nov. 14, 15 and 16. The series will mark the first games in history for both franchises, as well as the first India-Pakistan professional matchups. The teams' rosters have players from 25 countries, including six Indians on the Mumbai franchise. Kash Shaikh, chairman, CEO and co-founder of Baseball United said he was excited at the collaboration with Z. "This is a major milestone in our mission to bring professional baseball to India and the broader region, and it's a significant moment for the more than 50 million baseball fans in India. "Z is one of India's most iconic broadcasters, and their combination of reach, relevance, and reputation make them an ideal partner to connect with fans across this great country."

India has one of the world's largest, youngest, and fastest-growing media markets. Z, which reaches over 800 million viewers, is one of India's pioneering private broadcasters. Its flagship Zee TV launched in October 1992 as India's first privately-held satellite channel. Over the decades, Z has grown into a full-spectrum media and entertainment conglomerate, spanning general entertainment, movies, regional- and language-specific channels, and a major digital platform. "At Z, we are committed to bringing world-class international sports to Indian audiences and establishing India as a global platform for sports consumption," said Laxmi Shetty, head of advertisement revenue, broadcast and digital. "India has a deeply entrenched bat-and-ball sporting culture, and we are excited to introduce millions of sports fans to the speed, strategy, and spectacle of professional baseball. "With Hindi and English feeds, we are building a foundation for the sport of baseball that will entertain fans and create a wider passionate fanbase." – Agencies

Zaman, Irfan Reach Vancouver Open 2025 Quarterfinals

Zaman to face England's Sam Todd, Irfan to lock horns with Egypt's Mohamed Sharaf in next round

KARACHI: Pakistan's top squash players Noor Zaman and Ashab Irfan have booked their spots in the quarterfinals of the Richardson Wealth Vancouver Men's Open 2025 after impressive victories in their Round of 16 matches on Thursday. The PSA World Tour Copper event, offering a prize purse of \$31,250, features a strong international lineup with players from England, Egypt, Hong Kong, and Wales. Third seed Zaman produced a confident and skillful display to defeat Wales' Owain Taylor 3-1 in 53 minutes. Zaman controlled the early stages, winning the first two games 11-9, 11-9 through well-measured rallies. Taylor rallied in the third, saving two game balls before edging it 14-12, but Zaman responded strongly in the fourth, using sharp drops and steady backcourt play to seal the win 11-8. The 21-year-old will now face England's Sam Todd in the quarterfinal. In another Round of 16 match, fourth seed Irfan endured a nerve-testing five-game battle against Hong Kong's Matthew Lai, eventually prevailing 3-2 after 71 minutes of intense play. Irfan began strongly, taking the first game 11-4 with dominant play, but Lai struck back to level the score. The Pakistani regained momentum to claim the third game 11-7 before Lai once again forced a decider by winning a tight fourth 12-10. In the fifth, Irfan's superior conditioning and calm under pressure made the difference as he closed out the contest 11-6 to book his place in the quarterfinals. Irfan will face Mohamed Sharaf of Egypt in the fourth quarterfinal. – Agencies

Abbottabad 2025 Female Sports Gala Begins in Style

ABBOTTABAD: In collaboration with the Regional Sports Office Abbottabad, the District Administration Abbottabad on Friday organized a colorful opening ceremony of the Female Sports Gala Abbottabad 2025 at Kunj Ground on Thursday. Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance and Planning) Azki Fatima graced the event as the chief guest. The opening ceremony featured impressive displays of athletics and archery, while a total of 14 different sports competitions were held during the gala. These include cricket, athletics, badminton, basketball, volleyball, hockey, squash, table tennis, judo, taekwondo, karate, gymnastics, archery, and lacrosse. At the ceremony, ADC Azki Fatima and Female Sports Officer Ahmed Zaman distributed medals and cash prizes among the winning participants. – Agencies



PCB announces ticket prices for Pak-SA white-ball series

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced ticket prices for the white-ball series between Pakistan and South Africa. The white-ball leg begins with the three-match T20I series, starting October 28 in Rawalpindi, followed by back-to-back games in Lahore on October 31 and November 1. The three ODIs will then be played in Faisalabad on November 4, 6, and 8. Tickets for the opening T20I at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium have been priced to suit a wide range of fans, with rates starting at PKR 400 for General enclosures and going up to PKR 15,000 for Platinum Box seats. VIP tickets are available for PKR 800, Premium Enclosure tickets for PKR 700, First Class for PKR 600, and PCB Gallery seats for PKR 1,500. For the Lahore leg at Gaddafi Stadium, ticket prices remain unchanged across both matches: PKR 400 for General, PKR 600 for First Class, PKR 700 for Premium, and PKR 800 for VIP enclosures.

Second Healy ton takes Australia into Women's World Cup semis

With fourth win in five matches, Australia become first team to secure final-four berth in 50-over tournament

VISAKHAPATNAM: Skipper Alyssa Healy hit an unbeaten 113, her second century in a row, as holders Australia booked their spot in the semi-finals of the Women's World Cup with a crushing 10-wicket win over Bangladesh on Thursday. Healy and fellow opener Phoebe Litchfield, unbeaten on 84, hardly put a foot wrong as Australia romped home to their victory target of 199 with 25.1 overs to spare in Visakhapatnam. With a fourth win in five matches - the other was washed out - seven-time champions Australia become the first team to secure a final-four berth in the 50-over marquee tournament. The left-handed Litchfield hit Fariha Trisna for two successive fours to bring up the win as they reached 202-0 in 24.5 overs. Australia have two matches left to play in the league stage including a key clash with rivals England next week and a surprised Healy came to know about the semi-final qualification in the post-match presentation. "We pride ourselves in professionalism, we played well today to get the two points, we'll come back and be prepared for the next match as well," said Healy. "I didn't know we have made the semi-finals." Wicketkeeper-batter Healy raised her second successive ton after her heroics in the previous win over co-hosts India when the captain's 142 made Australia chase down 331. She hammered 20 boundaries from her 77-ball knock while Litchfield struck 12 boundaries and a six as she raised her eighth ODI fifty. Australia's spinners set up the victory after they kept Bangladesh down to 198-9 in their 50 overs after electing to bat first, Ashleigh Gardner, Alana King and Georgia Wareham all taking two wickets each. Sobhana Mostary hit a defiant unbeaten 66 to make Bangladesh play out their full quota of overs after they slipped to 165-9 in the 46th over but it wasn't enough to test the Australians. – Agencies

Liverpool seek mojo against Manchester United, Postecoglou hunts first win

LONDON: Liverpool will be desperate to recapture their spark against bitter rivals Manchester United this weekend but Ruben Amorim's men will harbour hopes of pinching a rare win at Anfield. The champions have lost just one of their past 14 Premier League meetings against United but have suffered three straight defeats in all competitions, with Arsenal now top of the pile. Nottingham Forest boss Ange Postecoglou survived the international break but remains under intense pressure after failing to record a win in his first seven matches. AFP Sport looks at three key talking points ahead of the weekend action: **Liverpool bank on Anfield factor against Man Utd:** When Liverpool started this season with five straight Premier League wins, it appeared they were on track for a record 21st English top-flight title - which would take them one clear of United. But problems they had papered over with a flurry of late goals finally caught up with them in defeats to Crystal Palace and Chelsea, either side of a Champions League loss at Galatasaray. Liverpool, one point behind leaders Arsenal, trolled United on social media this week, reminding them of the 7-0 drubbing they dished out in March 2023. Mohamed Salah scored twice that day and has an eye-catching record against United,

netting in 10 of the past 11 matches between the clubs in all competitions. But the Egypt forward will go into the fixture searching for form while new signings Florian Wirtz and Alexander Isak are struggling to make an impact. Arne Slot's men are also shaky at the back. United, without a win at Anfield since 2016, have come away with creditable draws from their past two visits. Ruben Amorim's men, wallowing in mid-table, will not scare Liverpool but they will likely have chances to exploit chinks in the home side's armour. **Postecoglou still winless:** Ange Postecoglou does not appear to be overconcerned about his position at Nottingham Forest despite a winless start to his reign at the City Ground. The club, just one place above the relegation zone, host Chelsea in the early kickoff on Saturday. It is a rapid fall from grace for Forest, who finished seventh last season under the now-departed Nuno Espirito Santo to secure European football. But it continues a troubling pattern for Postecoglou, who endured a nightmare league campaign last season with Tottenham, which cost him his job despite Europa League glory. The Australian said he relished a challenge after his team's 2-0 defeat at Newcastle on October 5, just days after home fans at the City Ground called for his sacking. – Agencies

Pakistan, Australia hockey match ends in a draw

DNA

JOHOR BAHRU: In a thrilling contest at the 2025 Sultan of Johor Cup, Pakistan and Australia played out a dramatic 3-3 draw on Friday at the Taman Daya Hockey Stadium in Johor Bahru. Both teams showcased high-intensity hockey from the first whistle, displaying strong attacking flair and tactical discipline. Australia took the lead more than once, but Pakistan fought back each time with determination and resilience. The match reached a gripping climax in the final quarter as Pakistan scored a late equalizer to level the score 3-3, denying Australia a clear victory. With this result, Australia remain unbeaten in the tournament, while Pakistan earn a crucial point to stay in contention in the round-robin stage. Although Pakistan were unable to secure a win, their spirited comeback and fighting spirit impressed fans and analysts alike. The evenly contested match highlighted the competitive nature of the tournament and set the stage for exciting upcoming fixtures.

Security forces 'kill 108...

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Taliban regime to prevent its soil from being used to attack Pakistan. The Taliban regime – instead of addressing Pakistan's concerns over cross-border terrorism – deployed a large number of terrorists in their aggression against Pakistan earlier this month. Taliban forces, in collaboration with their affiliated terror groups, launched an unprovoked attack on several Pakistan army posts on October 11. The aggression was met with a fierce response as Pakistan struck multiple Taliban posts along the border. In their retaliatory strikes, Pakistan killed over 200 Afghan Taliban and affiliated terrorists, while 23 soldiers laid down their lives in the border clashes. Pakistani forces dealt another crucial blow to the Taliban regime when they launched precision strikes deep inside Afghanistan on Thursday.

GST, taxes on solar panels being mulled

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if the revenue shortfall for the first half (July-December) of the fiscal year exceeds projections, and if the Finance Ministry is unable to reduce its expenditures. As per the contingency taxation measures identified by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and shared with the IMF, one proposal is to increase the General Sales Tax (GST) on imported solar panels from 10% to 18%, effective from January 2026, if needed. Another proposal under consideration is to raise the withholding tax on internet services from the current 15% to 18% or 20%. The government's push to discourage solar panel adoption stems from its reduced reliance on grid electricity, which has led to "capacity payments" estimated to hover around Rs1.7 trillion this fiscal year – a major concern for policymakers.

TLP ban summary sent to...

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house officer (SHO), three others – including a passerby. According to Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari, at least 1,648 police personnel were also injured, some of whom were struck by gunfire, while dozens of public and private vehicles were also torched, and commercial properties damaged. In view of a new protest call for today, the police across the province have been put on high alert to deal with any untoward situation. Authorities assert that no individual or group would be permitted to take the law into their own hands. Inspector General of Punjab Police Dr Usman Anwar reaffirmed that police were fully committed to upholding peace and the rule of law.

Govt Opens New Futsal Ground for Students

The facility was inaugurated by Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Mohyuddin Wani, who highlighted the federal government's ongoing efforts to promote youth engagement and sports development across Pakistan

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Under the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), another significant step has been taken to promote youth sports, as a new futsal ground has been inaugurated at a government school near Rawal Dam, Islamabad – further advancing the government's vision to expand sports facilities at the grassroots level. The facility was inaugurated by Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Mohyuddin Wani, who highlighted the federal government's ongoing efforts to promote youth engagement and sports development across Pakistan. Speaking at the ceremony, Mohyuddin Wani said the newly established futsal ground symbolizes the govern-



ment's strong commitment to providing healthy recreational opportunities for students and young athletes. He added that the Ministry and school leadership will ensure the effective utilization of this facility to nurture emerging talent and promote physical fitness among students. "Our youth are the country's greatest asset. Providing them with quality sports infrastructure is essential for building a stronger, healthier, and more active Pakistan," said the Federal Secretary. The ceremony was attended by officials from the Ministry of Education, school representatives, teachers, and students, who lauded the initiative and expressed hope that such projects will continue to expand under the government's youth-centered sports development programs.

Briefs

Oman receives prestigious award from Japan's top varsity

TOKYO: The University of Tokyo has announced that it has awarded the prestigious Shokomon Award to the government of the Sultanate of Oman in recognition of its contribution to supporting scientific research and academic and cultural exchange in the field of Middle Eastern studies. The award was received by Oman's Ambassador to Japan Dr. Mohammed bin Said Al Busaidi on behalf of the government of Oman. The award was based on the role played by the Sultan Qaboos Chair for Middle Eastern Studies, which was inaugurated at the university in 2011. It is the highest honor bestowed by the University of Tokyo on individuals and institutions who have made significant and influential contributions to enriching the university's progress and serving its academic goals. Oman is the first Arab government to receive it. The University of Tokyo has a significant academic relationship with Oman, primarily through the University of Tokyo Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (UTCMS), which was established with funding from Oman. The relationship includes academic exchange, research, and events such as seminars, lectures, and exhibitions focusing on Oman.—APP

Algeria buys about 400,000 tons durum wheat in tender

HAMBURG: Algeria's state grains agency OAC is believed to have purchased about 400,000 metric tons of durum wheat in an international tender which closed on Wednesday, European traders said on Thursday. The tender sought a nominal 50,000 metric tons but Algeria frequently purchases more than the volumes initially sought. Initial estimates of the purchase price were around \$324 a ton cost and freight (c&f) included for larger Panamax shipments and around \$334 a ton c&f for smaller Handymax shipments. About 90,000 tons of the purchase was believed to involve U-origins durum wheat with much of the rest believed to involve Canadian-origin of type 3 Canada western amber durum (No.3 CWAD). The tender sought shipment in four periods: November 1-15, November 16-30, December 1-15 and December 16-31. Algeria does not disclose the results of its tenders and results reported are based on trader assessments. More detailed estimates of prices and volume are possible later.—APP

Two women's bodies found after Greece migrant boat accident

ATHENS: The bodies of two women were found Friday on a rocky coast on the Greek island of Chios after a makeshift boat carrying 29 migrants ran aground, the coast guard said. "During a rescue operation for migrants (whose boat ran aground on the coast), two women were found lifeless, and 10 people, including three seriously injured, were transferred to the hospital in Chios," a coast guard spokesman told AFP. Greek Aegean islands near Turkey, including Chios, are one of the main entry points into Europe for people fleeing war and poverty. These perilous crossings are often fatal. On October 7, four bodies were recovered off the island of Lesbos after an inflatable boat sank with 38 migrants on board. Greece saw a significant increase in migrant arrivals over the summer, mostly from Libya, and landing in Crete. Another group of 23 people were rescued near Crete on Friday, the coast guard said. The conservative Greek government, which has steadily tightened its migration policy, decided in early July to suspend for three months asylum applications for people arriving by boat from north Africa. The measure has been criticized by numerous international organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Council of Europe.—APP

Trade expo Indonesia 2025 to boost economic ties with Pakistan

Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistan Chandra W. Sukotjo highlighted the resilience of bilateral trade

DNA

JAKARTA: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad, in collaboration with the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), and the International Creatives Exchange (ICE), organized "Indonesia-Pakistan Economic Networking Forum 2025 : Building a Shared Future" on the sidelines of 40th Trade Expo Indonesia (TEI) 2025. Hundreds of business people along with government officials and business leaders attended the Forum, including 60 Pakistani entrepreneurs. Among the attendees from the Indonesian government were Mr. Ricky Eka Virgana Ichsan, Director for South and Central Asia of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry and Mr. Muhammad Iqbal, Deputy Director of Investment Promotion for East and South Asia, Middle East, and Africa of the Indonesian Ministry of Investment/Coordinating Board of Investment, while the business community was represented by Mr. Harman Siswanto, Vice Chairman of Bilateral Committee for Pakistan and Afghanistan of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Uzair Nizam, President of Pakistan-Indonesia Business & Cultural



Network; Mr. Mohammad Bawazeer, Chairman of Bawazeer Group; and Ayub Gaba from K2 Industries, Karachi. In his remarks, Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Chandra W. Sukotjo highlighted the resilience of bilateral trade. "From January to July 2025, Indonesia's exports to Pakistan reached USD 2.16 billion, or 21.83% increase compared to the same period last year. Yet, our potential remains much

greater." The Envoy urges the Pakistan and Indonesian businesses to explore new areas of cooperation, such as pharmaceuticals, halal industry, renewable energy, digital economy, and agricultural technology. Vice Chairman of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Bernardino M. Vega urged both sides to move beyond trade numbers by strengthening people-to-people contact and creative

collaboration. "The world is changing and business models are also changing. We need to expand our collaborations to be more imaginative and value-added oriented. Indonesia and Pakistan have significant assets, it is the world's largest Muslim populations as well as the creativity and spirit of collaboration," he said highlighting the role of influencer as a bridge between the two brotherly countries.

In his turn, the Trade and Investment Attaché of the Embassy of Pakistan, Mr. Naseem Rashed emphasized the Pakistani government's commitment to facilitating more direct business collaboration between businesses of both countries (B2B engagement). "As two major Muslim nations with a long history of friendship, our economic relationship must reflect that potential. The Pakistani Embassy in Jakarta

is committed to helping expand trade, investment, and cultural cooperation," he said. Two panel discussions were held during the Forum. Both speakers and participants from Pakistan and Indonesia explored trade opportunities, market access, and joint investment, particularly the development of the Indonesia-Pakistan Trade in Goods Agreement (IP-TIGA) which aims to expand trade coverage and

reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers. During the event, Ministry of Investment of Indonesia noted that Pakistan ranks third among South Asian investors in Indonesia with USD 36.6 million in the last five years, while emphasized future cooperation in renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, and halal industry. As both brotherly Muslim countries are celebrating the anniversary of bilateral relations this year, two books were launched along with Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) signed between business entities from both countries. The two books are "75 Years of Indonesia-Pakistan Bilateral Relations: Two Friends, One Spirit," by Mr. Atta Ul Karim and "Islamabad to Jakarta: A Personal Reflection" by Mr. Shams Abbasi. Among the MoUs are signed by the International Creatives Exchange (ICE) and Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as that by Harmann Pharmaceutical from Pakistan and PT. Ultra Sakti from Indonesia.

Trade Expo Indonesia is an Indonesia's largest annual international trade exhibition, showcasing the country's best export products and services. TEI promotes Indonesia as a reliable trade and investment partner, connecting global buyers with Indonesian exporters across various sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, digital economy, and creative industries.

Army colonel sworn in as Madagascar president

ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR: Army colonel Michael Randrianirina was sworn in as Madagascar's president Friday, just days after a military power grab that sent ex-president Andry Rajoelina fleeing and raised international alarm about a new coup on the island. Randrianirina led the CAPSAT army unit, which mutinied and joined anti-government protesters before announcing Tuesday that the military had taken power, after Rajoelina was impeached for desertion of duty. "Today marks a historic turning point for our country," Randrianirina said after his swearing-in ceremony, where the 51-year-old colonel swapped his army uniform for a suit. He vowed sweeping reforms for the impoverished island nation, where anger over chronic power cuts sparked protests last month that soon escalated into a mass movement. "We will work hand in hand with all the driving forces of the nation to draft a fine constitution... and to agree on new electoral laws for the organisation of elections and referendums," Randrianirina said. "Our main mission is to thoroughly reform the country's administrative, socio-economic and political systems of governance." He thanked the country's youth for spearheading the protests that ousted Rajoelina, and said the army had intervened at the request of the top court to "avoid anarchy and disorder". The ceremony in the capital Antananarivo was attended by military officers, politicians, representatives of the Gen Z youth-led protest movement and several foreign delegations, including from the United States, the European Union, Russia and former colonial ruler France. A few dozen people gathered outside the constitutional court Friday morning in hopes of seeing the new president. "We're happy to be able to hope for change," said shopkeeper Faniry Randrianaridoa. "We hope, but we'll see," she told AFP. "It's not a whim to want water and electricity." Facing international criticism, Randrianirina has been eager to officialise his new role and insisted the takeover was not a coup, pointing to the constitutional court's backing. At his swearing-in, the new leader addressed the foreign delegations in French, inviting them to "accompany Madagascar in the process of steering and implementing national renewal". Local media reported that Randrianirina had already met with a Russian delegation Thursday. The international community's "large presence here shows that they respect national sovereignty," he told journalists. The new president said the youth would be "consulted before the new government is appointed".—DNA

Egypt raises fuel prices for the second time this year

CAIRO: Egypt increased fuel prices by around 12 percent on Friday, a step likely to drive up the costs of goods and services across the country. This is the second fuel price hike this year. In a statement posted on Facebook, the Egyptian government gave no reason for the move but said fuel prices will remain fixed in the local market with no further increases for at least one year. Egyptians have been grappling with soaring inflation as they navigate rising daily costs that reached another high last year. They included an increase in fuel prices, a hike in subway fares and a slide in the Egyptian pound against foreign currencies. According to the latest data from the Central Bank of Egypt posted Oct. 8, Egypt's annual urban consumer price inflation reached 11.7 percent in September—down from 12 percent in August and 13.9 percent in July. Fuel prices last increased in April, rising between 11 percent and 14 percent on various fuel products. At the time of a previous price hike in late 2024, the government said that raising prices was meant to "reduce the gap between the selling prices of petroleum products and their high production and import costs." According to the new prices taking effect on Friday, the cost of a liter of diesel—which is heavily relied on for public transport—increased from 15.50 pounds (\$0.33) to 17.50 pounds (\$0.37), while the price of the 92-octane gasoline rose to 19.25 pounds (\$0.40) from 17.25 pounds (\$0.36) and the

95-octane gasoline increased from 19 pounds (\$0.40) to 21 pounds (\$0.44). The petroleum sector will continue running refineries at full capacity and provide incentives to its partners to boost production, reduce import expenses, and stabilize costs—with the aim of narrowing the gap between production costs and selling prices, said the government on Friday. Earlier this year, the government raised the minimum monthly wage for both public and private sector workers to 7,000 pounds (\$138), up from 6,000 pounds (\$118.58). The Egyptian economy has been hit hard by years of government austerity, the coronavirus pandemic, the fallout from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and most recently, the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. The Houthi attacks on shipping routes in the Red Sea have slashed Suez Canal revenues, which is a major source for foreign currency. The attacks forced traffic away from the canal and around the tip of Africa. Egypt previously reached a deal with the IMF to more than double the size of its bailout to \$8 billion. The price hikes have been deemed necessary to meet conditions set by the International Monetary Fund for further assistance to the country. In March, the IMF said it completed its fourth review of Egypt's economic reform program approving a \$1.2 billion disbursement for the North African country.—APP

Clashes break out in BD capital

DHAKA: Police fired teargas and used stun grenades and batons to disperse protesters outside Bangladesh's national Parliament complex Friday, as tensions soared over the interim government's new political charter. Some protesters vandalized a police vehicle and makeshift tents, and others clashed with soldiers and security officials in the capital Dhaka. Witnesses said several people were injured. The clashes broke out after several hundred people, who described themselves as those whose protests ousted former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, started demonstrating Friday. They expressed anger that their concerns were not addressed in the new charter, despite their loved ones dying during last year's mass uprising against Hasina. The interim government, headed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, has invited the country's main political parties to sign a new political charter Friday to pave the way for a raft of political reforms. The "July National Charter," named after the national uprisings that started in July 2024, outlines a roadmap for constitutional amendments, legal changes and the enactment of new laws. A National Consensus Commission formed by the Yunus' government prepared the charter after a series of talks with the major political parties, except Hasina's Awami League party. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, headed by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, and eight like-minded parties said they would sign the charter. Hasina, who was toppled last August after huge protests, is in exile in India and is being tried in absentia on charges of crimes against humanity. The United Nations has said that up to 1,400 people may have been killed in the weeks-long uprising last year. Yunus has promised to hold the next national election in February. But questions remain whether the election would be inclusive without Hasina's party and its allies in the race. The country's largest Islamist party, Jamaate-Islami, has remained undecided about signing the charter, while a newly-formed student-led party, National Citizen Party, said it would not take part.—APP

PSX loses 638 points to close at 163.806

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, as the benchmark KSE-100 index lost 638.50 points, showing a negative change of 0.39 percent, closing at 163,806.22 points against 164,444.72 points on the previous trading day. A total of 1,978,654,033 shares were traded during the day compared to 3,078,369,285 shares on the previous day, while the total value of shares traded stood at Rs36,992 billion against Rs50,608 billion on the last trading day. As many as 483 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, of which 166 recorded gains and 277 sustained losses, while the share prices of 40 companies remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 891,368,186 shares at Rs2.23 per share, K-Electric Limited with 262,730,077 shares at Rs7.38 per share, and Bank of Punjab with 84,164,333 shares at Rs35.83 per share. Ismail Industries Limited witnessed the maximum increase of Rs95.97 per share price, closing at Rs2,100.00, followed by The Thal Industries Corporation Limited with a Rs43.22 rise to close at Rs648.32 per share. On the other hand, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited recorded the maximum decrease of Rs185.27 per share.—DNA

5th Pakistan-Africa trade development moot begins

ISLAMABAD: The 5th Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference (PATDC) and Made in Pakistan Exhibition officially opened at Millennium Hall, Addis Ababa, according to a press release issued by the Commerce Ministry here on Friday. The landmark event is jointly organized by the Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan, and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), in collaboration with the Embassy of Pakistan in Addis Ababa. The three-day conference and exhibition would bring together over 100 leading Pakistani exporters and industry representatives alongside business and government delegates from Ethiopia and across Africa, fostering an important platform for trade, investment, and bilateral cooperation. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Pakistan to Ethiopia, Mian Atif Sharif, highlighted the significance of the conference as a continuation of Pakistan's "Look Africa" policy. "This platform embodies Pakistan's strong commitment to deepen economic engagement with Africa, particularly East Africa," Ambassador Atif stated. "Ethiopia's role as the gateway to this

region makes Addis Ababa the perfect venue for this important partnership," he added. Ethiopia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Jemal Bakir, on the occasion, underscored the shared vision of cooperation and friendship between the two nations. "Our bilateral relations have grown steadily, and platforms like PATDC create tangible opportunities for both our business communities," he noted. Ambassador Dewano Kadir, Director General for Asia and Oceania at Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commended Pakistan's proactive engagement strategy with Africa and reaffirmed Ethiopia's readiness to facilitate partnerships. "The collaboration between Ethiopia and Pakistan stands as a model for South-South cooperation," he emphasized. Mr. Basit Saleem Shah, Minister (Trade & Investment) at the Embassy of Pakistan in Addis Ababa, appreciated the Ethiopian government's hospitality and support. "This event will unlock opportunities that go beyond trade—it will create enduring business linkages, enhance trust, and build a shared future of prosperity," he remarked. A presentation by Abdul Karim Memon, Director General of TDAP, showcased

Pakistan's robust export performance and highlighted key opportunities for African markets in sectors such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering, and agri-products. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz, Senior Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), emphasized the role of private sector collaboration. "Business-to-business partnerships will be the real drivers of economic growth in this evolving Pakistan-Africa relationship," he said. Speaking on the occasion as the guest of honour, Minister of Transport and Logistics of Ethiopia, Dr. Alemu Sime Feyisa, commended the initiative and acknowledged its contribution to regional economic integration. "Ethiopia stands committed to advancing logistics infrastructure and investment policies that make cross-border trade faster and more efficient," Dr. Alemu said. "We see today's gathering as a new chapter in our trade relations with Pakistan." The ceremony also featured remarks from Jam Kamal Khan, Minister of Commerce of Pakistan, who expressed his government's continued commitment to African markets.

China investigating 9 military officials for corruption

DNA

BEIJING: China said on Friday it has launched corruption investigations into its number two general and eight other high-ranking military officials, marking the latest push under President Xi Jinping to root out graft. Weidong, the Central Military Commission (CMC) vice chairman, was among nine individuals to be expelled from the army for having "seriously violated" discipline, according to an online statement by defence ministry spokesman Zhang Xiaogang. While rumours swirled as He had not been seen in public since March, a formal investigation had not been previously announced. Also named was Miao Hua, the former head of the military's political work department who was formally removed from his post, according to state media reports in June. Eight of the individuals were expelled from China's ruling Communist Party, after previously serving on its elite Central Committee, Zhang said. "The severe punishment of He Weidong, Miao Hua... and others once again demonstrates the Party Central Committee and the CMC's unwavering resolve to persevere in the fight against corruption," said Zhang. Xi has made rooting out alleged graft from all levels of government a top priority since coming to power just over a decade ago. He has called graft "the biggest threat" to the Communist Party and said "the fight against corruption remains grave and complex".—APP

Lebanon says Israeli strikes kill one, wound seven

BEIRUT, Lebanon: Lebanon's health ministry said Thursday that Israeli strikes in the south had killed one person and wounded seven, while the Israeli military said it had targeted Hezbollah and its allies. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, however, insisted Israel's strikes targeted "civilian facilities," condemning what he said was a breach of a ceasefire negotiated last year. "The repeated Israeli aggression comes as part of a systematic policy aimed at destroying productive infrastructure, hindering economic recovery, and undermining national stability under false security pretexts," Aoun said.—APP

Briefs

Japan's
former
PM dies

DNA

TOKYO: Hiroyuki Takano, the secretary general of the Social Democratic Party in Oita, Murayama's hometown, told AFP he had been informed that the former premier died of old age. In the landmark statement in August 1995, Murayama said that "Japan ... through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations". "In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology," he added. The phrases "deep remorse" and "heartfelt apology" were used by successive Japanese prime ministers when marking the 60th and 70th World War II anniversaries. Murayama, who was also well-known for his distinctive bushy eyebrows, was elected as the prime minister in a coalition government that also included the Liberal Democratic Party, Japan's dominant postwar political force. He was in office from 1994 to 1996, a turbulent period that saw a huge 1995 earthquake in western Japan, and a sarin gas attack on Tokyo's subway that killed more than a dozen people and injured more than 5,800.

Russia says
captured 3
villages in
Ukraine's east

MOSCOW: Russia said on Friday it had captured three villages in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions, including areas Kyiv had retaken three years ago in a surprise counter-offensive. The Moscow military command said it had captured the villages of Pishchane and Tykhe in Kharkiv and Pryvillya in Dnipropetrovsk. The Russian army is grinding through eastern Ukraine in costly metre-for-metre battles for small settlements, largely devastated by fighting since February 2022 and with a few inhabitants left. Ukraine had recaptured large parts of the Kharkiv region, including Pishchane, in a swift campaign in autumn 2022, triggering a Russian military draft for the first time since World War II. But now, the Russian forces are slowly advancing again, trying to encircle the important logistics hub of Kupiansk, Ukraine's major gain in the 2022 counter-offensive. The Russian offensive has killed tens of thousands and devastated large swathes of eastern Ukraine, forcing millions to flee their homes. – Agencies

Mohsin Naqvi
meets Owais
Noorani

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan Secretary General Allama Shah Owais Noorani. The meeting included a detailed discussion on religious harmony, tolerance and national unity. It was agreed during the meeting that no action would be taken against any innocent person, and all of the innocent will be released. Both leaders also agreed that no madrassa will be closed. They also agreed that the miscreants will be dealt with strictly. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that no one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands. He emphasized that taking up arms against the state can never be allowed. "There is no place for miscreants and extremists in the Pakistan of Quaid-e-Azam," he said, adding that elements spreading unrest, chaos, and extremism will be dealt with an iron hand. The Interior Minister acknowledged the valuable role of religious scholars in promoting interfaith harmony and patience, stating that all segments of society must play their part in ensuring lasting peace, tolerance, and harmony. – Agencies

France, Pakistan strengthen academic ties under 'Choose France' initiative

The ambassador also underlined that Choose France events allow French delegates to visit Pakistani universities, explore joint programs, and strengthen institutional collaboration

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of France in Pakistan hosted the "Choose France" event at the French Residence in Islamabad, highlighting the growing academic cooperation between France and Pakistan. The event, held under the aegis of Campus France Pakistan, brought together French Embassy officials, visiting representatives of French universities, Pakistani academics, and students who have recently studied in France. Speaking on the occasion, French Ambassador to Pakistan Nicolas Galey said that while media attention often gravitates toward breaking news and major events, it was equally vital to focus on long-term initiatives such as educational cooperation the real foundation of bilateral relations. "These sustained academic and cultural engagements are the seeds of the future relationship between Pakistan and France," the ambassador remarked, welcoming the visiting French higher education delegation. He noted that the Choose France initiative, launched by the French Embassy in Pakistan, serves as a bridge connecting Pakistani and French universities and creating durable academic partnerships. The platform also enables talented Pakistani students to meet directly with representatives of French institutions and explore opportunities for study and research in France. Reflecting on the evolution of the initiative, Ambassador Galey shared those four years after the first Choose France Education Tour was held in Pakistan, its impact has become "strong, visible, and structured." He emphasized that higher education



cooperation now stands among the top priorities of the France-Pakistan bilateral roadmap, a framework signed between the foreign ministries of both countries in January 2023. He further highlighted the remarkable rise in Pakistani students' interest in studying in France. "Five years ago, only around 200 students applied to French universities. This year, nearly 7,000 applications were registered through Campus France Pakistan," he said. "Most of these students have been awarded scholarships either from the French government, the Erasmus Mundus program, or directly from French institutions."

Ambassador Galey proudly noted that France has become the leading European Union destination for Pakistani students under the Erasmus Mundus program. He described this trend as "a sign of growing trust and mutual interest" between the two nations. Reiterating the importance of Campus France as the official channel for aspiring students, he said it provides free and reliable guidance for selecting recognized institutions and applying for scholarships. "We strongly encourage students and families to use this official platform to ensure a suc-

cessful educational experience," he stressed. The ambassador also underlined that Choose France events allow French delegates to visit Pakistani universities, explore joint programs, and strengthen institutional collaboration. According to the ambassador, twelve bilateral agreements between French and Pakistani universities have already been implemented as a direct outcome of the Choose France initiative. Several new exchange programs have started, with institutional ties evolving into long-term partnerships. He noted that this year's event gave special importance to student voices those who had experienced life and learning in France. "Beyond numbers and agreements, the heart of our cooperation remains human meeting, discovering, and understanding each other's cultures," he said. "These students are the real ambassadors of friendship between France and Pakistan." Ambassador Galey concluded by expressing gratitude to all contributors French and Pakistani university officials, embassy staff, and students for helping deepen the academic and cultural bonds between the two countries. The event concluded with a panel discussion moderated by Iman, Project Manager at Campus France Pakistan and Ms. Sabine Vermillard, the Scientific and Higher Education Attaché at the French Embassy in Pakistan. Panelists included Noheila Eladj from Epitech (a French institution that recently launched student mobility programs with Pakistan), Dr. Sahar, Director of the International Office at NUST, and two students, Hanal and Hayan, who shared their experiences of studying in France through partnerships between Epitech-FAST and NUST-Rohani School of Business.

Saudi Arabia in talks with
US for defence pact: report

KSA aims to finalise defence deal with US next month as Trump hosts Saudi crown prince

NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia is discussing a defence deal with the United States which it hopes to seal when Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman visits the White House next month, the Financial Times reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter. A senior Trump administration official told the Financial Times there were "discussions about signing something when the crown prince comes, but the details are in flux." The FT said the deal in discussion was similar to the recent US-Qatar pact that pledged to treat any armed attack on Qatar as a threat to the United States. The US deal with Qatar came after Israel last month attempted to kill leaders of Hamas with an air strike on Doha. The US State Department told the FT that defence co-operation with the kingdom was a "strong bedrock of our regional strategy," but declined to comment on details of the potential deal. The US State Department, the White House and the Saudi government did not respond to a Reuters request for comment on the FT report. Last month, Saudi Arabia signed a mutual defence pact with nuclear-armed

Pakistan. Riyadh and Islamabad signed the mutual defence pact on September 17, significantly strengthening a decades-old security partnership, a week after Israel's strikes on Qatar upended the diplomatic calculus in the region. The agreement states that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both," a statement from the prime minister's office and the state-run Saudi Press Agency had mentioned. "This agreement ... aims to develop aspects of defence co-operation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression," the statement said. The deal was signed by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Riyadh, where Pakistan's top official was accorded a warm welcome. Earlier this month, US President Donald Trump pledged to treat any armed attack on Qatar as a threat to the United States' own security, according to a document that says US forces could step in to defend the Middle Eastern nation. Qatar welcomed Trump's order, describing it as a milestone in strengthening defence ties and bilateral cooperation, its foreign ministry said. The executive order, which appears to significantly deepen the US commitment to Qatar, comes after Israel last month attempted to kill leaders of Hamas with an airstrike on Doha. That strike, launched with little advance notice to the Trump administration, caused consternation in Washington, given the close US relationship with Qatar, which hosts the largest US military base in the region.

India has halved
oil imports
from Russia

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India has halved its purchases of Russian oil, a White House official said, but Indian sources said no immediate reduction had been seen, as President Donald Trump's administration presses New Delhi and other nations to buy less Russian crude. Russian oil is a main irritant for Trump in prolonged trade talks with India – half of his 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods are in retaliation for those purchases. His administration says Moscow is using petroleum revenue to fund its war in Ukraine. The White House official told Reuters on Thursday that talks with an Indian delegation in Washington this week have been productive and that Indian refineries were already cutting Russian oil imports by 50%. But Indian industry sources said on Friday that New Delhi had not informed refiners of any request to cut Russian imports. Refiners have already placed orders for November loading, including some cargoes for December arrival, so any cut could be visible in December or January import numbers, said the sources, who asked not to be identified as they were not authorised to speak to the media. Indeed, India's imports of Russian oil are set to rise about 20pc this month to 1.9 million barrels per day, according to estimates from commodities data firm Kpler, as Russia ramps up exports after Ukrainian drones hit its refineries. The Indian oil ministry and refiners that buy Russian oil did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment. Trump said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured him on Wednesday that India would stop buying Russian oil. India's foreign ministry did not respond to Trump's assertion except to say it was not aware of any telephone conversation between the two leaders that day. Still, India's oil minister on Thursday sought data on Russian oil imports from all the refiners, including their loadings and arrivals tied up for November and December. Oil prices fell on Friday, with Brent crude futures down 48 cents, or 0.79pc, to \$60.58 a barrel at 0720 GMT (12:20 pm PKT), amid uncertainty over global supply as Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin prepared to discuss ending the war. India has become the biggest buyer of seaborne Russian oil sold at a discount after Western nations shunned purchases and imposed sanctions on Moscow for its 2022 invasion of its neighbour. New Delhi initially hoped to secure a quick trade deal with the US due to Modi's warm relationship with Trump, but the talks have floundered and the president has slapped some of the highest levies in his global tariff regime on India's products.

Floods have squeezed country's
agri sector, says finance minister

Pakistan's economy has been stabilizing following a near-default on government debt two years ago. The South Asian nation is set to receive about \$1.2 billion in loans from the IMF after signing off on a staff-level agreement with the IMF, following a successful review of its \$7 billion loan program

DNA

WASHINGTON: Pakistan Finance Minister has said the GDP takes hit from deadly floods. The deadly flooding that swept Pakistan this summer squeezed the country's agricultural sector, likely delivering a blow to economic growth this year, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said. Initial assessments showed damage to the country's rice and cotton sectors, Aurangzeb said during an interview with Bloomberg News in Washington on Thursday. He said more detailed damage assessments will take place in the coming months. "This will put in a dent to our GDP growth number," he said. "My own view is it will still be north of 3.5%, early days, but anywhere between 3.5 to 4." Heavy monsoon rains beginning in late June devastated farmland in Pakistan, hitting the country's rice-growing region of Punjab especially hard. The rains and resulting floods displaced more than 4 million people and killed about 900. Prior to the flooding, the Pakistani government projected economic growth of 4.2% for the fiscal year ending next June. "Climate change for us is not academic," he said. "We are living it, and the recent floods actually are a reflection of that." Pakistan's economy has been stabilizing following a near-default on government debt two years ago.

The South Asian nation is set to receive about \$1.2 billion in loans from the International Monetary Fund after signing off on a staff-level agreement with the IMF, following a successful review of its \$7 billion loan program. The third loan installment is expected to help bolster the country's \$407 billion economy, which has stabilized after it narrowly avoided a default on government debt two years ago. The IMF estimates the country's economy will grow between 3.25% and 3.5% in the fiscal year to June despite the destructive monsoon rains. Pakistan predicts inflation may cross the upper bound of its 5%-7% target range this year, cooling from a record 38% two years ago. Meanwhile, Pakistan and the US have moved to rebuild military and economic ties after years of strain. Economic links have grown with a trade deal that levied a 19% tariff on Pakistani goods, lower than regional peers and well below the 50% tariff on rival India. The finance minister also said Pakistan planned to issue its inaugural tranche of yuan-denominated debt – known as Panda bonds – by late November or early December. The \$250 million issue is key to diversifying the country's funding channels, he said. "We have tapped the US dollar market, we have done euros, we have done Islamic sukuk, but we had not accessed the second largest, the second deepest capital market in the world," he said.

Pakistan seeks
China's support
for BRICS-backed
bank membership

DNA

WASHINGTON: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb met with China's Deputy Finance Minister Liao Min in Washington and sought Beijing's support for Pakistan's membership in BRICS' New Development Bank (NDB), the Ministry of Finance said on Friday. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the plenary meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) in Washington, DC, where Aurangzeb had arrived on Sunday on a six-day trip from Oct 13 to 18. NDB – established in 2015 by the BRICS – is a multilateral development bank aimed at mobilising resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS, as per their website. In February, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet had approved Pakistan's membership in the NDB. In a statement issued today, the ministry said, "Aurangzeb sought China's support for Pakistan's membership in the NDB and welcomed enhanced investment from Chinese enterprises in key sectors, including information and communication technology, agriculture, industry, and minerals." The minister briefed Min on the staff-level agreement reached with the IMF last week, terming it "external validation of the government's ongoing economic reform agenda". The pair also discussed "latest developments regarding the issuance of the Panda Bond in the Chinese market". "The finance minister expressed gratitude to the office of the executive director [at the] IMF for extending full support to Pakistan during recent Board meetings," the statement added.

Abducted
son of Ziarat
AC M. Afzal
recovered

THE abducted son of Ziarat Assistant Commissioner (AC) Muhammad Afzal has been recovered, police said. They added that he reached Zardalu in Harnai and is now with the Deputy Commissioner Harnai. However, the AC remains missing two months after their abduction. According to police, the AC and his son were abducted two months ago. Officials had said the AC, his son, a gunman and the driver were intercepted during a visit to the Zezri picnic spot. The abductors later released the gunman and driver but took away the AC and his son, and set the official vehicle on fire. Security forces and local administration cordoned off the area and launched a search operation the same day. Last month, reports emerged that AC Afzal and his son had been killed. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti stated that reports circulating about the "martyrdom" of Afzal and his son were incorrect. – APP

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