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US envoy not happy with Israeli bids to harm ceasefire

Detailed News On Page-08

KP CM says all threats to de countered

Detailed News On Page-08



Markram says Proteas will come back

Detailed News On Page-06



Peace at last !

Pakistan-Afghan ceasefire deal reached in Doha

Both sides commit to respecting each other's sovereignty and will meet again in Istanbul on Oct 25, says Khawaja Asif

CENTRELINE REPORT

DOHA: Pakistan and Afghanistan have reached a landmark ceasefire agreement, marking a potential breakthrough in efforts to restore peace and stability along their troubled border, Qatar's Foreign Ministry announced in a statement issued late night on Sunday. The ceasefire agreement, mediated by Qatar and Turkiya, is expected to lay a strong foundation for lasting peace in the region, according to the Qatari officials. Both countries have also agreed to hold further meetings in the coming days and to establish a permanent mechanism to ensure peace and stability between them. "During the negotiations the two sides [have] agreed to an immediate ceasefire and the establishment of mechanisms to consolidate lasting peace and stability between the two countries," read the statement issued by Qatar's Foreign Ministry. "The two parties [have] also agreed to hold follow-up meetings in the coming days to ensure the sustainability of the ceasefire and verify its implementation in a reliable and sustainable manner,

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Pakistan, Afghan ceasefire; will it hold?

COMMENT

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: After nearly a week of intense border clashes that claimed dozens of lives on both sides, Pakistan and Afghanistan reached a ceasefire agreement late Saturday during negotiations held in Doha, Qatar. The breakthrough, facilitated by the State of Qatar with assistance from the Republic of Turkiya, aims to restore calm and open a new chapter in bilateral relations. China and Iran have been designated as guarantors to ensure compliance with the terms of the accord. According to the agreement, Afghanistan has pledged not to allow its territory to be used for any activity against Pakistan, while in return, Pakistan will continue providing humanitarian support to Afghan refugees. While no formal statements have yet been released by Islamabad or Kabul,

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the ceasefire news has sparked widespread relief and optimism among citizens of both countries. Social media platforms have been flooded with messages celebrating the "return of hope" and "brotherly peace" between the two neighbors. In a statement confirming the development, Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, "A round of negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Afghanistan was held in Doha, mediated by the State of Qatar and the Republic of Turkiya. The two sides agreed to an immediate ceasefire and the establishment of mechanisms to consolidate lasting peace and stability between the two countries." The statement further added that both parties would hold follow-up meetings in the coming days to ensure the sustainability and effective implementation of the agreement,

ARMED FORCES DAY OF ROMANIA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Air Marshal Shakil Ghazanfar, Ambassador of Romania Dr. Dan Stoenescu, Defence Attache Colonel Cristian Raducu and others cutting cake to celebrate the Romanian Armed Forces Day. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life attended the reception. – DNA

PM, Malaysian counterpart discuss regional uplift

FAIZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call from Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim Saturday evening and discussed regional developments. While thanking the leadership and people of Malaysia for the warm hospitality extended during his recent visit to Kuala Lumpur, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction that the understandings reached during the visit particularly regarding the export of halal meat and other mutually beneficial areas have elevated the Pakistan-Malaysia relations to new heights.

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China says US waged cyberattacks on national time centre

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China on Sunday accused the United States of conducting cyberattacks on Beijing's national time centre that could have caused severe damage to critical financial and telecommunications infrastructure. Beijing has stepped up espionage warnings in recent years as relations with the United States and other Western nations have worsened. Chinese authorities found "irrefutable evidence" of efforts by the US National Security Agency (NSA) to hack

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Azerbaijan drills

PAF to showcase JF-17 Thunder Block-III fighter jets

Jets execute flawless in-flight air-to-air refuelling operations on their non-stop way to Azerbaijan, says ISPR

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A contingent of the Pakistan Air Force, featuring advanced JF-17 Thunder Block-III fighter jets along with expert air and ground personnel, has reached Azerbaijan to take part in the joint aerial combat exercise, Indus Shield Alpha, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Sunday. "In a remarkable display of operational prowess and endurance, PAF fighters accomplished a non-stop flight from their home base in Pakistan to Azerbaijan, executing flawless in-flight air-to-air refuelling operations," a statement of the military's media wing read. It added that the intricate

Continued on Page 06

Netanyahu says Gaza war not over

APP

GAZA CITY: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned on Saturday that the war in Gaza would not be over until Hamas was disarmed and the Palestinian territory demilitarised. His declaration came as Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, handed over the remains of two

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

France museum closed after break-in

NEWS DESK

PARIS: France's Culture Minister Rachida Dati on Sunday reported a break-in at the Louvre in Paris, as the world-renowned museum said it was closing for the day. "A hold-up took place this morning at the opening of the Louvre Museum," she wrote on X, using a French word that can also mean "robbery". "No injuries reported. I'm on site with museum staff and police," she added. At least one person had entered the museum, a member of her team told AFP, without adding anything about any possible theft. The Louvre said it was closing for the day "for exceptional reasons". The museum was not immediately available for comment.

Zelensky fails to get planes

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: President Volodymyr Zelensky appears to have come away empty-handed from a White House meeting after US President Donald Trump indicated he was not ready to supply sought-after Tomahawk cruise missiles to Ukraine. Zelensky said after the cordial bilateral talks that he and Trump had talked about long-range missiles, but decided not to make statements on the issue "because the United States does not want an escalation". Following the meeting, Trump took to social media to call for Kyiv and Moscow to "stop where they are" and end the war. The Trump-Zelensky meeting came a day after Trump spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone and agreed to meet him in Hungary soon.

Doha accord first step in right direction: Dar

We look forward to the establishment of a concrete and verifiable monitoring mechanism, in the next meeting to be hosted by Turkiye, to address the menace of terrorism emanating from Afghan soil towards Pakistan



FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday welcomed the ceasefire agreement inked between Pakistan and Afghanistan, effectively bringing an end to the days of hostility triggered by border clashes. "Welcome the agreement finalised late last night in Doha. It is the first step in the right direction," DPM Dar said in a post on X while reacting to the truce agreed between Paki-

stan and Kabul during talks in Doha, Qatar. "We look forward to the establishment of a concrete and verifiable monitoring mechanism, in the next meeting to be hosted by Turkiye, to address the menace of terrorism emanating from Afghan soil towards Pakistan. It is important to put all efforts in place to prevent any further loss of lives," Dar added while appreciating the constructive role played by brotherly Qatar and Turkiye. Pakistan and Afghanistan had been recently engaged in cross-border strikes triggered by an unprovoked attack by Afghan Taliban forces and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists, prompting Islamabad to launch airstrikes as well as a response on the ground, resulting in the elimination of more than 200 Afghan Taliban and affiliated terrorists. A temporary truce between the neighbours – which Pakistan agreed to at the request of Afghanistan – on Wednesday paused days of fierce fighting that killed dozens and wounded hundreds.

Pakistan launches first Hyperspectral Satellite HS-1

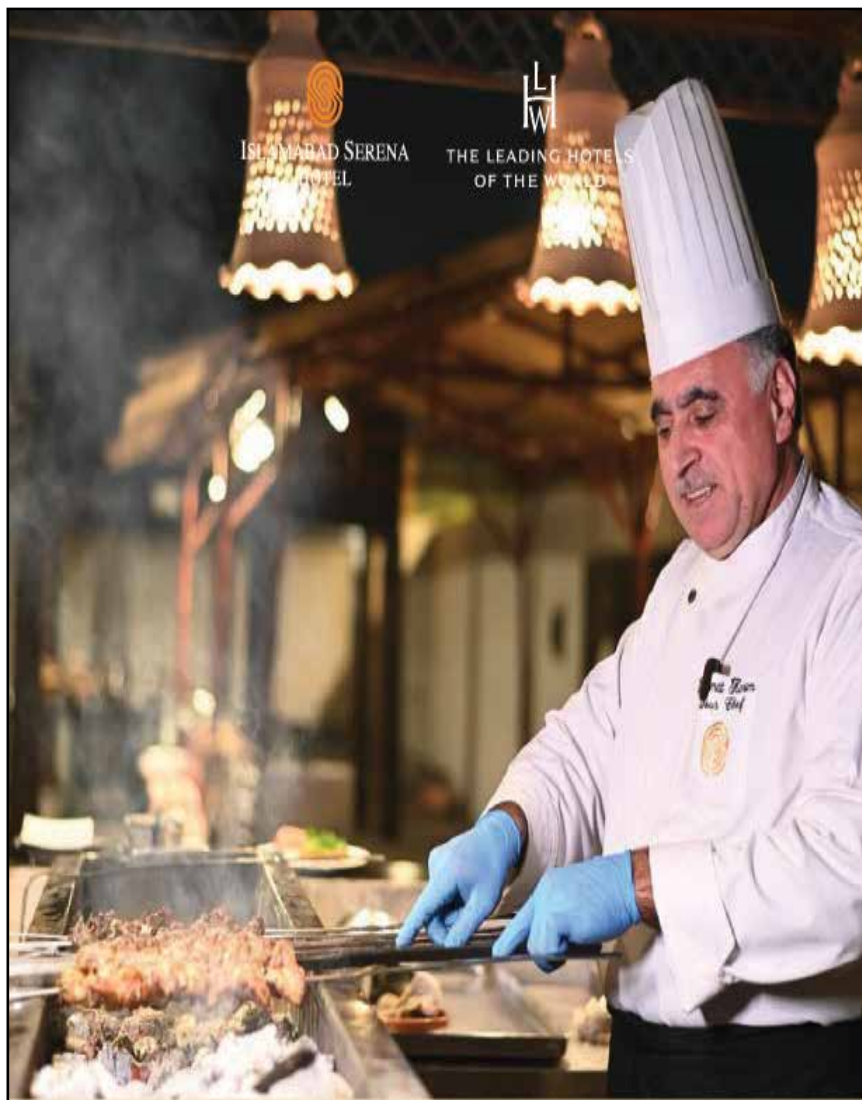
Suparco says HS-1 will help forecast floods and landslides and monitor environmental change

NAZIR SIYAL / DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan has launched its first Hyperspectral Satellite HS-1 from China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre (JSLC), with live scenes of the mission broadcast from Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission's (Suparco) Karachi complex, the space agency said. Preparations for the launch were completed in the presence of Pakistani scientists and engineers. A Suparco spokesperson said the hyperspectral satellite has successfully entered its orbit. It may take up to two months to complete the satellite's in-orbit testing; after two months, HS-1 will become fully operational, the spokesperson added. According to the spokesperson, HS-1 will conduct detailed analysis of land, vegetation, water and urban areas. The advanced satellite is capable of capturing precise images across hundreds of spectral bands and is expected to revolutionise agricultural planning and environmental monitoring. It will assist in monitoring deforestation, pollution and glacier melting, and help identify geological risks in CPEC projects, the spokesperson said. Suparco Chairman Muhammad Yousuf Khan extended his felicitations to the nation, the spokesperson added,

noting that the national project was made possible with the support of the Government of Pakistan. The mission marks a major step towards Pakistan's self-reliance in space technology, and HS-1 will place the country among emerging space leaders for sustainable development, the spokesperson said. The spokesperson described the mission as a major milestone in Pakistan's National Space Policy and Vision 2047. In a statement, the Foreign Office (FO) said the successful launch of HS-1 from the Chinese Satellite Launch Centre is a major milestone and highlights long-standing Pakistan-China collaboration in the peaceful exploration of space. The FO noted that HS-1 carries advanced hyperspectral imaging capable of capturing data across hundreds of narrow spectral bands. It will also contribute to development initiatives, including CPEC, by identifying geo-hazard risks and supporting sustainable infrastructure development, the statement added. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar commended the scientists and technical teams from Pakistan and China working on HS-1 for their commitment, professional excellence and exemplary cooperation, MoFA said.

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CM orders special unit in PRA to boost revenue

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that Pakistan has entered a new era of space technology as its first hyperspectral satellite (HS-1) has successfully reached space with the cooperation of China

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered for establishment of a special unit in the Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) to enhance the province's revenue collection and expand the tax base. Chairing a special meeting on revenue collection here on Sunday, the Chief Minister reviewed tax targets, potential new sectors, and ongoing reforms within the PRA. Director General PRA Moazzam Ali Sipra briefed the meeting that the Authority is taking concrete steps to improve tax collection mechanisms under the Chief Minister's guidance. He informed that the new special unit would comprise industrial experts, tax consultants, legal specialists, and data analysts, who will work collectively to improve efficiency and transparency in tax administration. The DG PRA added that the Authority has decided to expand its operational jurisdiction to 30 districts by October 30, following the Chief Minister's in-principle approval for the recruitment of 130 enforcement officers. Maryam Nawaz Sharif di-

rected the concerned authorities to assign additional responsibilities related to the Revenue Authority to Additional Deputy Commissioners (General) in districts. She also reviewed proposals for the inclusion of 19 new sectors in the tax net to increase provincial revenue. The meeting was informed that the PRA has launched a mobile application for the facilitation of potential taxpayers. The Chief Minister emphasized that honest taxpayers must not be harassed and that complete transparency and ease should be ensured in the tax collection process. The CM reiterated her government's commitment to strengthening the revenue system to ensure sustainable financial growth and improved service delivery in Punjab. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that Pakistan has entered a new era of space technology as its first hyperspectral satellite (HS-1) has successfully reached space with the cooperation of China. In a media statement, she said, "A major mile-

stone in Pakistan's space program has been achieved with the successful launch of HS-1 from China." The CM congratulated Pakistani scientists and the technical team on this remarkable success, terming it an important step towards Pakistan's self-reliance in space technology. Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that the hyperspectral satellite marks a significant breakthrough in Pakistan's space program, as it will enable detailed analysis of land, vegetation, and water resources in urban and rural areas. The satellite is capable of capturing highly accurate images across hundreds of light bands, which will revolutionize agricultural planning and environmental monitoring. She added that the satellite will facilitate precise monitoring of crops, soil health, and water quality, while also helping track deforestation, pollution, and glacier melting. Moreover, it will assist in identifying geographical risks related to projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).



LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Two women killed, 30 injured as coaster collided

HARIPUR: Two women were killed and 30 others were injured on Sunday when a coaster carrying a wedding party collided with the mountainside on Jab road in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Haripur, according to Rescue 1122. A Rescue 1122 statement said the accident took place due to brake failure. Subsequently, four Rescue 1122 ambulances and a rescue vehicle were sent to the site, it said, adding that the bodies and most of the injured were taken to Trauma Centre Haripur. Two of the injured whose condition was critical were sent to Abbottabad.

In a similar incident in late September, 11 deaths were reported after a truck crashed in KP's Dera Ismail Khan. Three people were also injured in the accident, which a Rescue 1122 spokesperson attributed to brake failure. In another accident the same month on September 9, two women had died while four people were injured after a jeep they were travelling in plunged into a ravine in KP's Mansehra. This was two days after five members of a family were killed in a road accident on the Hazara Motorway in Haripur. The accident had taken place when a trailer en route to Rawalpindi collided with a car near the Maqsood Interchange on the motorway.—APP

15 electric buses approved for Taunsa

DG KHAN: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Usman Khalid announced that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved 15 electric buses for District Taunsa, which are expected to arrive shortly. These buses are part of an initiative to introduce modern, comfortable, and eco-friendly transport services in the region. Once the buses for Taunsa and Dera Ghazi Khan are received, the DC said, the government will expand these services to other areas, significantly benefiting the public by improving mobility and reducing pollution. During his visit to Taunsa, accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Nadeem Hashmi, Chief Officer District Council Jawad-ul-Hasan Gondal.—APP

Over 5500 cops deployed for Pak-South Africa matches

RAWALPINDI: Over 5,500 police officers have been deployed to perform security duties in connection with the Pakistan-South Africa cricket series under the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani. According to police spokesman, special security and traffic plans have been prepared for the practice and Test matches. For traffic management, more than 367 officers have been assigned while senior officers are present in the field to supervise and brief security personnel. Snipers have also been deployed on rooftops, and monitoring is being carried out through CCTV cameras, with a separate control room established for this purpose. Additionally, Police mobiles, Elite Force, and Dolphin Squad are actively patrolling around the stadium to ensure law and order.—APP

Sindh govt extends Diwali Greetings to Hindu Community

KARACHI: On behalf of the Government of Sindh, Spokesperson Sukhdev Hemnani has extended warm greetings to the Hindu community on the joyous occasion of Diwali, wishing peace, prosperity and happiness to all those celebrating across Sindh and beyond. Hemnani highlighted that continuing its tradition, the Sindh Government declared public holiday for the Hindu community on Diwali this year as well. He noted this yearly gesture reflects Sindh Government's enduring commitment to recognising the cultural—APP

Kohistan corruption case Key accused, wife held in Rs 40b

The NAB vowed to bring all those involved to justice and recover every penny of the public funds looted from the national treasury

PESHAWAR: In a major development in the Kohistan corruption case, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has arrested the main accused, Qaiser Iqbal, along with his wife. From the very beginning, this scandal has been regarded as one of the biggest financial frauds in the country, involving the illegal withdrawal of over Rs 40 billion from the government treasury. According to sources on Sunday, more arrests of influential individuals are expected in the coming days, which could expose further key figures in the corruption network. NAB officials confirmed that Qaiser Iqbal and his wife were taken into custody

immediately after being discharged from Abbottabad Medical Complex. Investigations revealed that the accused, while serving as a clerk and later as a head clerk in the C&W Department, Upper Kohistan, misappropriated government funds in assistance with contractors and private individuals. During raids, NAB recovered gold, foreign currency, luxury vehicles, cash, original property documents and bogus cheque records from the suspect's residence. It was also uncovered that billions of rupees were withdrawn from the government account G-10113 through fake bills, fictitious schedules and forged cheques. The scandal

reportedly involves officials from the C&W Department, District Accounts Office, AG Office and the National Bank of Pakistan, who collectively ran the fraudulent scheme for several years. The NAB has already arrested several government officials, bankers and contractors, while the process of recovering properties worth billions continues. The investigation has now reached higher-level and official suggested that the corruption network may be linked to powerful circles beyond departmental boundaries. The NAB vowed to bring all those involved to justice and recover every penny of the public funds looted from the national treasury.—APP

Flour crisis in KP raised in apex committee: Muqam

He emphasized that the provincial government must also take prompt action to provide relief to the public

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, and Provincial President of Pakistan Muslim League (N), Engineer Amir Muqam has said that the ongoing flour crisis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been raised in the Apex Committee meeting. He added that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has also been informed about the difficulties faced by the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the issue will be resolved soon. Talking to senior journalists in Swat on Sunday, the federal minister stated that the suspension of flour supply occurred due to smuggling of flour to Afghanistan, which has led to a shortage in the province. He said that as a public representative, he cannot remain silent on people's problems. "I have always spoken for the rights of the people in the past, I am doing so today, and I will continue to do so in the future," he remarked. Engineer Amir Muqam urged the provincial government to immediately release the wheat stored in official warehouses to overcome the crisis. He expressed regret that the KP government has not shown seriousness in addressing the issue. He further said that he has also apprised Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif about the additional charges being collected from flour dealers and truck owners, upon which she assured him that the matter would be resolved soon. He emphasized that the provincial government must also take prompt action to provide relief to the public.—DNA

Neglected community pleads to turn wasted greenbelt into public lifeline

ISLAMABAD: Surrounded by traffic and trapped in a sea of concrete, communities living along the Islamabad Expressway, from Faizabad to Khanna Pul, are raising a simple yet urgent demand: turn the long-unused greenbelt into a safe, accessible public space. Originally meant as a natural buffer, this strip has become a symbol of neglect — overgrown, littered, and forgotten. Yet residents believe it holds the potential to be a lifeline: a place for walking tracks, children's play areas, and greenery that supports both physical and mental well-being in a city rapidly losing its breathing spaces. Voices From the Greenbelt On a battered bench between the noisy Expressway and the streets of Iqbal

Town, Salma from Shakrial sits with her two children. Their two-room home is dark and damp, so she brings them out for fresh air. "My children are like flowers. Without fresh air and the morning dew, they are withering away," she says softly talking to APP. The children laugh as they slide down the only working slide — until their play is interrupted. A taped tennis ball, hit hard by older boys playing cricket, strikes seven-year-old Zainab. This single ruined patch is all they have. Women, toddlers, and boys share it — playing, sitting in the dust, dodging cricket balls. People throw garbage here too, making it dirty and unsafe. Ehsan, who came at his daughter Aqsa's request, told APP: "The parking mafia and

building material dealers are taking over this place too. Even this little space is shrinking for us. When I take my daughter back home, she will be covered in dust." Bilal agrees: "We have no other place to bring our kids on weekends. From Faizabad to Khanna Pul there is a wide strip of land. If it were leveled and grass planted, families could spend a few peaceful hours." Bashira Bibi, her cheeks red from the sun, says: "Only two slides remain. The swings and benches are broken or stolen. If someone damages anything, nobody stops them." Muhammad Saleh, 11, says: "There are holes everywhere, dust and stones all around. Three or four cricket teams play at once, and their balls keep hitting us. But we have no choice?"

he told media. Former councillor Shah Nawaz explains: "We tried to improve the space with local effort. A few swings were installed, but without money for a boundary wall or proper equipment, nothing lasted. Now this wide strip from Faizabad to Khanna Pul is being grabbed by mafia or turned into graveyards. With just a little attention, this could become a safe space for thousands of residents." Mudassar, a college student, admits: "We know women and children are disturbed by our cricket balls, but tell us where else can we go? Artificial turf grounds in the city charge by the hour. We cannot afford them." Another boy, Mehboob, adds, "The space is here. If a portion was set aside for us, we could play

in peace." Old Jamila Bibi, walking with a stick, says, "I spent my life in open fields in the village. Now I come here hoping for fresh air, but the dust and the cricket balls push me to the edge. If there was grass, I could sit in comfort even for a while." On the Islamabad side — from Dhoke Kala Khan to Zia Mosque — the need is the same. Sitting on a patch of wild grass near the mosque, Asim says: "We have no park or open ground. Our cramped homes force us to sit here among pits and garbage." This long, wasted greenbelt — touching Iqbal Town, Murshid Town, Khanna Kak, Shakrial, Madina Town, Alibabad, Raja Shafiqur-Rehman Town in Rawalpindi, and the Zia Mosque strip in Islamabad — could become a true lifeline.—APP

Smog: entry of heavy vehicles banned in Lahore

LAHORE :Measures to combat smog and air pollution are actively underway, with 24-hour monitoring of trucks and trolleys transporting construction materials now in effect. Additionally, the entry of heavy vehicles not complying with standard operating procedures (SOPs) has been banned in Lahore. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a zero-tolerance policy will be strictly implemented against vehicles emitting smoke. Daily action will also be taken against overloaded trolleys, and the transportation of sand, gravel, soil, and other construction materials without proper covering will be strictly

prohibited on city roads. The EPA enforcement force is conducting continuous inspections at all entry points to Lahore. Heavy fines will be imposed, and non-compliant vehicles may be impounded for violating environmental laws. Furthermore, water sprinkling operations will be carried out at construction sites and in dust-prone areas to control airborne particles. In coordination with the EPA, WASA, and the district administration, water spraying activities will begin at night to manage dust and improve air quality. Authorities stress that effective dust control is essential in efforts to prevent smog, and all relevant

institutions will remain active and present in the field. Following the recent directives, no truck or trolley will be allowed to transport construction materials without being properly covered with a tarpaulin. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has ordered all departments involved to submit detailed reports on their respective anti-smog activities. It is also worth mentioning that the Chief Minister has instructed authorities to intensify public awareness campaigns, ensuring citizens are fully informed about smog-related hazards and encouraged to support environmental protection efforts.—APP

Efforts afoot to conduct grand operations against smog

LAHORE :Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that nine departments of the Punjab government are carrying out grand operations against smog as per the direction of Punjab chief minister. In a statement issued here on Sunday, she said, "Continuous efforts by Punjab government and public cooperation helped to control air quality index of the city." She said that environment protection force and the department were fully mobilised and all sectoral squads were present in the field. Marriyum said that brick-kilns were being monitored through drones besides issuing live report. The senior minister said that smog guns and air

quality monitors were also present in the field. For the first time in Punjab's history, forecasting of air quality index had enabled timely operations along with government approach to control pollution levels. Modern technology, anti-smog machinery, timely data provision and inter-departmental coordination had kept air quality at controlled levels, she added. Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif congratulated all officers and staff for their efforts. The minister said that modern climatic data center had pre-identified areas with high pollution levels for targeted action. She further said that construction materials in open areas were promptly cov-

ered to prevent dust emissions. Traffic police banned movement of trucks, freight vehicle and trolleys to control vehicular pollution, she said and added that traffic monitoring through Safe City cameras was ongoing, ensuring smooth flow. Marriyum said that WASA, LDA, PHA, C&W and local administration began water sprinkling operations last night. She said that agriculture department's grand operation across Punjab to prevent stubble burning was ongoing. Farmers were actively participating in the anti-stubble burning campaign. Over 1,354 personnel from the Agriculture department were mobilised in the field, said Marriyum Aurangzeb.—APP

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Oct 01/Nigeria
Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea
National Day

Oct 03/Germany
Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea
National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia
Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt
Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda
Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain
National Day

Oct 23/Hungary
National Day

October 24/United Nations
United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania
Armed Forces Day

Oct 26/Austria
National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan
Independence Day

Oct 28/Czech Republic
National Day

Oct 29/Turkey
Republic Day



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France, Pak 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 successful 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-Rohan School of Business.

Call for gender-sensitive criminal justice reforms in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A new Knowledge Brief published by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) emphasizes the urgent need for gender-sensitive reforms in Pakistan's criminal justice system. Authored by Dr. Fida Muhammad Khan, Assistant Professor at PIDE, and Zainab Fatima, Researcher Women Aid Trust, the study titled “Gendered Pathways to Crime” challenges the assumption that men and women engage in criminal behavior under similar circumstances. It argues that the pathways leading to crime are profoundly shaped by gender, social expectations, and structural inequalities that disadvantage women from an early age. The study explains that women often experience unique forms of trauma, marginalization, and abuse that increase their likelihood of becoming involved in criminal activity—factors that are rarely recognized by existing laws or institutions. Although laws are written to apply equally to all, their implementation of

ten overlooks the intersecting effects of gender, poverty, and class. The authors highlight four major pathways discussed in GPT literature, that frequently lead women into crime: childhood trauma and abuse, drug misuse linked to emotional or economic stress, violence from intimate partners, and socio-economic coercion including sex work. These pathways are reinforced by systemic inequality, patriarchal norms, and limited access to justice, making women's experiences of crime and punishment significantly different from those of men. The brief also highlights that Pakistan's colonial-era criminal justice system continues to operate under gender-neutral assumptions, focusing primarily on the act of crime rather than its underlying causes. It documents instances where women have been coerced into false confessions through threats of humiliation or sexual violence, exposing deep-rooted power imbalances in law enforcement and judicial processes. The authors argue that recognizing gender as a key factor in understanding crime is essential for achieving fairness, preventing reoffending, and ensuring

justice. To address these issues, the study recommends comprehensive reform of Pakistan's criminal justice system through gender-sensitive policing, judicial training, and the creation of women-only police divisions and prosecution units. It also proposes revising sentencing guidelines to reflect gendered pathways to offending and expanding academic and policy research on women offenders within South Asia. Such efforts would help build a justice system that recognizes women's lived experiences and addresses the structural and cultural barriers that contribute to their criminalization. While the Gendered Pathways Theory (GPT) has been extensively studied in Western contexts, the authors emphasize the importance of developing localized research in Pakistan and other post-colonial societies. Contextualizing GPT within South Asian realities is vital to understanding how social hierarchies, cultural expectations, and colonial legacies shape women's vulnerability to crime today.

CDWP approves 12 projects worth Rs 35.4b

Recognizing agriculture as the backbone of Pakistan's economy and the cornerstone of food security, the CDWP approved transformative initiatives designed to modernize farming, strengthen value chains, and promote climate resilience. The flagship project, Punjab Resilient and Inclusive Agriculture Transformation (PRIAT), worth Rs. 68.67 billion, was referred to ECNEC. Ahsan Iqbal stressed the need to align the initiative with measurable outcomes and past cluster-based studies to enhance value addition and export orientation in agriculture, remarking that every drop of water and every acre of land must translate into prosperity, not just production. In the same sector, the National Program for Animal Disease

Surveillance and Control, worth Rs 7.35 billion, was approved to enhance Pakistan's compliance with international sanitary standards and boost livestock exports. Additionally, the Punjab Climate Resilient and Low Carbon Agriculture Mechanization Project (P-CLAMP), worth Rs 36.12 billion and financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), was referred to ECNEC. Under the governance reforms agenda, the Punjab Resource Improvement and Digital Effectiveness (PRIDE) Program, worth Rs3.08 billion, was approved. The health sector witnessed three crucial projects approvals reflecting Pakistan's commitment to universal healthcare and child welfare. Projects included the National Health Support Program (Rs.

2.17 billion), Extension of Child Health Facilities in Southern Punjab (Rs. 6.40 billion) funded by JICA, and D-TALK & Insulin for Life (Rs. 1.39 billion) funded by XEM Korea. Minister Ahsan Iqbal underscored that each rupee invested in health must yield tangible outcomes, noting that Pakistan's fiscal space is limited and borrowed resources are a trust from future generations. He instructed the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to integrate diabetes initiatives with the National Diabetes Program to maximize national health impact. In pursuit of knowledge-driven economic growth, the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Campus Project in Pattoki, valued at Rs1.46 billion, was approved.—APP

12 projects worth Rs 35.4b approved

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives/ Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Professor Ahsan Iqbal chaired a meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) that approved 18 development projects across critical sectors of national growth “Development is not just about projects; it is about people, performance, and purpose. Every initiative we approve today must translate into a better tomorrow for Pakistan,” Ahsan Iqbal said while chairing the meeting, a news release said on Sunday. He emphasized that Pakistan's development strategy is rooted in Vision 2025 and Uraan Pakistan's 5Es Framework—Exports, E-Pakistan, Energy & Infrastructure, Environment, and Equity & Empowerment—which together aim to transform the country into a competitive, inclusive, and knowledge-based economy by 2047. Out of the taken up projects at the CDWP forum, twelve projects worth Rs35.4 billion were approved, while six projects amounting to Rs280.2 billion were recommended to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for consideration. The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Awais Manzoor Sumra, the Vice Chancellor of PIDE, the Chief Economist, and senior representatives from federal ministries, provincial departments, and development partners. The agenda focused on projects in food and agriculture, governance, health, higher education, housing, social welfare, power, transport, and water resources—reflecting the government's multi-sectoral approach to national progress.

FIA handcuffs human smuggler in 132m visa fraud

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Islamabad has arrested a notorious human smuggler involved in multi-million rupee visa frauds and fake overseas employment schemes. An FIA official told on Sunday that the suspect, identified as Rizwan alias Shah, was apprehended from Islamabad in a targeted operation carried out under the directives of FIA Director General Rifaat Mukhtar. According to the official, the accused was wanted in multiple cases and had swindled citizens by luring them with promises of lucrative jobs in Canada. He had set up a bogus company under the name Mehrban Enterprise in Islamabad, through which he collected millions. Investigators revealed that in one case alone, Rizwan defrauded a complainant of Rs. 13.2 million by offering fake employment opportunities abroad. Several forged documents and passports were recovered from his possession at the time of arrest. FIA official said the suspect has been shifted into custody and further investigation is underway. He added that FIA's ongoing crackdown against human smugglers will continue relentlessly until all such elements are brought to justice.—DNA

135 mines in Pak adopt mechanized mining techniques

ISLAMABAD: A total of 135 mines across Pakistan have adopted mechanized mining techniques under a national drive to modernise the country's marble and granite industry, significantly cutting material wastage and improving production efficiency. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the shift toward mechanized quarrying has reduced waste from nearly 85 percent to about 45 percent, while attracting Rs 1.16 billion in combined public-private investment. The modernization drive, spearheaded by the Pakistan Stone Development Company (PASDEC), has introduced technology-based extraction methods and skill-development initiatives aimed at enhancing product quality and boosting exports. According to the documents, the PASDEC has so far assisted 135 operational

mines in adopting modern quarrying equipment, with training support from provincial mineral departments, donor agencies, and international partners. The cumulative investment of Rs 1.16 billion has financed machinery pools, skill-building programmes, and technology upgrades across the country's major stone belts. The mechanization programme has also generated more than 800 technical and non-technical jobs, both directly and indirectly, especially in less-developed districts, including the newly merged areas of the former FATA. In these regions, project activities have provided alternative income sources and new business opportunities to local communities. The PASDEC's transition plan has helped transform traditional blasting-based mining into controlled cutting of standardized “square

blocks,” a practice widely used in international markets. The improvement in block quality has strengthened Pakistan's ability to meet export standards in countries such as China, Korea, and Italy, where demand for processed marble and granite continues to rise. Pakistan possesses an estimated 30 billion tonnes of marble and granite reserves, spread across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Over the past five years, Pakistan's marble exports have averaged around US \$ 37 million annually, mostly in raw or semi-processed form. Efforts are also under way to locally manufacture quarrying machinery in collaboration with the Pakistan Machine Tool Factory, aiming to reduce dependence on imported equipment, cut operational costs.—APP

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Briefs

Kundi praises
China's role
in Pakistan's
growth

ISLAMABAD: Director for Asia and Oceania Region of China Railway 20 Bureau Group Corporation (CR20G), Mr. Xin Han, called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House Islamabad on Saturday. During the meeting, both sides discussed avenues of cooperation in the field of infrastructure development in Pakistan. The discussions particularly focused on potential partnerships in nationally significant projects, including the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway (M-6) and the Rohri-Karachi section upgradation of Pakistan Railways. CR20G's Chief Representative in Pakistan, Shoaib Ahmed, briefed the Governor that the company had earlier completed the Lahore-Multan Motorway (M-3) project between 2016 and 2018, which was widely appreciated for its timely completion and high construction standards. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi welcomed the delegation and appreciated China's continued cooperation in Pakistan's development, highlighting the strategic importance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). —DNA

Mushaal
applauds COAS
General Asim

ISLAMABAD: Kashmiri activist Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of detained Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik Sunday praised Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's diplomatic peace initiatives and emphasized the need to maintain focus on Kashmir's struggle at the United Nations (UN) and with Pakistan, cautioning that any incident involving Yasin Malik on November 10 could spark widespread turmoil. In her exclusive talk on PTV News, Mushaal commended General Syed Asim Munir for leading Pakistan's diplomatic efforts on Kashmir and Gaza with clarity and consistency. She noted that his proactive role had helped amplify the voices of Kashmiri people globally and renewed hope for a peaceful resolution. She also praised the constructive engagement of China and the United States in promoting regional peace and urged these powers to remain engaged to secure justice for Kashmir and prevent further escalation in the region. Responding to a query, Mushaal said that November 10 holds critical importance for the fate of Yasin Malik, and warned that if any harm comes to him, the reaction will be explosive not only from Kashmiris but across the region. "This time, the response will be beyond control," she cautioned, adding that after the loss of Syed Ali Gilani, another innocent Kashmiri leader's blood will not be shed in silence. —APP

ANF seizes
over 205 kg of
drugs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) intensified its nationwide crackdown against drug traffickers, conducting seven operations across the country that led to the arrest of six drug suppliers and the seizure of over 205 kilograms of drugs valued at more than Rs18.5 million. During international operations at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore, ANF team officers apprehended two passengers traveling to Jeddah for Umrah and recovered a total of 167 capsules from their abdomens containing 0.562 kg of heroin, 0.219 kg of ice (crystal meth), and 0.442 kg of heroin. In another operation at a courier office in Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi, 68 grams of weed were recovered from a parcel arriving from the United Kingdom. In an inter-provincial operation near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza, ANF teams seized 120 kilograms of hashish and 30 kilograms of opium from a vehicle and arrested the drug smuggler on the spot. Meanwhile, domestic operations led to multiple recoveries: 30 kilograms of hashish were seized from a vehicle near Bacha Agha Bazar in Baleli, Quetta; 14.4 kilograms of hashish and 3.6 kilograms of opium were recovered from a drug supplier near Pindi Bridge on Bannu-Kohat Road. —APP

Pak tackles one of Asia's
highest breast cancer rates

Delivering a powerful and informative presentation, Dr. Saeeda Yasmeen, General Surgeon and Breast Cancer Treatment Specialist, highlighted the common causes of breast cancer, the importance of regular check-ups, and lifestyle improvements. She urged participants to "break the myths, break the stigmas, and adopt healthy lifestyles

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Education and Professional Training, Wajih Qamar, has said that the government is fully cognizant of the severity of the spread of breast cancer and is taking all necessary measures to create maximum awareness about this lethal disease, as early detection and treatment remain the most effective tools to defeat it. She made these remarks while addressing a hugely attended annual Breast Cancer Awareness Session (Pink Ribbon) as Chief Guest, hosted by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) at the S.M. Muneer Auditorium on Saturday. Ms. Wajih Qamar commended the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry for taking the lead in this noble cause, saying that the Chamber's consistent efforts to raise awareness and mobilize the business community for social good are truly praiseworthy. She added that ICCI has demonstrated that economic leadership can and must go hand in hand with social responsibility. The Minister of State appreciated ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood's comprehensive roadmap on awareness and treatment, urging all stakeholders to work collectively to achieve shared goals. "Together, we can turn this national health emergency into a story of resilience, awareness, and recovery," she concluded. Addressing the event as Guest of Honour, Lt. General (R) Nigar Johar Khan, HI(M), TI(M), highlighted that Pakistan bears one of the highest breast cancer incidence rates in Asia, with one in every nine women at risk. "Every day, over a hundred lives are lost to this disease — behind every number is a mother, a sister, a daughter, and a family devastated by a prevent-



able loss," she stated. She stressed that women's health must be treated as a national priority, not as a seasonal campaign but as a year-round commitment. Lt. Gen. (R) Nigar Johar emphasized that although the latest technologies for detection and treatment are available in Pakistan, awareness and breaking social taboos remain crucial. "The risk is not only to women; it affects the entire population. To build a productive society and a productive Pakistan, we must take collective action," she said. In his welcome address, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood lauded Ms. Wajih Qamar, Lt. Gen. (R) Nigar Johar Khan, and Dr. Saeeda Yasmeen for their vital contributions in promoting awareness, extending guidance, and providing treatment. He

proudly unveiled ICCI's actionable commitments under its Pink Shield Initiatives, which include: Quarterly Pink Screening Camps in collaboration with partner hospitals, Annual Pink Business Week to promote awareness within the corporate sector, Chamber's Help Desk and Hotline to guide families toward credible screening and treatment facilities, Scholarship and Support Program for deserving patients, Corporate Referral Pathways to connect businesses and institutions with healthcare partners. Chairman ICCI Founder Group, Tariq Sadiq, reaffirmed that the Chamber has always been a champion of women empowerment — not just through words, but through meaningful action. "We have consistently worked to create opportu-

nities for women entrepreneurs and to help them rise as equal partners in Pakistan's economic growth. Today, we extend that commitment to their health and wellbeing," he said. "Through initiatives like the Pink Ribbon campaign, ICCI stands as a responsible institution that promotes care, compassion, and community health." Delivering a powerful and informative presentation, Dr. Saeeda Yasmeen, General Surgeon and Breast Cancer Treatment Specialist, highlighted the common causes of breast cancer, the importance of regular check-ups, and lifestyle improvements. She urged participants to "break the myths, break the stigmas, and adopt healthy lifestyles."

OGRA clarifies its legal
mandate on solvent oil oversight

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has reaffirmed that it is acting strictly within its legal mandate as assigned by the Federal Government to ensure the elimination of solvent mixing in petroleum products. Under Section 30 of the OGRA Ordinance, 2002, all licensees are required to furnish information relating to their licensed operations and products. The Authority's recent data requisition from Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) regarding solvent oil is part of a broader effort to ensure that products meant for industrial use are not diverted or blended with motor gasoline, which compromises quality, consumer safety, and government revenue. OGRA remains fully committed to promoting transparency, fair competition, and regulatory compliance in the petroleum sector while safeguarding public interest and ensuring the supply of quality petroleum products across the country. —DNA

PCT&VI approves new
technical courses

GWADAR: The Pak-China Technical & Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) at University of Gwadar (UG) has approved a series of new skill-based training programs including boat making, boat engine repair, general and solar electrical work, mobile phone repairing, and logistics and supply chain management, during its third Board of Studies meeting. Chaired by Prof. Dr. Syed Manzoor Ahmed, Executive Director of PCT&VI, the meeting took place in the institute's Conference Room. Other attendees included Prof. Dr. Jan Muhammad, Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Gwadar, and Dr. Mohibullah, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology at the University of Gwadar, along with departmental heads, faculty members, and administrative officers, according to Gwadar Pro news network. The Board reviewed various academic and administrative matters, with a focus on aligning curricula with evolving industry needs. Other than the newly introduced courses, in a major revision, the existing Mechatronics program was replaced with a newly designed Robotic Engineering program, reaffirming PCT&VI's commitment to offering cutting-edge, industry-relevant education. The proposals were formally approved by the Competent Authority. Admissions for all newly approved and existing programs will be announced soon, expanding opportunities for students from Gwadar, Makran and beyond. The latest decisions build on the institute's recent efforts to expand training opportunities in line with economic trends. —DNA

WAPDA hands over plots, final
payments to affected families

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step towards community rehabilitation, Pakistan's Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) distributed final payments and handed over resettlement plots to 65 households displaced by the Dasu Hydropower Project (DHPP), one of Pakistan's largest clean energy initiatives being developed with the expertise of Chinese companies. The Final Payment Distribution and Plot Handover Ceremony was held at the GM/ PD Office in WAPDA Colony, Choochang. Director General Social Safeguard Brig (Retd.) Khalid Khan Jadoon of WAPDA and Achlie Gullepo, Project Manager of Dasu Hydro Consultant (DHC), handed over resettlement plot certificates and Temporary Relocation Package (TRP) cheques to the affected families. Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. According to the project statement, this milestone marks a major advancement in the Dasu HPP's comprehensive resettlement program, aimed at ensuring displaced communities receive fair compensation, improved housing, and opportunities to rebuild their lives in the newly established Khushi-1 Resettlement Village. "This handover is more

than a transaction; it's a promise of renewed livelihoods and better futures," said Brig (Retd.) Jadoon. "We are committed to ensuring that all families affected by the Dasu project are resettled with dignity and support." The DHPP required the acquisition of 4,643 hectares of land, directly affecting 767 households from 34 hamlets and villages. The project has also documented and protected several community assets, including mosques, schools, health units, rock carvings, and a historic mosque, under a Resettlement Framework that guides land acquisition and ensures fair compensation and rehabilitation. Chinese companies play a central role in the project's development. China Gezhouba Group Co. Ltd. (CGGC) is the main contractor for Main Works-01, including the RCC dam, spillways, and river diversions. China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) is building the Right Access Road, while China Gansu International Corporation for Economic and Technical Cooperation (CGICOP) constructed the Project Colony. Power Construction Corporation of China (PCCC) holds the contract for the transmission line between Dubair Khwar HPP and Dasu HPP. —DNA



ISLAMABAD: Women taking interest in the paintings during exhibition entitled Tree for Life.

Pak
strengthens
provincial-
level coop
with China:
Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (PD&SI) has outlined an ambitious roadmap to accelerate the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase II, with a focus on high-tech industrialization, enhanced provincial-level cooperation, and modernization of governance and economic systems to support sustainable growth. This was reported by Gwadar Pro citing the latest Monthly Development Report and Initial Flood Damage Assessment released by the Ministry of PD&SI. Eighty-five percent of the project financing for the Karakoram Highway (KKH) Project has been committed by the Government of China, marking a major milestone in the deepening strategic partnership between the two countries. Federal Minister for PD&SI Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, while unveiling the report, said, "The bidding process for the Thakot-Raikot Motorway will commence within two months." "Provincial-level cooperation under CPEC would also be expanded following discussions with Chinese provincial leaders". He highlighted that the next phase of CPEC would not only upgrade physical infrastructure but also integrate emerging technologies, industrial modernization, and regional connectivity. —APP

National Polio
eradication
campaign
concludes

ISLAMABAD: National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) on Sunday said that during the first six days of the nationwide campaign, more than 43.7 million children have been vaccinated against polio. According to the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), in Punjab, over 23 million children received the vaccine, while in Sindh, more than 10.4 million children were immunized. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, more than 6.16 million children were vaccinated, followed by 2.58 million in Balochistan, 466,000 in Islamabad, 294,000 in Gilgit-Baltistan, and 733,000 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, NEOC added. The NEOC emphasized that protecting the nation's future from polio is a shared national responsibility, highlighting the critical role of parents and guardians in ensuring every child under five receives the vaccine. The NEOC have encouraged parents to welcome vaccination teams and ensure their children receive the life-saving drops during every polio immunization drive. —APP

Naqvi reviews
progress on
T-Chowk Flyover

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the T-Chowk Flyover project early in the morning and reviewed the ongoing development work on the mega project. He inspected the quality and pace of construction activities. He was informed that 100% of the piling, pile cap, and girder casting work has been completed, while 60% of the protective wall construction is finished. Expressing satisfaction over the progress, Mohsin Naqvi instructed that a comprehensive completion plan be devised keeping in view the future expansion of the GT Road. He directed that the project be completed on time with the highest standards of quality, emphasizing that there would be no compromise on construction standards in development projects. The Interior Minister also instructed for aesthetically pleasing landscaping and horticulture around the project area. He added, "The T-Chowk Flyover project will provide signal-free access to the federal capital for travelers coming from GT Road. Public convenience and service remain our top priority." During a detailed briefing on the project's progress, it was informed that the work is continuing as per the set timeline and will be completed within the stipulated period. The Inspector General of Islamabad Police, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, CDA members, and other senior officials were also present on the occasion. —DNA

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Pakistan-Afghan ceasefire a step towards lasting peace

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a major diplomatic breakthrough, Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to a comprehensive ceasefire following a week of fierce border clashes that left dozens dead and many injured on both sides. The landmark accord was reached in Doha, Qatar, on October 18, 2025, in negotiations mediated by the State of Qatar and the Republic of Turkiya, with China and Iran serving as guarantor states. The Doha ceasefire represents a significant evolution from the earlier 48-hour temporary truce, which came into effect following intense cross-border hostilities earlier in the week. Now expanded into a broader peace framework, the agreement aims to prevent future escalation, foster dialogue, and build long-term stability and cooperation between the two neighboring Islamic nations. According to the text of the agreement, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to peace, mutual respect, and the principles of Islamic brotherhood. The key provisions include: Immediate cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a Joint Border Coordination Office to ensure uninterrupted communication between military officials on both sides. Afghanistan's assurance that its territory will not be used by any group, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), to carry out attacks or subversive activities against Pakistan. Pakistan's reaffirmation to continue extending humanitarian support to Afghan refugees, guided by Islamic and humanitarian principles. Establishment of Peace Corridors at Chaman and Torkham to promote trade, facilitate cross-border movement of civilians, traders, and patients, and strengthen economic connectivity. Media restraint clauses, requiring both nations to avoid hostile rhetoric and focus on messages promoting Islamic brotherhood, mutual respect, and co-operation. Monitoring and review mechanisms, with Qatar hosting quarterly meetings to assess progress and ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement. The agreement follows days of deadly border clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan, triggered by Pakistan's strikes on TTP hideouts inside Afghan territory. The operation, aimed at dismantling terrorist infrastructure responsible for cross-border attacks, provoked retaliatory action by Afghan forces. The situation worsened on October 15, when Afghan troops again targeted Pakistani border posts, prompting a strong and measured counter-response from Pakistan's security forces. According to sources, Pakistan's retaliation inflicted significant losses on the Afghan side, compelling Kabul to request an immediate ceasefire. In a gesture of statesmanship,

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Islamabad agreed to a temporary 48-hour truce, making it clear that any continuation of "adventurism" or provocation would be unacceptable. This move not only de-escalated immediate tensions but also demonstrated Pakistan's consistent preference for diplomacy and dialogue over prolonged confrontation. The ceasefire, though initially fragile, soon gained momentum through diplomatic engagement, culminating in the Doha accord. It symbolizes a renewed opportunity for both countries to address long-standing grievances, particularly the issue of cross-border militancy. For years, Pakistan has urged the Taliban-led Afghan government to act decisively against the TTP, which continues to launch attacks from Afghan soil. Despite repeated assurances from Kabul, little progress had been observed until this breakthrough. Afghanistan's explicit commitment in the Doha agreement to deny sanctuary to anti-Pakistan groups could mark a turning point in restoring trust between the two nations. The Taliban, having themselves been victims of external aggression, should recognize the perils of harboring militant organizations. As long as such groups operate unchecked, mutual confidence will remain elusive. The Doha agreement, therefore, serves as both a test of intent and a roadmap for cooperation. Observers note that whenever Pakistan and Afghanistan clash, regional spoilers stand to gain. Among them, India remains the most active beneficiary of discord between the two Muslim-majority nations. Following recent military setbacks, New Delhi has every incentive to exploit instability along Pakistan's western frontier. A distracted Pakistan allows India to pursue its regional ambitions unchallenged. However, Islamabad appears increasingly aware of the broader geopolitical context, understanding that continued conflict with Kabul would only weaken both nations while serving the interests of external actors. By choosing negotiation over confrontation, Pakistan and Afghanistan have signaled maturity and strategic foresight. Peace in Afghanistan is not just a bilateral concern—it is a regional necessity. The successful implementation of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline and the CASA-1000 power transmission project depends on regional stability. Without peace, these multibillion-dollar initiatives will remain stalled, depriving the broader region of much-needed economic growth, energy security, and integration. Some reports suggest that Pakistan has decided to pull out of the TAPI, however other projects are still on the table and their future largely depends on stability in Afghanistan. The Doha accord between Pakistan and Afghanistan stands as a ray of hope in a region long plagued by conflict and mistrust. It signifies that even after intense confrontation, dialogue remains possible and productive. Both nations bound by faith, culture, and geography must now rise above animosity and work toward a shared future. Continued hostility will only benefit external powers and perpetuate suffering for ordinary citizens on both sides. If implemented faithfully, the Doha ceasefire could become the foundation of enduring peace, mutual trust, and regional cooperation not only between Pakistan and Afghanistan but for the stability and prosperity of South and Central Asia as a whole.

China's Edge and America's Fragility

Qamar Bashir



Washington sees this bind and is examining ways to mine, process, and manufacture more of these inputs at home. That path is necessary, but it is not quick. Permitting, capex, skilled labor, environmental safeguards, local consent, and shared infrastructure mean any serious build-out takes well over a decade to mature. Even then, the unit costs will be markedly higher than those produced by an ecosystem in China that has already reached enormous scale. The arithmetic is straightforward: if domestic inputs are several times more expensive than imported ones, consumers pay more, manufacturers lose margin, or both

WHEN a member of Congress asked who now holds the advantage between the United States and China, Kurt M. Campbell did not search for diplomatic shelter. He answered plainly—"China, China, China"—and added that America is in a more fragile position. That exchange distilled a wider realization in Washington: the contest is no longer about who has the cleverest idea, but about who can pair ideas with scale, speed, finance, and supply chains that actually deliver. Across robotics, autonomous systems, shipbuilding, critical minerals, and the green-energy stack, China has assembled an industrial machine that converts plans into production with few seams. The United States still leads in many forms of research and in the highest tiers of AI hardware and software. Yet too often these strengths sit on islands that are hard to connect to the physical economy. China, by contrast, works from the factory outward. It absorbs a technology, replicates it at home, pushes costs down, and then ships it to the world. That pattern—learn, scale, export—now runs through much of its economy. This is evident on factory floors. China has built the world's largest base of industrial robots and the domestic suppliers to keep adding more of them, allowing factories to iterate quickly and standardize quality. It shows up in the air as well, where Chinese drones dominate civilian markets and where military variants have spread to buyers that find Western systems unaffordable or unavailable. Autonomy at scale is not just a technical feat; it is a logistics and training advantage that compounds year after year. The imbalance is even clearer at sea. Chinese yards deliver commercial ships at a rate that American yards cannot currently approach. Those deliveries are not only commercial statistics. They translate into maritime resilience, seafit, and the capacity to replace hulls fast if a crisis damages them. Industrial power is not an abstraction; it is a queue of vessels sliding down the ways, month after month. America's shipbuilding base, meanwhile, is thin, specialized, and expensive to expand, which leaves the country reliant on time it may not have. Beneath these visible platforms lies a quieter source of leverage: rare earths and allied magnet materials. Modern electronics, precision weapons, wind turbines, and electric drivetrains all depend on them. China does not merely mine a large share of these inputs; it processes and refines them, and it manufactures the magnets that sit at the end of the chain. When Beijing tightened export restrictions, markets felt the tremor immediately. U.S. officials have pressed China to ease those curbs and have worked to rally partners to reduce concentration risk. That effort is prudent, but it also acknowledges the present reality—critical stages of the chain are outside American control. It is here that the familiar

American toolkit—tariffs, export controls, and the weaponization of data and finance—meets its limit. Measures of this kind can unsettle smaller or more fragile economies; they have done so repeatedly in the past. They are far less effective against a state with a continental-scale market, deep foreign-exchange reserves, a disciplined industrial policy, and broad capacity to substitute or reroute flows when pressured. China has spent years preparing for that pressure by localizing essential inputs, building parallel financial pipes, and hardening its digital and data regimes. A country that can supply so much of its own demand and anchor so many others' supply is not easily forced to change course from the outside. That is why the question posed in the hearing—will punitive tariffs work this time—lands differently today. Tariffs can raise Chinese costs at the American border, but they also raise costs for American producers who rely on Chinese inputs at every intermediate step. If the response from Beijing is to ratchet controls on minerals, chemicals, or magnet materials, the downstream impact is immediate: delays, higher bills, and quality slippage as firms scramble for substitutes. The economic effect accumulates in quieter ways as well. Investment decisions are deferred; projects are redesigned; factories operate below capacity. The result is slower growth and a steady erosion of credibility in the claim that America can out-produce its rival where it matters most. Washington sees this bind and is examining ways to mine, process, and manufacture more of these inputs at home. That path is necessary, but it is not quick. Permitting, capex, skilled labor, environmental safeguards, local consent, and shared infrastructure mean any serious build-out takes well over a decade to mature. Even then, the unit costs will be markedly higher than those produced by an ecosystem in China that has already reached enormous scale. The arithmetic is straightforward: if domestic inputs are several times more expensive than imported ones, consumers pay more, manufacturers lose margin, or both. And if China chooses to restrict intermediate goods while America is still scaling its replacements, the squeeze is immediate. It is the classic choice between the devil and the deep sea. None of this argues for resignation. It argues for realism. Treating China as an equal party in the global economy does not mean conceding strategic ground; it means recognizing that coercive instruments will not deliver quick or clean wins. A better first step is to lower the temperature of the tariff war by restoring duties toward earlier baselines and by limiting new restrictions to genuinely narrow security cases with clear, auditable justifications. That would not end competition. It would simply replace a spiral of retaliation with rules that both sides can plan

around, which is the precondition for any serious industrial strategy at home. De-escalation abroad must be matched by seriousness at home. The United States needs a long-horizon, bipartisan program that outlasts election cycles and that treats production as a national capability, not a slogan. That means modernizing ports and shipyards so output can compound rather than stall; accelerating permitting without waiving environmental standards; building regional hubs for magnets, specialty chemicals, and advanced components with public-private risk sharing; aligning procurement with delivery so firms are paid to produce, not to promise; and investing in workforce pipelines that can staff mines, mills, fabs, and yards. Recycling and re-use should be embedded from the start so domestic supply is not only larger but also more resilient when prices swing. The same principle should guide the data front. The United States can and should protect sensitive datasets and core algorithms, but it should avoid broad regimes that punish neutral commercial activity or force partners to choose camps. A narrower, predictably enforced set of rules will better protect security without undermining competitiveness. Data is valuable because it flows; policy that freezes it indiscriminately tends to reduce American firms' reach more than it constrains China's. Some will hear this and worry that stepping back from the tariff cliff signals weakness. The opposite is true. It signals confidence that America's real advantage lies in the combination of research excellence, entrepreneurial depth, and an open capital market that can scale new industries when the ground rules are stable. Tariffs and blunt data controls may temporarily bruise a competitor, but they rarely build capacity at home. Capacity is built by patient investment, steady rules, and a clear list of priorities that does not change with each headline. Campbell's answer in the hearing was a snapshot of the present, not a verdict on the future. China's strength today rests on a disciplined link between strategy and production. America's path back runs through the same link. It will not be achieved by trying to bludgeon a rival that has already insulated itself from the tools that once worked on others. It will be achieved by lowering the noise, rebuilding the sinews of industry, and competing on the only terrain that decides enduring power: the ability to design, build, and deliver at scale. If the United States chooses that course, it will find that fragility is not fate. It is a diagnosis—and like any diagnosis, it is most useful when it prompts the right treatment.

— 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

Sharm el-Sheikh and the Shadows of History

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The fundamental question remains; what is the true enforceability of such agreements? A peace accord is not merely a collection of signatures but a covenant of trust. Without mutual respect and the will to abide by its spirit, the document is reduced to little more than parchment and ink. In the absence of clear guarantees and mechanisms for enforcement...

HISTORY, when it repeats itself, does so with a painful consistency. The recent peace agreement signed between Israel and Palestine in Sharm el-Sheikh, though welcomed by many as a diplomatic triumph, raises more questions than it answers. The gathering of world leaders, including the President of the United States, lent the event a ceremonial weight; yet, the conspicuous absence of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu overshadowed the symbolism of unity that such moments usually intend to convey. In international diplomacy, gestures often carry greater significance than words—and an empty chair at such a table speaks louder than a thousand signatures. To understand the implications of this accord, one must travel through the corridors of history. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been punctuated by countless accords—Camp David, Oslo, Wye River, and Annapolis, among others—all draped in the language of hope, yet ultimately betrayed by the realities of mistrust and imbalance. Each agreement began with applause and optimism, only to be eroded by violence, settlements, and political expediency. The peace of Sharm el-Sheikh, therefore, is not the dawn of a new chapter; it is another verse in a long and tragic poem written in the ink of broken promises. The fundamental question remains; what is the true enforceability of such agreements? A peace accord is not merely a collection of signatures but a covenant of trust. Without mutual respect and the will to abide by its spirit, the document is reduced to little more than parchment and ink. In the absence of clear guarantees and mechanisms for enforcement, any agreement between parties with a history of hostility becomes fragile—an arrangement that trembles at the first gust of political change. Who will hold either side accountable if one defies the clauses? The international community may issue statements and convene emergency meetings, but the world has witnessed again and again that resolutions alone cannot restrain a nation's ambition or fear.

The presence of powerful nations at the ceremony may lend the agreement diplomatic legitimacy, but moral legitimacy comes only from sincerity and justice. No treaty, however well-drafted, can sustain peace if one party continues to occupy, oppress, or provoke. The imbalance of power between Israel and Palestine has been the central obstacle to every peace effort. The stronger party often negotiates from a position of control, while the weaker negotiates from necessity. In such a dynamic, peace becomes not a partnership, but a concession. Without equality of intent and mutual recognition of suffering, peace remains an illusion. The absence of Netanyahu at the table invites speculation. Was it a political calculation to avoid domestic backlash, or an indication of Israel's reluctance to accept the moral and practical obligations that peace demands? Symbolically, it echoes the hesitation that has marked Israel's approach to genuine reconciliation. True peace requires courage—not only to sign, but to surrender certain privileges of power, to dismantle structures of occupation, and to extend the hand of humanity even when distrust lingers. History teaches us that peace without justice is a pause, not a conclusion. The Palestinian question is not merely about borders; it is about dignity, statehood, and survival. Any agreement that does not address these core issues is merely a truce awaiting its expiry date. Similarly, any framework that allows one side to act with impunity while the other is bound by restraint cannot endure. The lessons of the past are clear; when peace is imposed rather than nurtured, it decays from within. Philosophically, peace is not an event—it is a process of transformation. It requires not only political signatures but moral awakening. Nations must evolve beyond the mindset of victory and defeat to embrace co-existence. In this sense, the peace of Sharm el-Sheikh will only have meaning if it transforms hearts as well as policies. The children of Gaza and Tel Aviv must inherit not the bitterness of their fathers but the possi-

bility of friendship. Yet such transformation cannot be legislated; it must be cultivated through fairness, empathy, and the humility to acknowledge past wrongs. Academically, one might frame this as a problem of asymmetrical negotiations and enforcement theory. Without a credible external guarantor or binding arbitration mechanism, the incentives for compliance diminish over time. If the agreement lacks teeth, it cannot bite when breached. History shows that when Israel expands settlements or conducts military operations in defiance of accords, global powers rarely move beyond expressions of "deep concern." Similarly, when extremist factions within Palestine retaliate, they too jeopardize the very peace their people long for. Thus, the failure is not only political—it is moral. The world's silence, selective outrage, and short-lived attention have all contributed to the erosion of accountability. In moral terms, peace demands sacrifice from both sides. It requires Israel to see beyond its security walls and Palestine to rise above its despair. It requires the world to uphold justice not through speeches but through sustained action. If the international community truly seeks to guarantee peace, it must ensure that violations are not met with indifference. Guarantees cannot exist in rhetoric—they must live in reality. And so, as the ink dries on another agreement, the world watches—half in hope, half in doubt. The setting of Sharm el-Sheikh, a resort once associated with tranquility and diplomacy, may again witness the familiar arc of optimism fading into cynicism. Yet, perhaps, in this weary repetition, lies a glimmer of awakening: that peace cannot be gifted, it must be earned through honesty, equity, and respect for human life. If the architects of this accord have truly learned from history, then perhaps this time the peace will hold—not because it was signed in grandeur, but because it was implemented in good faith. Otherwise, it will join the archives of unfulfilled promises, a reminder that in the pursuit of peace, words are many, but courage is rare.

Briefs

Pakistan-Afghan ceasefire...

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thus contributing to achieving security and stability in both countries,” it added. Confirming the agreement, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, who led Pakistan’s delegation in Doha, expressed hope that the ceasefire would end border tensions between the two countries. Asif said the delegations from the two sides would meet again in Istanbul on October 25 as he emphasised that both countries have agreed to respect each other’s territorial sovereignty. The defence czar added that under the agreement, terrorism from Afghanistan on Pakistani soil will stop immediately. He also thanked Qatar and Türkiye for mediating talks with Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan held the first round of talks mediated by Qatar in Doha on Saturday. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif led the Pakistani delegation, while his Afghan counterpart Mullah Yaqoob headed his country’s negotiators. Furthermore, sources said senior security officials accompanied the defence minister to support the negotiations. The Afghan intelligence chief was also part of the Kabul delegation. Pakistan told the Afghan delegation that the presence of militant groups in Afghanistan was “unacceptable”, sources added. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar termed the ceasefire agreement “first step in the right direction”.

Pakistan, Afghan ceasefire...

FROM PAGE 01
contributing to long-term security and regional stability. The detailed text of the ceasefire agreement outlines several key provisions:

- Immediate cessation of hostilities and creation of a Joint Border Coordination Office to manage communication between military officials.
- Afghanistan’s assurance that its soil will not be used by any group, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), to conduct attacks against Pakistan.
- Pakistan’s reaffirmation to continue humanitarian support for Afghan refugees in line with Islamic and humanitarian principles.
- Establishment of Peace Corridors at Chaman and Torkham to facilitate trade and human connectivity.
- Media restraint clauses, directing both nations to avoid hostile rhetoric and promote messages of Islamic brotherhood.
- Monitoring and review mechanisms, with Qatar hosting quarterly meetings to assess progress.

The ceasefire agreement, effective immediately, will remain valid for two years and can be extended by mutual consent – marking a potentially historic step toward lasting peace and cooperation in the region.

Pakistan launches first...

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This is Pakistan’s third satellite launched into space this year, according to Suparco. The Suparco spokesperson said the earlier EO-1 and KS-1 missions were successfully launched and are fully operational in orbit. Pakistan’s space programme, the spokesperson said, is entering a new era of advanced technology and applications. The agency framed the mission as a major leap in Pakistan’s space journey, ushering in advanced applications across agriculture, disaster management, urban planning and environmental monitoring. In agriculture, HS-1’s hyperspectral imaging is intended to enable precision farming through high-resolution data and calibration. By providing detailed insights into crop health, soil moisture and irrigation patterns, HS-1 is expected to enhance yield estimation by 15–20%, bolstering food security. For urban development, HS-1’s sensors will help monitor environmental changes, map infrastructure and analyse urban growth trends.

4 envoys present credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari

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.



High Commissioner of New Zealand



Ambassador of the Netherlands

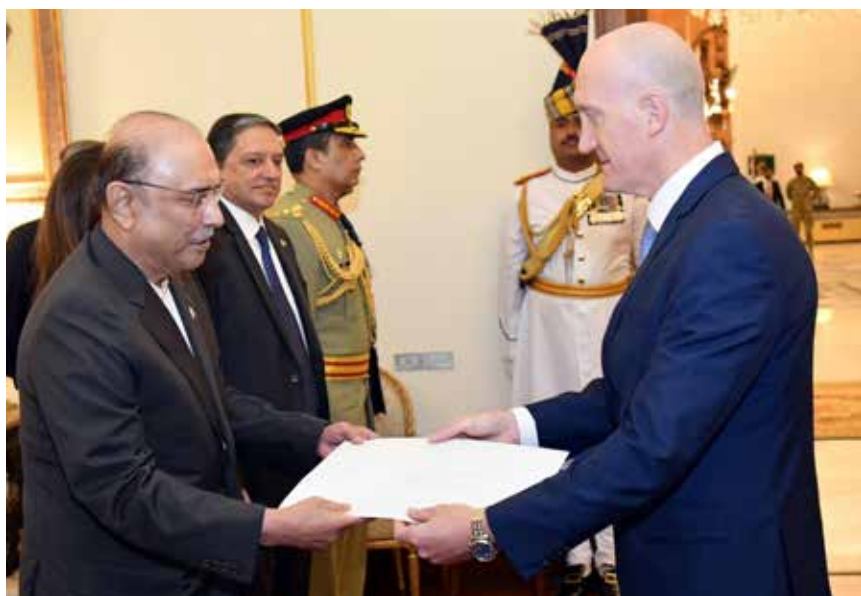
DNA

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 Siegert, 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 promoting goodwill between the two nations. In his conversation with the Ambassador of Lebanon, the President reaf-



High Commissioner of Canada



Ambassador of Lebanon

firmed 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. During his meeting with the Ambassador of the Netherlands, the President underscored the importance of further strengthening bilateral ties, especially in trade, investment, agriculture, and education. He appreciated Netherlands’ partnership in areas such as water management, climate resilience and sustainable development, and invited greater Dutch investment in Pakistan.

In his interaction with the Non-Resident High Commissioner of New Zealand, the President highlighted the shared Commonwealth heritage and democratic values between the two countries. He underscored the potential for enhanced cooperation in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and clean energy and expressed appreciation for New Zealand’s support for Pakistan’s multilateral initiatives. The President extended his best wishes to all four envoys for a successful and productive tenure, expressing hope that their efforts would lead to stronger bilateral and multilateral partnerships for mutual benefit. Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, and Secretary Foreign Affairs were also present on the occasion.

Sultan of Johor Cup
Great Britain beat Pak to win bronze medal

Australian lifts the trophy by defeating India 2-1 in the final

SPORTS DESK

JOHAR: Great Britain’s men’s junior hockey team beat Pakistan 3-2 on Saturday to claim the bronze medal in the third-place playoff at the Taman Daya Stadium in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. Great Britain made a blistering start in the first quarter, racing to a two-goal lead. Kaden Dreyse scored from a penalty corner in the seventh minute before Michael Royden added the second in the 12th minute. Pakistan captain Abdul Hannan Shahid gave his side hope with a field goal in the 23rd minute, but even a late drag-flick from Sufyan Khan couldn’t turn the game around. Later in the night, Australia beat India 2-1 in the final at Johor Bahru’s Taman Daya Hockey Stadium. Ian Grobbelaar scored twice to lead Australia to victory, while Anmol Ekka netted India’s only goal. The result gave India their fifth runners-up finish at the junior hockey tournament. Australia struck first in the 13th minute with a penalty-corner conversion by Ian Grobbelaar, but India hit back early in the second quarter when Anmol Ekka’s drag flick beat goalkeeper Magnus McCausland to level the score at 1-1. Ajit Yadav’s interception sparked a promising move in the final quarter but his shot went wide. India pressed hard in the closing minutes, earning an eighth penalty corner, but could not breach the Australian defence. With the match heading for a shootout, Grobbelaar converted a penalty corner in the 59th minute to seal a 2-1 win and the 2025 Sultan of Johor Cup title for Australia.

Azhar Mahmood urges consistency

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan head coach Azhar Mahmood has urged his players to show greater consistency when they face South Africa in the second and final Test of the series, starting Monday at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. Pakistan lead the two-match series 1-0 after a 93-run win in Lahore – a result that gave their World Test Championship 2025-27 campaign an ideal start. Azhar, however, said his side must avoid repeating the lapses that allowed South Africa to fight back in patches during the first Test. “Even after the first Test I had said that losing wickets in clusters is a concern,” he told media at a press conference at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. “The pitch in Lahore, offered something for everyone – reverse swing, pace and spin – but batsmen who applied themselves scored well. “Our focus is on not repeating the mistakes we made earlier.” The coach said the players had worked on adjusting to spin-friendly conditions during their training camp. – APP

Pakistan slams ICC for ‘unverified’ claim over Afghan cricketers’ deaths

Says such incidents have eroded confidence in ICC’s neutrality, warns global regulator against biased narrative

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday condemned the International Cricket Council’s (ICC) recent statements, describing them as selective, biased, and premature, and warning that such narratives risk politicising the sport and undermining trust in global cricket governance. “Pakistan, a prime victim of cross-border terrorism, rejects the ICC’s selective, biased and premature comment that advances a disputed allegation, as established, that three ‘Afghan cricketers’ died in an ‘airstrike,’” Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataullah Tarar said in an X post. “The ICC has cited no independent verification to substantiate these claims,” the minister said, adding, “Pakistan strongly rejects the characterisation and contests the ICC’s claim and calls for immediate correction.” “We also note a troubling pattern of amplification without any attempts at evidence gathering. “Within hours of the ICC release, its Chair, Jay Shah, publicly echoed the same claim on X, and the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) then posted a statement on the same lines, explicitly invoking the ICC’s claim rather than providing details or proof.” This sequencing is an attempt at manufacturing an ostensible echo chamber, according to Tarar. “This episode follows a pattern of avoidable controversies under the ICC’s current leadership that have disproportionately attempted to affect Pakistan cricket, including the recent ‘handshake controversy’ that delayed Pakistan’s Asia Cup fixture until a resolution was found. Saying that these incidents have eroded confidence in ICC’s neutrality, the information minister stressed that a global regulator must not appear to push any biased narrative, nor allow match-management controversies to recur. “Pakistan has consistently held that politics must not contaminate the sport, especially cricket, and urges the ICC to uphold its independence and the spirit of the game. Tarar warned that the ICC should abstain from definitive attributions, avoid certifying unverified claims on the behalf of others, refrain from allowing certain actors to draw political mileage, and uphold even-handed standards irrespective of the nationality of office-bearers.

Netanyahu says Gaza war not over

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further hostages on Saturday night under a US-brokered ceasefire agreement. The Israeli military said late Saturday that a Red Cross team received the remains of two hostages and the coffins were on their way to its security forces in Gaza. The issue of the dead hostages still in Gaza has become a sticking point in the implementation of the first phase of the ceasefire. Israel has linked the reopening of the key Rafah crossing to the territory to the recovery of the hostages’ remains. Netanyahu cautioned that completing the ceasefire’s second phase was essential to ending the war. He said late Saturday that “Phase B also involves the disarming of Hamas and the demilitarisation of the Gaza Strip. “When that is successfully completed – hopefully in an easy way, but if not, in a hard way – then the war will end,” he added in an appearance on right-wing Israeli Channel 14. Hamas has so far resisted the idea and since the pause in fighting has moved to reassert its control over the Gaza Strip.

PAF to showcase JF-17...

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mid-air refuelling operation, executed with utmost precision by PAF’s own IL-78 aerial tanker, reaffirmed the long-range capability of PAF fighter jets and showcased the professional excellence and preparedness of PAF aircrew to undertake extended international deployments. “Exercise Indus Shield Alpha aims to enhance mutual understanding, tactical coordination, and interoperability between the two brotherly Air Forces,” the ISPR said and added, “the exercise will focus on modern aerial warfare tactics, joint mission planning, and execution in an environment shaped by rapid technological advancements and evolving airpower dynamics.

PM, Malaysian counterpart discuss...

FROM PAGE 01
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif briefed Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on his participation in the signing ceremony of the Gaza Peace Agreement in Sharm-el-Sheikh. While welcoming this peace effort, both leaders expressed hope that it would help bring an immediate end to the suffering of the Palestinian people, ensure unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza, and pave the way for lasting peace and stability in the region. The Prime Minister also apprised his Malaysian counterpart of the security situation along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. He underscored that Pakistan seeks peace and stability in Afghanistan but continues to face cross-border terrorism emanating from Afghan soil. The Prime Minister emphasized that the Afghan authorities must take immediate and effective steps to dismantle terrorist networks operating from Afghan soil that continue to orchestrate attacks inside Pakistan.

China says US waged cyberattacks on national time centre

FROM PAGE 01
the National Time Service Center, between 2022 and 2024, according to a statement published on the official Ministry of State Security WeChat account. The facility is responsible for coordinating clocks around the country used by everything from computer servers to train stations and power grids. The ministry accused the NSA of exploiting weaknesses in the messaging service of an unspecified foreign mobile phone brand in order to steal login credentials from employees at the time centre. The attacks could have jeopardised power grids, transport, and even space launches, the ministry said.

Markram confident of Proteas comeback in Rwp Test

“It’s great to have him back in the camp. He brings a lot of experience and a really good skill set as well,” the skipper remarked. “For us, the goal is to level the series and keep improving in these conditions”

DNA

RAWALPINDI: South Africa’s stand-in captain Aiden Markram has expressed confidence in his team’s ability to stage a strong comeback in the second Test against Pakistan, saying the Proteas are determined to level the two-match series when play begins at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Monday. The defending champions suffered a 93-run defeat in Lahore in their opening fixture of the ICC World Test Championship 2025–27 cycle, but Markram said the side remained upbeat

and motivated to bounce back strongly. Addressing a press conference at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Sunday, Markram said the return of experienced left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj had provided a timely boost to the squad. “It’s great to have him back in the camp. He brings a lot of experience and a really good skill set as well,” the skipper remarked. “For us, the goal is to level the series and keep improving in these conditions.” Having inspected the pitch briefly, Markram said it looked “pretty good to the eye” but expected spin to play a crucial role once again. “We’re expecting it to spin – we anticipated that from day

one,” he said. “We’ve done our homework after the first game and come up with new plans to counter it. Hopefully, that gives us a better chance of success.” Comparing the conditions in Rawalpindi with those in Lahore, where Pakistan took a 1–0 lead, Markram said his team was preparing for a similar challenge. “We’ll have to assess how quickly it starts to spin, but we’re planning with that in mind,” he added. The Proteas skipper said he had spent extra hours in the nets fine-tuning his approach for subcontinental tracks. “I’ve been working on ideas that suit my game. Mentally, I feel in a good space and

very hungry to contribute and lead from the front,” he said. “We’ll play with our hearts on our sleeves and give it a good fight.” Reflecting on South Africa’s previous tour of Pakistan in 2021, Markram said conditions were likely to differ this time but adaptability would be key to their success. “It’s about assessing quickly and backing your plans as a batsman,” he noted. “Once you decide on a plan, you stick with it.” Pakistan lead the series 1–0 after their victory in Lahore, while South Africa will be hoping to restore parity when the second Test begins on Monday at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Briefs

Flights resume at Dhaka airport after fire forced operations to halt

DHAKA: Flights have resumed at Bangladesh's main airport in Dhaka, airport officials said, six hours after a fire in the cargo section delayed flights and halted operations on Saturday. The first flight departed at 9.06 p.m. (1506 GMT), officials told reporters. The fire has been completely brought under control, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism said in a statement. "Steps will be taken to identify the source of the fire and implement measures to prevent such incidents in the future," the ministry added. Operations at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport were suspended after the fire broke out in the cargo section of the airport, with around 37 firefighting units working to douse the flames. The army, navy, and air force also joined the fire service in efforts to bring the blaze under control. Kabir Ahmed, president of the International Air Express Association of Bangladesh, said it was too early to estimate the exact losses, but that the overall impact — direct and indirect — on imports and exports could exceed \$1 billion.—APP

Protesters out in force for anti-Trump 'No Kings' rallies across US

WASHINGTON: Huge crowds took to the streets in all 50 US states at "No Kings" protests on Saturday, venting anger over President Donald Trump's hardline policies, while Republicans ridiculed them as "Hate America" rallies. Organizers said seven million people marched in protests spanning New York to Los Angeles, with demonstrations popping up in small cities across the US heartland and even near Trump's home in Florida. "This is what democracy looks like!" chanted thousands in Washington near the US Capitol, where the federal government was shut down for a third week because of a legislative deadlock. Colorful signs called on people to "protect democracy," while others demanded the country abolish the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency at the center of Trump's anti-immigrant crackdown. Demonstrators slammed what they called the Republican billionaire's strong-arm tactics, including attacks on the media, political opponents and undocumented immigrants. "I never thought I would live to see the death of my country as a democracy," 69-year-old retiree Colleen Hoffman said as she marched down Broadway in New York.—APP

135 mines in Pakistan adopt mechanized mining techniques

ISLAMABAD: A total of 135 mines across Pakistan have adopted mechanized mining techniques under a national drive to modernise the country's marble and granite industry, significantly cutting material wastage and improving production efficiency. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the shift toward mechanized quarrying has reduced waste from nearly 85 percent to about 45 percent, while attracting Rs 1.16 billion in combined public-private investment. The modernization drive, spearheaded by the Pakistan Stone Development Company (PASDEC), has introduced technology-based extraction methods and skill-development initiatives aimed at enhancing product quality and boosting exports. According to the documents, the PASDEC has so far assisted 135 operational mines in adopting modern quarrying equipment, with training support from provincial mineral departments.—APP

Running for a Cause

Serena Hotels and KKAWF champion a drug-free future

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, under the initiative of Sports Diplomacy, collaborated with the Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation (KKAWF), for the 9th edition of the "Save Tomorrow" Run & Walk at Fatima Jinnah Park (F-9 Park), Islamabad. The annual "Save Tomorrow" Run & Walk brought together over 500 participants from various walks of life, united in the mission to promote a drug-free and healthy society. Participants competed across different categories 15 and below, professional runners, 40+, and Persons with Disabilities showing their commitment to raising awareness about drug abuse and encouraging preventive action. The event featured motivational speeches from



dignitaries and partners who emphasized the power of collective responsibility in combating drug addiction. Ms. Cristina Von Sperling Afridi, Chairperson of KKAWF, highlighted the Founda-

tion's commitment to protecting youth through education, awareness, and community programs that build strength and informed decision-making. Prizes and medals were distributed among win-



ners in each category, acknowledging their active participation and support for the cause. The event served as a powerful reminder that community-driven efforts can bring meaningful change and inspire a united front against drug abuse. Through its CSR ini-

tiatives, Serena Hotels continues to champion impactful causes that promote health, wellness, and social awareness. Serena Hotels and KKAWF remain united in their mission to build a safe and drug-free society for future generations.

Egypt expected to lead proposed post-war Gaza stabilization force

LONDON: Egypt is expected to take the lead in an international stabilization force being developed to oversee security inside Gaza under a proposed UN Security Council mandate backed by the US and European partners, according to diplomatic sources. The proposed force, which would have broad powers similar to those granted to international troops in Haiti to combat armed groups, is being shaped as part of a European and US-backed UN motion, The Guardian newspaper reported on Saturday. Washington is said to favor a UN mandate for the mission, without establishing it as a full-fledged UN peacekeeping operation. Türkiye, Indonesia, and Azerbaijan are among the countries being lined up as key troop contributors alongside Egypt. While no European or British troops are expected to participate, the UK has deployed advisers to a coordination unit operated by the US inside Israel, The Guardian also reported. The unit is tasked with helping implement the second phase of a 20-point plan drafted by US President Donald Trump. British officials have underlined that the long-term objective remains the establishment of a Palestinian state encompassing Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. The UK has already been training a contingent of Palestinian police officers, but under the new proposal the international force would take the lead on security responsibilities. Should the operation prove effective, Israel would withdraw further from areas of Gaza, although Israeli officials insist that a significant buffer zone will remain under their control to guard against future Hamas attacks. Diplomatic sources acknowledge that one of the most contentious elements of the plan involves the decommissioning of Hamas weapons and British officials are drawing on lessons from Northern Ireland's peace process, where weapons controlled by both the IRA and loyalist groups were put beyond use under independent supervision. The UK also appears to support a role for its former prime minister Tony Blair on a newly proposed "board of peace," outlined in Trump's plan, which would oversee the work of a 15-member committee of Palestinian technocrats. Blair's potential appointment has drawn backing from Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, who told CNBC during a recent interview: "Tony Blair is a person acceptable to the Iraqis and a friend, having contributed to the decision to go to war with President Bush, at the time, and to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime," e added: "(Blair) is a great friend of the Iraqis and visits us often and I also hold meetings with him. We certainly wish him success in this mission and we will support him." Blair's position on the board, which will be chaired by Trump, is expected to be confirmed by early November, ahead of a major reconstruction conference in Cairo that Egypt will host to mobilize donor and private sector funding for Gaza's recovery. Officials say the cost of rebuilding Gaza is estimated to exceed \$67 billion, requiring not only contributions from Gulf donors but also significant private investment. Questions remain over the precise relationship between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the proposed board. PA Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian said her government had learned from past mistakes and was intent on reform. Speaking at a conference in Naples organized by Italian think tank IPSI, she said one of the PA's key initiatives was overhauling its education curriculum. "If we develop that curriculum to the best standards of the world but children that are taught that curriculum continue to live under dire occupation, will that give them a narrative of peace? No," she said.—APP

Dozens arrested in Tunisia anti-pollution protests

TUNIS: Police in Gabes, Tunisia have arrested dozens of people in demonstrations against a chemical factory which locals blame for pollution and a range of health issues, a local campaign group and a lawyer said Saturday. Thousands have rallied in the southern coastal city in recent days calling for the closure of a phosphate processing plant, which they say is behind a rise in gas poisonings and other pollution-related health problems. "The arrests targeted night protesters," said Mehdi Talmoudi, a lawyer and member of the local branch of the Tunisian Bar Association. "While daytime demonstrations have been largely peaceful, those at night have seen occasional clashes with security forces and burning tires," he told AFP. Talmoudi said the exact number of arrests was not known. But Khayreddine Debaya, coordinator of the local campaign group Stop Pollution, said "over 100 people were taken into custody" by early Saturday. "Police arrested more than 70 people just last night, and more by dawn," he said. "Some were taken from their homes." Other Tunisian activists on social media have also condemned "a wave of arrests." Locals in Gabes have held several rallies urging the closure of the factory, which processes phosphate to make fertilizers. They say it has recently been releasing more toxic gases and radioactive waste into the sea. Authorities earlier this year said they would ramp up production at the plant, despite a 2017 promise to gradually shut it down. Early on Saturday, the Tunisian presidency said President Kais Saïed had summoned parliament speaker Brahim Bouderbala and the head of the second parliamentary chamber, Imed Derbali, to discuss "the environmental situation" in Gabes, among other issues.—APP

Meeting discussed bottlenecks in meat export to Malaysia

ISLAMABAD, Oct 19 (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan chaired a high-level committee meeting in Lahore to address the bottlenecks faced by meat exporters in exporting meat to Malaysia. The meeting was attended by Secretary Industries and Production Saif Anjum, along with representatives from both the public and private sectors, said a news release. During the meeting, participants deliberated upon issues and recommendations related to meat exports to Malaysia. Exporters identified key challenges including feed quality, livestock breed, high production costs, lack of cold chain facilities, limited banking support, and documentation hurdles. Exporters emphasized that the banking sector is not providing adequate support.—APP

UNICEF warns quality of humanitarian aid to Gaza as crucial as quantity

GAZA: A senior UNICEF official has warned that the quality of relief aid entering Gaza is as vital as its quantity, stressing the need for unrestricted access to essential supplies to meet the enclave's mounting humanitarian needs. Hamish Young, UNICEF's senior emergency coordinator, who was speaking to Anadolu Agency, said: "Palestinians in Gaza need tents, plastic sheeting, and clean drinking water." He highlighted the urgent need for fuel and equipment necessary for water production and distribution, as well as pipes to repair wells and desalination plants. Speaking from the road leading to the Kissufim crossing, east of Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza, Young said he and his team were waiting for permission to allow in much-needed aid. "We have 50 trucks waiting for permission to move and bring in medical supplies and hygiene items essential to save children's lives," he said. According to UNICEF, Israel has allowed 653 aid trucks into Gaza since the ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10. This number is far fewer than the 600 trucks per day agreed under the current arrangements. On Sunday, 173 trucks were permitted to enter, including three carrying cooking gas and six with fuel. No aid entered on Monday or Tuesday, while 480 trucks were allowed through on Wednesday. Describing conditions in Gaza as "catastrophic," Young said all hospitals had been either destroyed or severely damaged, while residents faced severe shortages of food and shelter. He warned that UNICEF urgently needed a "significant amount of food supplies" to address the effects of famine in northern Gaza, adding: "There is an urgent need to make every effort to bring in all these supplies I'm talking about." Young continued: "Children in Gaza are in dire need of this support, and we shouldn't sit and wait for these supplies." He called for the daily entry of "600 trucks loaded with supplies, including a full range of materials from the private sector and commercial suppliers, in addition to vital humanitarian aid provided by UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, and the World Health Organization." Young added that Gaza also needed around 50 trucks of fuel each day, including cooking gas, which he described as "critical for the population of Gaza," adding that aid organizations needed freedom of movement throughout Gaza "so that we can deliver supplies to the most vulnerable children, and to their mothers and the families who care for them.—Agencies

18 October – day of restoration of independence

Today, Azerbaijan marks the 34th anniversary of the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan restored its state independence in the late 20th century after the collapse of the USSR. On 18 October 1991, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted the Constitutional Act "On the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan". The Constitutional Act referred to the Declaration on the Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 28 May 1918 and the Declaration "On the Restoration of State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan" adopted by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 30 August 1991, proclaiming the independent state of Azerbaijan as a legal successor of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Thus, according to the Constitutional Act "On the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan", the people of Azerbaijan restored their independence on 18 October 1991. The Constitutional Act consisted of 6 chapters and 32 articles. On 29 December 1991, the people of Azerbaijan voted for the country's independence and sovereignty in a nationwide referendum. The chaos and government crisis within the country, as well as Armenia's military aggression

against Azerbaijan, seriously damaged the independent state-building process at that time. Only in 1993, when National Leader Heydar Aliyev returned to power with the demand of the Azerbaijani people, did the country manage to take consistent steps to fulfill the ideas of national independence and restore the traditions of statehood and sovereignty. The Contract of the Century, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, and other internationally important projects are connected with the name of Heydar Aliyev. As a result of the great leader's wise policy, high-speed socio-economic development was ensured in Azerbaijan, and it became a country with a strong position in international relations. The years under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan were the fateful stage when the nation took advantage of a rare historical opportunity and made its independence eternal and irreversible at the cost of great suffering. In short, the National Leader of the Republic of Azerbaijan is a personality who created history and today he is being remembered by the people of Azerbaijan for his shining and great services to his nation. Today, the political course defined by the National Leader is being successfully continued by the

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. Under his leadership, the country won the 44-day Patriotic War. The territories were liberated from almost 30 year long Armenia's occupation in 2020. President Ilham Aliyev fulfilled the dream of his father and the National Leader by liberating the lands of Azerbaijan from occupation. On September 19-20, 2023, in order to put an end to the existence of illegal Armenian forces, as well as to restore full sovereignty over all its territories, Azerbaijan carried out counter-terrorism measures within 24 hours in the Karabakh region. Now the three-color national flag of Azerbaijan is waving in the liberated lands. Immediately after the historic Victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, large-scale restoration and reconstruction work, including key infrastructure projects, were launched in the Karabakh and East Zangezur regions, and thousands of people have returned to their native lands. Today, the people of Azerbaijan celebrate this holiday in a completely different way, as a victorious nation that has restored its territorial integrity. In conclusion, it should be underlined that Pakistan has been one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence throughout these years, demonstrating consistent and valuable support.—Agencies

China accuses US of cyberattack on national time center

BEIJING: China on Sunday accused the US National Security Agency of carrying out cyberattacks on its national time center following an investigation, saying any damage to related facilities could have disrupted network communications, financial systems and power supply. The Ministry of State Security alleged in a WeChat post that the US agency had exploited vulnerabilities in the messaging services of a foreign mobile phone brand to steal sensitive information from devices of the National Time Service Center's staff in 2022. It did not specify the brand. The US agency also used 42 types of "special cyberattack weapons" to target the center's multiple internal network systems and attempted to infiltrate a key timing system between 2023 and 2024, it said. It said it had evidence but did not provide it in the post. It said the time center is responsible for generating and distributing China's standard time, in addition to providing timing services to industries such as communications, finance, power, transport and defense. It had provided guidance to the center to eliminate the risks.—APP

Nigeria denies officers arrested over coup plot

ABUJA: Nigerian authorities on Saturday denied that more than a dozen officers had been arrested over a coup plot, pushing back on local media reports. The west African country has seen several military takeovers in its history and spent much of the 20th century under junta rule since its independence from Britain. A fresh coup would turn back the clock on more than a quarter century of civilian rule. "The Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) wishes to categorically state that the claims by the said publication are entirely false," said a statement from Tukur Gusau, director of defense information, without specifying which outlet he meant. But Sahara Reporters, an online publication, and Premium Times, based in the capital Abuja, both said Saturday that at least 16 officers were planning to overthrow President Bola Tinubu. The military had announced earlier this month that 16 officers had been arrested over "issues of indiscipline." The two media outlets, citing defense sources, reported that the arrests were in fact linked to a coup plot. The military is fighting a long-running insurgency against Boko Haram and Daesh West Africa Province in the northeast. While the violence has waned since its peak a decade ago, attacks continue — including deadly assaults on military bases — seemingly with no end in sight.—APP

Protest hits Rome over Libya migrant deal after boat wreck

ROME: Migrants and rights activists protested in Rome Saturday against Italy's migrant deal with Libya, a day after some 20 people were feared dead in the latest boat wreck in the Mediterranean. Under a controversial 2017 deal renewed under Prime Minister Georgia Meloni's hard-right government, Italy funds and trains the Libyan coast guard. In return, Libya is expected to help stem the departure of migrants to Italy or return those already at sea back to Libya. That agreement is up for renewal next month. During the protest, dozens of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa recounted what they endured in Libya, and a minute of silence was held for those who died trying to cross the Mediterranean. Hundreds of people attended the event, including activist Sarita Fratini. "In the central Mediterranean, there is a line called the line of death," Fratini told AFP. "In the Libyan area, you get captured. In the north, you die because there is no one there." Fratini has been helping migrants sue Italy after they were seized in the Mediterranean by Libya and pushed back to detention centers there.—APP

Briefs

Kundi, Mohsin
discuss
security
situation
in KP

LAHORE: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi met with Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi at his residence in Lahore on Sunday to discuss the overall law and order situation in the province and recent incidents of terrorism.

During the meeting, both leaders held detailed discussions on the ongoing operations against the outlawed elements in various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the prevailing Pakistan-Afghanistan border situation and the efforts being made to restore sustainable peace in the region.

They paid tribute to the security forces for their effective operations against Indian-backed militant groups and expressed deep respect for the police personnel martyred in the recent terrorist attacks on the Police Training Centre and NADRA office in Dera Ismail Khan. The two also discussed the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the damaged facilities.

Governor Kundi emphasized that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are peace-loving and that lasting peace is essential for the province's progress and prosperity. He said intelligence-based operations against terrorists and anti-state elements are crucial to ensuring public safety.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to defeating terrorism, saying that the nefarious designs of Indian-backed militants will never succeed. He acknowledged the sacrifices made by the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the fight against terrorism, describing them as invaluable to the nation's security and unity. — APP

France's
ex-president
Sarkozy
goes to jail

PARIS: France's ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy is to be jailed Tuesday over a scheme to acquire Libyan funding for his 2007 presidential run, becoming the first former head of an EU country to serve time behind bars. Sarkozy, France's right-wing leader from 2007 to 2012, was convicted in late September of criminal conspiracy over a plan for late Libyan dictator Moamer Kadhafi to fund his electoral campaign.

The former state leader, who has appealed the verdict and denounced an "injustice", is to be incarcerated in the Parisian prison La Sante. "If they absolutely want me to sleep in prison, I will sleep in prison — but with my head held high," he told the press after his September 25 verdict.

Sarkozy is to be the first French leader to be incarcerated since Philippe Pétain, the Nazi collaborator head of state of France's Vichy regime, who was jailed after World War II. He is likely to be held in one of the cells of nine square metres (95 square feet) in the prison's solitary confinement wing, prison staff have told AFP.



ISLAMABAD: Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi, Charge d Affaires of the US Embassy Natalie A. Baker for a group photo on the occasion of a dinner hosted by Dr. Abrar ul Hasnain renowned dentist, at his residence. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life attended the dinner, which was hosted in hour of the KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi who attended the event along with his family. Also seen in the pictures are (from L to R), Mr. Shahbaz, Ambassadors of Syria, Myanmar, Zahid Latif Khan, the Governor, Natalie Baker, Ansar M Bhatti Editor Daily Islamabad POST-Centreline, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Dr. Abrar ul Hasnain, and Ambassador of Nepal. — DNA

IMF can't impose conditions
against Pakistan's interests

Pakistan expects \$1.2bn IMF tranche by Dec 31; Islamabad, Washington to finalise trade deal within two weeks

NEWS DESK/DNA

WASHINGTON: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cannot impose any condition that goes against Pakistan's national interest, stressing that all ongoing economic reforms are guided by the country's own priorities. "The IMF cannot put any condition that goes against Pakistan's national interest," said Aurangzeb while addressing a press conference in Washington, where he was accompanied by other senior officials. Finance czar said that the reforms introduced under the IMF programme had played a vital role in stabilising Pakistan's economy. "[The] steps we took under the IMF arrangement have strengthened the economy and built confidence," he said. The finance minister added that Pakistan expects to receive the next IMF tranche of \$1.2 billion by December 31, noting that the IMF Executive Board is expect-

ed to approve the agreement soon. "We anticipate the board's approval shortly, which will pave the way for the disbursement," he stated. He further said that a trade and tariff agreement with US was expected within the next two weeks. Discussing Pakistan's privatisation plans, Aurangzeb confirmed that the government was close to a decision on the privatisation of New York's Roosevelt Hotel.

Meanwhile, Aurangzeb, on the sixth and final day of his visit to the US, continued his engagements and witnessed the signing of a swap agreement between the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

The signing took place during his meeting with IFC Managing Director Makhtar Diop on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings in Washington, DC. The finance minister hailed IFC's recent reorganisation, which has designated Pakistan as a regional hub, calling it a strong vote of confidence in the country's rising economic potential.

He also reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening its partnership with the IFC across key development and financial sectors.

Highlighting progress on the Reko Diq project, Senator Aurangzeb expressed optimism about the EXIM Bank's participation in the near future.

He further appreciated IFC's continued support for subnational finance and Digital Payment Rights (DPR) initiatives, as well as its advisory role in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, electric vehicles, and commodity exchanges.

The FinMin also welcomed Diop's upcoming visit to Pakistan around the Spring Meetings, expressing confidence that it would further strengthen Pakistan-IFC collaboration. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb also participated in the 15th V20 Ministerial Dialogue on "Cost of Capital, Debt & Growth Pathways."

In his address, he highlighted the increasing frequency and intensity of devastating floods in Pakistan, emphasising that the Government continues

to fund rescue and relief operations from its own resources.

He appreciated the support extended by the CVF-V20 Secretariat in assisting Pakistan with the preparation of its Climate Prosperity Plan (CPP), and informed that financing is being made available under the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) to operationalise the plan.

Senator Aurangzeb also underscored the need to operationalise the Loss and Damage Fund and called for fast-tracking decision-making processes at the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to ensure timely and effective climate action for vulnerable countries. The finance czar also called on the senior management of JP Morgan on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings in Washington, DC.

Hd briefed the JP Morgan team on Pakistan's upcoming inaugural issuance of the Panda Bond in the Chinese market, noting that it would be launched as a green bond to support sustainable financing objectives.

US envoy
Witkoff felt
'betrayed' by
Israeli attack
on Hamas
in Qatar

"I think both Jared and I felt, I just feel we felt a little bit betrayed," says Witkoff

DNA

WASHINGTON: US envoy Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump's chief negotiator on the Middle East, has said that he felt "betrayed" when Israel launched a strike targeting Hamas negotiators in Qatar last month. In a CBS interview alongside Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, who worked with Witkoff on the brokering of a Gaza ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, the presidential envoy said he learned of the September 9 attack in Doha the morning after it happened. Qatar is a key US ally and acted as mediator in the push to end the Gaza war. "I think both Jared and I felt, I just feel we felt a little bit betrayed".

Whoever attacks
Pak would receive
strong response

PTI stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Pak Army, says Sohail Afridi



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi has said that his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stands firmly alongside the Pakistan Army in the face of any aggression. "PTI stands shoulder to shoulder with the army against any aggression," the chief minister said. "Whoever attacks Pakistan, including from across the

border, will receive a strong and fitting response." In an informal conversation with senior journalists, accompanied by former minister Meena Khan, the chief minister said, "We are with our army against any foreign aggression." The chief minister said he wants to consult the party founder, Imran Khan, regarding the formation of the provincial cabinet, but is not being allowed to meet him. He said that new faces would also be part of the cabinet, adding that the chief secretary and the inspector general of police would not be changed for now.

"Whoever Imran Khan names will be part of the cabinet," Afridi said, adding that he would inform the founder about both deserving and undeserving cabinet members. So far, he said, Imran had only confirmed Muzammil Aslam's inclusion. The chief minister said he had not come merely to run the government but to bring change. "If he were not given time to meet Imran Khan, he would finalise the cabinet after consultation with other senior leaders."

Speaking on the repatriation of Afghan refugees, CM Afridi demanded that the provincial government must be taken into confidence on all policies regarding Afghanistan.

He said hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees had already returned, while 1.2 million still remain in the country and should be repatriated with dignity.

The return process, he added, would be expedited, stressing that Afghan refugees should not be forcibly sent back. He admitted that the previous government was relatively weak but added that while it is fair to criticise mistakes, such criticism should not come at the cost of harming the province. The KP chief minister said that no one had brought him against anyone, and his government stood firmly for the rule of law. — DNA

Trump says he is not a 'King' as protests rage

DNA

NEW YORK: Huge crowds took to the streets Saturday in all 50 US states to vent their anger over President Donald Trump's headline policies at "No Kings" protests that Republicans ridiculed as "Hate America" rallies. Meanwhile President Trump while talking to media dispelled the impression as if he were behaving like a king. He said protest in this regard were without any justification. From New York and Washington to smaller cities in Michigan and Trump's second home in Florida, demonstrations in the eastern half of the United States revved up ahead of similar events due out west. More than 2,700 protesters are planned coast to coast, and organisers say they are expecting millions to attend.

"This is what democracy looks like!" chanted thousands at a protest in Washington near the National Mall, home to the city's iconic landmarks. "Hey hey ho ho, Donald Trump has got to go!" said protesters, many of them carrying American flags. Demonstrators are up in arms over what they see as strongarm tactics

since the Republican billionaire returned to the White House in January, including attacks on the media, prosecuting political opponents and a vast immigration crackdown.

A US government shutdown is now in its third week, with the Trump administration firing thousands of federal workers and lawmakers showing little sign they are ready to break the impasse. Thousands flooded New York's Times Square, Boston Common and Chicago's Grant Park.

"I never thought I would live to see the death of my country as a democracy," 69-year-old retiree Colleen Hoffman told AFP as she marched down Broadway. "We are in a crisis—the cruelty of this regime, the authoritarianism. I just feel like I cannot sit home and do nothing." In New York's Queens borough, demonstrators carried colourful signs that read "Queens Say No Kings," and "We protest because we love America and want it back!" while some chanted, "We love our country, we can't stand Trump!" In Los Angeles, organisers plan to float a giant balloon of Trump in a diaper. They said they expect 100,000 people to attend. So far, Trump's response to Saturday's events has been muted.

"They're saying they're referring to me as a king.

I'm not a king," he told Fox News show "Sunday Morning Futures." But his top surrogates were in more fighting form, with House Speaker Mike Johnson calling the day of protest the "Hate America rally." "You're going to bring together the Marxists, the Socialists, the Antifa advocates, the anarchists and the pro-Hamas wing of the far-left Democrat Party," he told reporters. Republican lawmaker Tom Emmer also used the "Hate America" phrase and referred to participants as the "terrorist wing" of the Democratic Party. Beyond the United States, the "No Kings" movement is even organizing events in Canada, and small protests took place Saturday in Malaga, Spain and Malmö, Sweden. On Thursday, Deirdre Schifeling, chief political and advocacy officer for the American Civil Liberties Union, said protesters wanted to convey that "we are a country of equals." "We are a country of laws that apply to everyone, of due process and of democracy. We will not be silenced," she told reporters. Leah Greenberg, co-founder of the Indivisible Project, slammed the Trump administration's efforts to send the National Guard into US cities and crack down on undocumented migrants.

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