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PM Shehbaz calls for boosting the industrial sector

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Ahsan pays tributes to the rescuers

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Pak-Afghan Tensions

Public opinion makers must play a positive role

Pakistan's apprehensions about India's role in Afghanistan are not new. These concerns persisted even after the fall of the first Taliban regime in November 2001, when India became active in Afghanistan's development, education, and health sectors

COMMENT

SHAMIM SHAHID

THE tensions that have once again strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are the outcome of years of mistrust, miscommunication, and misplaced fears. The concerns that brought both countries to this tragic point are neither entirely imagined nor entirely real – rather, they have been shaped by exaggeration, political manipulation, and decades of suspicion. Both Islamabad and Kabul have repeatedly accused each other of harboring anti-state elements, while even genuine diplomatic gestures are often misread as threats. Instead of cooling tempers, the media – both mainstream and social – have at times inflamed hostilities, amplifying unverified claims and promoting narratives that deepen divides between the two neighboring Islamic countries. A particular mindset within Pakistan has long justified aggressive postures toward Afghanistan on the grounds of Kabul's growing diplomatic engagement with India. This deep-rooted anxiety, dating back to the early years of Pakistan's formation, still reflects a psychological insecurity rather than a rational assessment of regional dynamics. Pakistan's apprehensions about India's role in Afghanistan are not new. These concerns persisted even after the fall of the first Taliban regime in November 2001, when India became active in Afghanistan's development, education, and health sectors. During the governments of President Hamid Karzai and Dr. Ashraf Ghani, Pakistani officials and sections of the media repeatedly questioned the nature of Afghan-Indian relations.

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Pakistan-Afghanistan border 'likely to reopen' within 48 hours

Officials from both countries agree to reopen the border, say sources

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan-Afghanistan border is likely to reopen within 24 to 48 hours, sources told Geo News on Monday, a day after the two neighbouring countries agreed to a ceasefire. Pakistan closed the Torkham and Chaman borders with Afghanistan on October 12 after the Afghan Taliban, in association with their affiliated militants, attacked multiple Pakistan Armed Forces posts along the border. The sources privy to the matter said that officials from both countries have agreed to reopen the border if no other dispute arises. The border clashes between forces from the two countries began on the night between October 11 and 12 after the Afghan Taliban and militants launched unprovoked attacks against Pakistan's border posts. The resulting clashes led to the killing of over 200 Taliban and affiliated militants, while 23 Pakistani soldiers were martyred defending the motherland.

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DPM Dar for further deepening Pakistan, Japan ties

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Japanese Ambassador Akamatsu Shuichi Monday called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and exchanged views on key regional and international developments. During the meeting, the DPM/FM encouraged efforts to further deepen Pakistan-Japan relations across diverse areas.

ATC issues non-bailable arrest warrant for Aleema

Judge Amjad Ali Shah orders police to produce her before court on Oct 22

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi on Monday ordered police to arrest PTI founder Imran Khan's sister Aleema Khan and produce her before the court on October 22 in connection with cases related to the protest staged by the party on November 26 last year. ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah issued non-bailable arrest warrant for Aleema due to her continued absence from proceedings. The development came after 10 accused, including Aleema, had been indicted in the Sadiqabad Police Station case with

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Two key terrorists killed in KP

APP

PESHAWAR: Swabi Police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) carried out a joint intelligence-based operation in the Manei Ajmeer mountain area in district Swabi, successfully eliminating two dangerous terrorists belonging to the outlawed group "Fitna-ul-Khawarij." According to District Police spokesman, the operation was launched following credible information about the presence of terrorists in the area. During the encounter, the terrorists opened fire on the police party, which retaliated effectively, resulting in the killing of two terrorists. Two others managed to escape under the cover of darkness

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ISLAMABAD: Japanese Ambassador AKAMATSU Shuichi called on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. – DNA

US President says Gaza ceasefire is still in force

Gaza's civil defence agency, which operates under Hamas authority, said the strikes killed at least 45 people across the territory

NEWS DESK

GAZA CITY: US President Donald Trump said Sunday that a ceasefire in Gaza was still holding after Israel carried out deadly strikes on the territory over alleged truce violations by Hamas. The dozens of strikes Israel carried out on Hamas positions in southern Gaza Sunday came after it accused the militant group of targeting its troops in "a blatant violation" of the nine-day-old truce.

EDITORIAL ON PAGE 5

Asked by reporters whether the truce was still in effect, Trump said: "Yeah, it is". The US president, who helped broker the deal, also suggested that Hamas leadership was not involved in any alleged breaches, instead blaming "some rebels within". "We want to make sure that it's going to be very peaceful with Hamas," Trump said. "It's going to be handled toughly, but properly." Gaza's civil defence agency, which operates under Hamas authority, said the strikes killed at least 45 people across the territory. Four hospitals in Gaza confirmed the death toll of 45 to AFP, saying they had received the dead and wounded. Israel's military said it was looking into the reports of casualties. Media restrictions in

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EU in 'contact' with Taliban on Afghan migrant returns

European Union confirms initial technical-level talks to facilitate deportations of Afghan migrants

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Monday said it has "initiated exploratory contacts" with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan as member states push to boost deportations of failed asylum seekers. The admission, which is likely to raise hackles given the Taliban's poor rights record and diplomatic standing, comes after a majority of EU nations urged Brussels to reach out to Kabul to boost expulsions. The European Commission is working to ensure coordination among member states, Markus Lammert, a spokesman for the EU's executive, told a press conference in Brussels. "Earlier this year, we have initiated exploratory contacts at technical level with the de-facto

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Briefs

Rawalpindi Test: Pakistan close day one at 259-5

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

RAWALPINDI: The opening day of the second and final Test between Pakistan and South Africa concluded with the Green Shirts reaching 259/5 in their first innings after the Proteas' breakthroughs at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Monday. Resuming the final session at 177-3 in 62 overs, Shan Masood and Saud Shakeel continued Pakistan's strong batting display, steadily adding runs with the skipper nearing his Test century. Pakistan crossed the 200-run mark in the 70th over. The pair contributed 45 runs for the fourth wicket before Keshav Maharaj struck, claiming his second wicket by dismissing Shan Masood for 87 off 176 balls, featuring two fours and three sixes. Pakistan were reeling at 212-4 in 73.3 overs.

IHC sets 3-day deadline for recovery of NCCIA official

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The IHC on Monday gave police a three-day ultimatum to recover the deputy director of the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), who was allegedly abducted earlier this month. The court issued the directives while presiding over the hearing of a plea filed by Rozina Usman for the recovery of her husband Muhammad Usman, who she has alleged was taken away by four armed individuals on October 14. IHC Justice Muhammad Azam Khan heard the petition while Advocate Raja Rizwan Abbasi appeared in court on behalf of the wife.

Message on Diwali

No room for hatred, chaos, terrorism in Pakistan: Shebaz

Pakistani nation stands united and resolute alongside the security forces to defeat the menace of terrorism and hatred from the country

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has emphatically stated that Pakistan is a land of peace and tolerance where there is no room for hatred, chaos and terrorism. He was addressing a ceremony held at Prime Minister House, Islamabad this evening in connection with Diwali festival. The Prime Minister paid tribute to the services and contributions of Pakistan's minority communities in different fields of life. He said presence of representatives of different religions in this event embodies the very ideals of Pakistan as were envisioned by its founding father Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah where all citizens enjoy equal rights and freedoms. Shehbaz Sharif said the Muslim and non Muslim Pakistanis continue to move in unison to thwart any nefarious design

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PM for promotion of cottage SMEs

FAIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the authorities concerned to encourage the registration of cottage small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to enable them avail business loans and pave the way for country's industrial growth. The prime minister, chairing a review meeting on Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) Restructuring and SME Development, appreciated the initiatives to enhance women participation in SMEs and called for awareness on such measures.

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26th Amend not controversial, remarks Justice Amin-ud-Din

Lawyers call for formation of full court to hear the merits of the case

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench Head Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan has put his weight behind the 26th Constitutional Amendment. "Don't say that the 26th [Constitutional] Amendment is controversial," Justice Amin-Ud-Din remarked on Monday, while heading an eight-member bench hearing multiple pleas filed against the constitutional tweaks passed by parliament in October last year. The bench also includes Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan. As many as three dozen petitioners, including the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), Lahore High Court Bar Association, Lahore Bar Association, Karachi Bar Association as well as the former seven presidents of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and various individuals in personal capacity, had challenged the validity of the 26th Constitutional Amendment. During the hearing today, senior lawyer Akram Sheikh appeared before the court in his personal capacity and urged the court to constitute a 24-member full court. "The court should not be further packed by adding any more judges [...]. I leave the issue of conflict of interest to the judge,"

Continued on Page 06

Super Tax: Supreme Court adjourns hearing

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's constitutional bench on Monday adjourned the hearing of multiple petitions challenging the imposition of super tax until Tuesday. A five-member bench headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan heard the case involving several corporate taxpayers, including major telecom companies. During the proceedings, counsel for various taxpaying companies, Abid Shaban, concluded his arguments. Shaban contended that the Senate's role is limited to giving recommendations, while the authority to pass amendments rests with Parliament. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail observed that the Senate could make suggestions, but enacting amendments was not within its mandate. The counsel argued that while the Senate proposed a 4 percent tax, the National Assembly approved a 10 percent instead. Responding, Justice Mandokhail remarked that the National Assembly holds the authority to accept or reject

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‘Illegal Afghanis being repatriated’

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the country’s first EV bus service is also monitored from the Operations Command and Control Center

KARACHI :Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Monday said that no illegal immigrants, including Afghan refugees, should remain in the country. He said the global principle is that when you go to any country, you must enter with a visa and leave when it expires. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Illegal Afghan immigrants in Pakistan are being repatriated. The vacated areas belong to the government and will be taken into its custody, he added. He announced that the provincial government will expand the People’s Bus Service to more districts and launch additional routes for electric (EV) buses. Sharjeel Inam Memon visited the Operations Command and Control Center of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority in Karachi. During the visit, he inspected various sections of the center, where officials briefed him on its operations. On the occasion speaking to the media, the Senior Minister said that the Operations Command and Control Center of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority is equipped with the latest facilities. The People’s Bus Service, Green Line, and Orange Line are monitored from this center. The purpose of such operations, he said, is to make public travel safer and more convenient. He said that the Green Line Bus Service was originally a federal project. When the Sindh government took over, the daily ridership increased from 55,000 to 83,000 passengers due to the government’s

efforts. Since coming under Sindh’s control, more than 30,000 additional people are benefiting from the Green Line BRT. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the country’s first EV bus service is also monitored from the Operations Command and Control Center. The People’s Bus Service is currently operating in Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Mirpurkhas, and Shaheed Benazirabad. “We plan to launch the People’s Bus Service in three or four more districts this year,” he said, adding that more EV buses and routes will be introduced to improve public transport facilities. He also announced that double-decker buses will be launched this year for Karachi residents. He said that the Transport Department’s priority is to provide the best travel facilities to every city and area. The Sindh government is providing subsidies to every passenger. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, President Asif Ali Zardari, the Chief Minister of Sindh, and the provincial government are all working to make travel more affordable and accessible. He announced that the Sindh government will launch 500 additional EV buses for Karachi, Hyderabad, and other cities. The top priority of the Pakistan Peoples Party leadership is to modernize the transport sector and provide maximum travel facilities to the public. He said the Sindh government launched Pakistan’s first wom-

en-only Pink Bus Service, which was also the first of its kind in the region. Similar women-only Pink Bus Services will soon be introduced in other cities where Sindh government buses operate. The government is also providing free EV scooters to working women and students. “Our goal is to provide all employed women and students across the province who hold a driving license and valid proof of employment or enrollment with free EV scooters,” he said. He urged women and girls to obtain their driving licenses, noting that the Sindh government offers free driving training and licenses for women. Employed women and students can fill out the form by visiting the iWorkforSindh.com website, which also provides access to both government and private job opportunities. He said the government is working across all sectors to empower women and provide the best travel facilities. The launch of Pakistan’s first EV bus service also aims to protect the environment. “We are soon starting an EV taxi service and a Pink Taxi Service for women,” he said, adding that the Pink Taxi Service will be operated by female drivers to ensure women feel safe while traveling. In response to a question, he said that work is underway to repair roads damaged by rain. “We are addressing issues on routes where vehicles are facing difficulties,” he added.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif cuts the cake on the occasion of Diwali. — DNA

IESCO recovers over Rs 6.84b from defaulters: IESCO

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), Engineer Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood, has said that the timely payment of electricity bills is crucial for the company’s financial stability and for ensuring a strong and sustainable national economy. In a statement issued on Monday, he said that a well-organized recovery campaign is underway across all IESCO operational circles to ensure prompt bill payments and recover outstanding dues from defaulters. Sharing the results of the ongoing recovery drive, the CEO informed that IESCO’s recovery teams have shown outstanding performance, successfully collecting over Rs 6.84 billion from more than 227,000 running and dead defaulters. He added that electricity connections of several non-paying consumers have also been disconnected in accordance with company policy. Engineer Khalid Mehmood emphasized that timely bill payment by consumers not only strengthens IESCO’s financial position but also supports the government’s broader efforts for national economic stability.—APP

Meeting reviews Green Bus Service project in Murree

RAWALPINDI: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi to review progress on the Green Bus Service project being launched in the hilly station under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The meeting was attended by Member of the National Assembly Raja Osama Ashfaq Sarwar and Member of the Punjab Assembly Bilal Yamin Satti. Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Murree Umar Owais Kayani, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Kamran Sagheer, Assistant Commissioner Murree Faisal Ahmad Sahib and officers from other relevant departments were also present. During the meeting, officials from the Transport Department and other agencies concerned gave a detailed briefing on the proposed routes, operational facilities, public benefits.—APP

Rs100b package for rehabilitation of flood affectees: CM

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday announced a historic package worth Rs.100 billion for the rehabilitation of flood-affected people across the province. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Flood Victims Rehabilitation Programme 2025 in Depalpur, the CM said that free transport would also be provided to facilitate flood victims in accessing relief funds across Punjab, said a handout issued here. The CM said that every single penny from the allocated package would be spent exclusively on flood victims, adding that the provincial treasury was a sacred public trust to be used solely for the welfare of the people. She said that the Punjab government had

launched a fully transparent, self-funded rescue and relief operation without seeking any international aid. Highlighting the government’s field efforts, she said that she and her cabinet members remained with the flood-affected families for several weeks during the recent crisis, personally monitoring rescue and rehabilitation activities. The CM informed that over 1,700 teams comprising personnel from the Pakistan Army, and the revenue, livestock, and agriculture departments had been conducting door-to-door surveys, with over 70 percent already completed. She said that relief disbursements had begun even before the survey’s completion, adding that 2.5 million people were relocated to safe areas, over

1.2 million individuals received medical treatment through 100 field hospitals, and livestock vaccinations were carried out across all affected regions. Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that no corruption or mismanagement would be tolerated in the flood relief process, and a robust verification system had been introduced to ensure that assistance reached only genuine victims. She said that Rs.100 billion had been allocated for rehabilitation efforts, flood relief camps were established at 75 locations providing food, shelter, and assistance, while over 71,000 bank accounts had been opened for direct disbursement of funds. The first phase, she noted, covered 15 districts where relief was already underway.—APP

Large industry grows by 4.44 % during July-August

ISLAMABAD: The output of the Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) witnessed an increase of 4.44 per cent during the first two months of fiscal year 2025-26 compared to the same months of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. On year-on-year basis, the LSMI’s production also increased by 0.54 percent during August 2025 when compared with that of August 2024. On month-on-month basis, the LSMI’s production in June 2025, decreased by

2.75 per cent when compared with July 2025. The provisional quantum indices of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) for August 2025, with the base year 2015-16, have been developed based on the latest data supplied by the source agencies. The main contributors towards overall growth of 4.44% are food (1.02), tobacco (0.17), textile (-0.03) garments (0.84), paper & board (0.21), petroleum products (-0.21), chemicals (-0.13), pharmaceuticals (-0.11), cement (0.98), iron & steel

products (-0.16), electrical equipment (0.08), machinery and equipment (-0.11), automobiles (1.83), other transport equipment (0.23), and furniture (-0.17). The production in July-August 2025-26 as compared to July-August 2024-25 has increased in food, tobacco, wearing apparel, non-metallic mineral products, electrical equipment, automobiles and other transport equipment while it decreased in beverages, textile, chemical products, iron & steel products, machinery and equipment, and furniture.—APP

Karachi Police arrest over 760 suspects

KARACHI: Acting on the directives of Additional IGP Karachi Javed Alam Odho, Karachi Police carried out a series of successful operations against criminal elements across the city during the past week. According to a police spokesperson on Monday, district police engaged in 23 encounters with armed robbers, during which two dacoits were killed and 32 suspects, including 27 injured robbers, were arrested. Police also seized 30 illegal firearms, a Hi-Roof van, and 15 motorcycles used in various crimes. Across Karachi’s East, West, and South Zones, law enforcement teams arrested more than 768 suspects involved in different criminal activities. As part of the ongoing anti-narcotics campaign, police recovered 18.5 kilograms of hashish, along with quantities of ice/crystal meth and heroin, worth millions of rupees in the local market.—APP

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Efforts afoot to meet global connectivity goals

ISLAMABAD: In a significant stride towards regional integration and transport modernization, Pakistan has reinforced its commitment to international road safety and infrastructure standards, aligning closely with frameworks set by the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP). According to the official document available with APP, it said that Pakistan, despite historical gaps, has made “substan-

tial progress” in road safety and axle load regulation. Since November 2023, the National Highway Authority (NHA) has enforced a 100% Axle Load Control Regime across the national highway and motorway network, backed by 210 weigh stations, including 14 mobile units, in coordination with the National Highways & Motorway Police (NH&MP). NHA has intensified its focus on highway safety improvements, aligning with both national priorities and global best practices. High-risk road

segments are being systematically upgraded using methodologies developed by the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP). These upgrades are prioritized based on crash data, traffic volumes, and available financial resources, ensuring a data-driven and cost-effective approach to safety enhancement. Recognizing the critical importance of post-crash response, NHA is actively working with RESCUE 1122 and NH&MP to identify strategic sites for the deployment of ambulance services along major corridors, it added.—APP

COMSATS varsity awards 1,283 degrees, 92 medals

ABBOTTABAD: COMSATS University Abbottabad on Monday awarded 1,283 students MS and BS degrees, 32 students received PhD degrees, while 92 students were honoured with gold, silver, and bronze medals for their outstanding performance during the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 sessions. The convocation ceremony was held at the COMSATS University Abbottabad Campus, where 901 undergraduates, 350 graduates, and 31 PhD students were conferred degrees. Rector COMSATS University Islamabad, Professor Dr. Sajid Qamar, attended the event as the chief guest, while Director COMSATS University Abbottabad, Professor Dr. Shahid Khattak, directors of other campuses, members of the Senate, Syndicate, and Academic Council, senior faculty members, and a large number of parents and dignitaries were also present. Addressing the convocation, Dr. Sajid Qamar congratulated the graduating students and commended the efforts of the faculty and management for their dedication, which has earned global recognition for Pakistan. He described the convocation as a major milestone in the students’ lives and urged them to contribute to the country’s progress through their knowledge and skills. He emphasized that education and scientific research are key to addressing the challenges of the 21st century and to producing a skilled workforce for national development. He praised Professor Dr. Shahid Khattak for his leadership and for providing students with high-quality education and professional training. Speaking on the occasion, Professor Dr. Shahid Khattak said that COMSATS University has been playing a vital role in promoting quality education and research for over two decades. He noted that the institution’s graduates have been contributing to national and international development through their professional excellence. Dr. Khattak reaffirmed the university’s commitment to aligning its educational and research programs with national priorities and societal needs, with the support of the Government of Pakistan and other relevant bodies. The ceremony concluded with the distribution of degrees and medals among the graduates, marking a memorable day of pride and celebration for the students, faculty, and their families.—DNA

Anti-smog guns begin working as polluted air starts entering from India

The Punjab government has made the use of masks mandatory for those traveling on motorbikes in view of air pollution

LAHORE: The Punjab government has launched extensive measures to combat rising air pollution as polluted winds from India begin entering Pakistan, affecting air quality in multiple cities. According to official sources, winds from New Delhi are entering Pakistan at a speed of 5 kilometers per hour, while polluted air from Chandigarh, Gurdaspur, Ludhiana, and Patiala is making its way toward Gujranwala, Multan, and Bahawalpur. Additionally, winds carrying pollutants from Suratgarh, Jodhpur, and Jaipur are also drifting into Pakistani territory. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has warned that the air quality in Lahore and other cities is expected to decline today, primarily due to pollution caused

by Diwali celebrations in India, where fireworks lead to severe smog across several cities. In anticipation of worsening conditions, the Punjab government initiated preventive actions last night. These included water spraying and the deployment of anti-smog guns in high-risk areas. EPA sources confirmed that anti-smog guns have been made fully operational in several key locations, including Karim Block, Allama Iqbal Town, Multan Road, Ravi Pul, Nishtar Colony, Upper Mall Scheme, Shahdara Flyover, Thokar Niaz Baig, GT Road, and Shahdara. A slight improvement in air quality is expected between 1 PM and 5 PM, though authorities remain on alert. Citizens are urged to take necessary pre-

cautions, including wearing masks and limiting outdoor activities during peak pollution hours. Officials emphasized that public awareness and cooperation remain crucial in minimizing the health impacts of smog and ensuring the success of anti-pollution efforts. Meanwhile, The Punjab government has made the use of masks mandatory for those traveling on motorbikes in view of air pollution. Senior Punjab Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that winds from Indian capital Delhi, other cities including Chandigarh, Gurdaspur, Ludhiana and Patiala are heading towards Lahore, while Multan, Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar are also being affected by air pollution coming from India. She said

that instructions have been given to cover construction sites, vehicles bringing goods, while the use of masks is mandatory for those traveling on motorbikes. In addition, it has also been instructed to keep the windows of the vehicles up, and also close the doors and windows of the houses. The senior minister said that a slight improvement in the air is expected between 1 pm and 5 pm, while the sky will remain clear but light fog in the afternoon. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that water spraying and anti-smog guns are being used in Lahore and other cities, and the role of every citizen in preventing and reducing smog is the reason for big change and success.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

Oct 01/China
National Day

Oct 01/Cyprus
National Day

Oct 01/Republic of Korea
Armed Forces Day

Oct 01/Nigeria
Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea
National Day

Oct 03/Germany
Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea
National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia
Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt
Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda
Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain
National Day

Oct 23/Hungary
National Day

October 24/United Nations
United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania
Armed Forces Day

Oct 26/Austria
National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan
Independence Day

Oct 28/Czech Republic
National Day

Oct 29/Turkey
Republic Day



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Islamabad.....	0321-5744480

PML-N committed to welfare of overseas Pakistanis: Khalid

Abid Raza appreciated the efforts of Ch. Khalid Mahmood Gondal and commended his dedication toward the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. Both agreed that the role of expatriates is crucial for Pakistan’s economic stability and global standing, and it is essential to maintain strong engagement between them and the homeland

DNA

RAWALPINDI: President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Italy, Ch. Khalid Mahmood Gondal, visited Pakistan and held a meeting with Abid Raza, Deputy Editor of Daily Islamabad Post. During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, including the role of overseas Pakistanis in national development and welfare initiatives for the Pakistani community residing abroad. Ch. Khalid Mahmood Gondal briefed the Islamabad Post about the extensive work being carried out by PML-N Italy for the welfare and unity of the Pakistani diaspora in Italy. He said that the Pakistani community is playing a vital role in strengthening Pakistan’s image abroad and contributing significantly to the country’s economy through remittances. He emphasized that PML-N, under the visionary leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has always recognized the valuable contributions of overseas Pakistanis. “Our party has a clear vision to facilitate and empower Pakistanis living abroad. Their hard work and patriotism are assets for our country,” he remarked. Ch. Khalid further stated that PML-N Italy is fully aware of the issues being faced by the Pakistani community in Italy, including matters related to documentation, employment, and social integration. He assured that his team is making continuous efforts to resolve these problems through coordination



RAWALPINDI: Abid Raza Managing Director Shifa Builders /Deputy Editor Daily Islamabad POST, Brig Nafees Afzaal Satti, Ch. Khalid Mahmood Gondal President PML N Italy posing for a picture on the occasion of a dinner meeting. DNA

with local authorities and the Pakistani Embassy in Rome. Abid Raza appreciated the efforts of Ch. Khalid Mahmood

Gondal and commended his dedication toward the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. Both agreed that the role of expatriates is

crucial for Pakistan’s economic stability and global standing, and it is essential to maintain strong engagement between them.

NPO helps industries achieve Rs 11.18b value addition

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) has helped local industries achieve Rs11.18 billion in productivity-related value addition over the past four years by utilising a total public grant of Rs374 million. Operating under the Ministry of Industries and Production (MoIP), the NPO has significantly expanded its outreach to industrial and service sectors, assisting companies in improving production efficiency, reducing costs, and enhancing competitiveness. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the organisation conducted 396 energy and resource audits between 2020 and 2025 in sectors such as textiles, auto parts, leather, surgical instruments, and sports manufacturing. It also organised 489 national productivity training programmes and hosted 21 multi-country sessions under the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) framework. Notably, Pakistan ranked first among 21 APO member

nations in accessing international services, reflecting NPO’s growing regional engagement and institutional credibility. The NPO’s financial performance has also strengthened. Its revenues rose sharply from Rs2.13 million in FY2020 to Rs71.29 million in FY2023-24, driven by the increasing demand from firms seeking advisory services for cost reduction, energy efficiency, and productivity enhancement. The official documents note that countries such as South Korea and Thailand had productivity levels similar to Pakistan’s in the 1970s, but they advanced rapidly by investing in technology, skills, and institutional reforms. Recognising this, the NPO partnered with the Korea Development Institute (KDI) to formulate the National Productivity Master Plan (NPMP), which has now been integrated into Pakistan’s Special Economic Framework by the Planning Commission. The NPMP seeks to introduce a national productivity meas-

urement system, promote technological standardisation, and develop productivity-linked incentives to motivate industrial performance. These reforms aim to help Pakistan transition from a cost-based to a productivity-driven growth model. Looking ahead, NPO’s Business Plan 2025-28 aligns with the NPMP’s objectives. It focuses on technology adoption, process optimisation, and a nationwide productivity awareness campaign to address persistent inefficiencies and strengthen competitiveness. A senior NPO official told Wealth Pakistan that improving productivity is vital for Pakistan’s industries to gain global competitiveness. He said sustained efforts through institutional reforms and collaboration with international partners will help reduce dependence on subsidies and currency adjustments, ensuring long-term industrial viability.—APP

Ayaz reaffirms commitment to protection of minority rights

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended warm greetings to Hindu parliamentarians and members of the Hindu community across Pakistan and around the world on the auspicious occasion of Diwali “Diwali is a festival of peace, love and lights,” the Speaker said in his message, adding that the celebration symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and the spirit of harmony among communities. Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that followers of all religions in Pakistan enjoy equal rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan. He reaffirmed that the Parliament is committed to protecting the rights of all religious communities living in the country. The Speaker also said that national cohesion and interfaith harmony are essential for Pakistan’s stability and progress. He appreciated the significant role played by minority communities in the country’s development and nation-building.—APP

Ahsan pays tribute to rescuers’ selfless service to humanity

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Monday lauded the lifesaving efforts of Rescue 1122, saying that saving one life is equivalent to saving the whole of humanity. He was addressing the National Rescue Challenge 2025 at the Emergency Services Academy, Lahore. The minister praised the role of rescuers who, he said, save numerous lives daily and demonstrate exemplary commitment to humanity. He particularly appreciated the services of Rescue 1122 personnel during recent floods that started from Narowal, where thousands were evacuated to safer places through timely operations. He said the success of Rescue 1122 reflected a strong sense of mission among its members and commended the leadership of Director General Dr Rizwan Naseer for transforming the service into a modern, efficient and trusted institution. Prof Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that he would like to see greater participation of women in future rescue challenges, noting that women’s inclusion enhances the service’s outreach and effectiveness. Recalling a personal experience, he said that in 2008 when he survived an assassination attempt, Rescue 1122 staff promptly transported him to hospital, saving his life. “Every rescuer embodies the spirit of humanity and public service,” he remarked. The minister also linked the spirit of Rescue 1122 to Pakistan’s broader national resilience, recalling a conversation with Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan after the 1998 nuclear tests. He said the late scientist had told him that success comes when every individual, from a security guard to a scientist, considers themselves part of a national mission. Highlighting economic progress, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that when the present government took office, the country faced the threat of default, but under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan not only avoided bankruptcy but achieved economic stabilization and growth within two years. He termed this recovery an exemplary achievement and said that today the world recognizes Pakistan’s improving economic outlook. Paying tribute to the armed forces, he said Pakistan’s military had given a befitting response to Indian aggression.—DNA

Rawalpindi reports 13 news dengue cases

RAWALPINDI: The District Health Authority (DHA) Rawalpindi has reported a total of 1,106 confirmed dengue cases in hospitals across the district so far during the year, with 13 new cases diagnosed during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 56 patients are currently under treatment in various hospitals. According to the latest surveillance data released by the District Health Authority (DHA) Rawalpindi, a total of 16,993 patients have been screened for dengue symptoms in local hospitals this year. The data highlights ongoing efforts to curb the spread amid the autumn season, when dengue transmission typically increases. The mobile surveillance teams have have inspected 5.8 million houses, identifying 184,552 positive for mosquito breeding sites. Additionally, 1.63 million spots including water containers and drains during which resulted 25,343 positive and a total of 209,895 larvae destroyed. Enforcing the compliance for SOPs, authorities have taken strict punitive actions including registering 4,572 First Information Reports (FIRs), sealing 1,868 premises, issuing 3,557 challans, and imposing fines totaling over Rs. 11 million.—APP

Pak-Türkiye friendship week announced

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIQU) and Yunus Emre Institute Pakistan, announced the celebration of “Pakistan-Türkiye Friendship Week” from October 30 to November 5, featuring international conference, photo exhibition and sport competitions. This announcement was made following the directives of their respective governments, said a press release on Monday. As part of these celebrations, an international conference will be held on October 30 to highlight the deep historical, cultural and academic ties between the two brotherly nations. A photo exhibition showcasing Türkiye’s culture and civilization will also be organized at the university, highlighting the country’s art, heritage and modern development. In addition a traditional archery competition will be held among students to pay tribute to Türkiye’s ancient sporting traditions. These events have been comprehensively planned by the Directorate of International Collaboration and Exchange & the Directorate of Students Advisory and Counseling Services in collaboration with Türkiye’s Yunus Emre Institute, under the special guidance of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood.—APP

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LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

Briefs

Number of cellular subscribers reaches 197m

ISLAMABAD: The number of cellular subscribers in Pakistan reached 197 million, with a mobile teledensity of 79.38 percent, by the end of August 2025, according to data from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The data also revealed that mobile broadband subscribers have grown to 148 million, achieving a mobile penetration rate of 59.56 percent. In addition, fixed telephone subscribers stood at 3 million, reflecting a fixed teledensity of 1.03 percent, while broadband subscribers totaled 152 million, with a broadband penetration rate of 61.09 percent.—APP

IFA marks World Food Day with awareness seminars

ISLAMABAD: In connection with World Food Day, the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) organized a series of awareness seminars across the city to highlight the importance of food safety and hygiene. The sessions brought together traders, food brand representatives, and officials from the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries to discuss joint efforts for safe food supply. As part of its World Food Day campaign, the Islamabad Food Authority held multiple awareness seminars focused on food safety, hygiene practices, and public health protection. The seminars aimed to educate traders and food business operators on maintaining hygiene standards and following official safety guidelines. In this regard, Deputy Director Operations Dr. Tahira Siddique represented the authority at these events and underlined the significance of collaborative efforts between the IFA and the local business community. She said the authority, in partnership with traders, was committed to ensuring that citizens have access to safe and hygienic food.

A large number of traders from across the city took part and engaged actively in the discussions. Special lectures were also delivered during the seminars to highlight food safety protocols and the importance of cleanliness in food preparation and handling. Speakers emphasized that maintaining hygiene at every stage of food production and sale was essential to prevent contamination and ensure consumer safety. Dr. Tahira Siddique, in her address, explained the key responsibilities and initiatives of the Islamabad Food Authority. She stressed that traders must strictly follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the IFA to maintain food quality and compliance with regulations. Participants from the business community appreciated the authority's efforts and assured their full cooperation in implementing food safety measures. They also discussed ways to enhance coordination with the IFA to improve monitoring and awareness at food outlets across Islamabad.—APP

On Diwali, PM praises Hindu community

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday extending Diwali greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan and around the world, reiterated his government's commitment to providing equal rights and opportunities for progress to all communities, irrespective of their beliefs. The prime minister, in his message on Diwali being celebrated today, said that the "festival of lights" reflected the light prevailing over darkness and hope over despair. "As we celebrate Diwali, let us collectively look toward a future filled with positivity and unity. As Pakistanis, we take pride in the diversity of our society, which strengthens our national fabric and enriches our shared culture," he remarked. Calling the diversity of faiths a true source of unity, Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the invaluable contributions of the Hindu community in Pakistan saying that their role in country's social, economic.—APP

Ensure completion of T-Chowk flyover project within timeline

The Chairman also directed consultants and resident engineers to ensure timely completion of the project while maintaining the highest standards of construction and safety at all stages

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD :Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, visited the T-Chowk Flyover Project along with concerned officers to review the ongoing construction work. During the visit, he inspected various sections of the project and was given a detailed briefing on the progress made so far. Officials, consultants, resident engineers, and the project director briefed the CDA Chairman that, as per the directives of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, construction work on the T-Chowk Flyover project is progressing rapidly. They informed that approximately 49 percent of the total construction work has been completed. According to the briefing, 100 percent of the pile caps and girders casting has been completed, while 60 percent of the protective walls are finished. Work on the transom structure has also commenced. The officials further apprised the Chairman that despite the ongoing construction, traffic flow remains normal and uninterrupted in the area. Work on the project continues 24/7 in line with the approved timeline, ensuring timely completion. Expressing satisfaction over the progress, Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed the project team to ensure comprehensive planning for the project's completion, keeping in view the future expansion of GT Road. He emphasized that no compromise would be tolerated on the quality of construction, and all development activities must adhere strictly to the set timeline. He instructed that surveillance cameras be installed at the project's entry points to ensure monitoring and public safety. Moreover, he directed the preparation of a landscaping plan and the installation of aesthetic LED



lights and digital screens to enhance the visual appeal of the project on a permanent basis. Chairman Randhawa added that the T-Chowk Flyover Project will not only benefit the residents of the twin cities but also commuters traveling from Lahore and other parts of Punjab. Upon its completion, travelers entering Islamabad via GT Road will enjoy a signal-free and smooth traffic

flow into the federal capital. He reaffirmed that providing modern travel facilities and promoting infrastructure development in Islamabad remain top priorities of the CDA. The Chairman also directed consultants and resident engineers to ensure timely completion of the project while maintaining the highest standards of construction and safety at all stages.

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Pak's satellite leap: A Sino-Pakistani step forward

BEIJING: The launch of Pakistan's first hyperspectral satellite, HS-1, from China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre on October 19, 2025, passed with the quiet efficiency that marks so much of the partnership between Islamabad and Beijing. This is Pakistan's third orbital success this year, following the electro-optical EO-1 in January and the remote-sensing KS-1 in July, both also lifted skyward by Chinese rockets. In a region where space ambitions often serve as proxies for earthly rivalries, the event underscores a deepening technological alliance that benefits both nations, yet invites scrutiny over its long-term costs for Pakistan. Hyperspectral imaging represents a leap beyond the capabilities of conventional satellites. While standard remote-sensing craft capture broad swaths of visible light, HS-1 peers across hundreds of narrow spectral bands, from ultraviolet to infrared. This allows it to detect subtle chemical signatures in soil, vegetation, and water, distinctions invisible to the naked eye or simpler sensors. SUPARCO officials describe it as a tool for precision agriculture, where farmers in Punjab or Sindh could map nutrient deficiencies in crops with pinpoint accuracy, potentially boosting yields by up to 20 percent. In disaster-prone areas like the Indus basin, it promises early warnings for floods and landslides, drawing on data to predict erosion patterns or glacial melt in the north. Urban planners in Karachi or Lahore might use its scans to track heat islands or pollution plumes, informing decisions on green spaces or infrastructure, according to an article published by CEN. These applications align neatly with Pakistan's Vision 2047, SUPARCO's blueprint for positioning the country as a mid-tier space player by mid-century. The satellite integrates into an expanding fleet that includes the 2018-launched PRSS-1, enhancing Pakistan's ability to monitor its own territory without relying on foreign providers. At a time when climate change exacerbates floods and droughts, such self-reliance in data collection could prove invaluable. The launch also ties directly into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, where HS-1's geo-hazard mapping will identify risks along routes snaking through Baluchistan's rugged terrain, from seismic faults to landslide-prone slopes. This is not abstract; CPEC projects, valued at over \$60 billion, have already faced delays from natural disruptions, and better forecasting could safeguard investments. Yet the story extends beyond utility. China's role in this venture reflects a broader strategy of technological outreach, one that contrasts sharply with the barriers erected by the West. The United States has intensified export controls on dual-use technologies since 2022, targeting semiconductors and advanced computing that could fuel military advancements in China. By October 2025, these measures have expanded to include high-bandwidth memory and dynamic random-access chips, with "foreign direct product rules" ensnaring even third-country firms like those in South Korea operating on Chinese soil. Pakistan finds in China a willing partner unbound by such restrictions. Beijing's openness extends to space tech, where it has launched over a dozen Pakistani payloads since 2018, fostering transfers of know-how that SUPARCO could scarcely afford alone. This collaboration empowers Islamabad to build surveillance capacities in a neighborhood shadowed by India, whose space program boasts over 50 active satellites, including military reconnaissance birds like RISAT. Pakistan's satellite program accelerates not in isolation, but through alliances that sidestep Western gatekeeping. Yet mutual innovation demands more than launches. True partnership would involve joint R&D hubs, where Pakistani talent contributes as equals, not just beneficiaries. Beijing has shown willingness in other realms, like the digital Silk Road, but space remains a realm of guarded secrets. HS-1's ascent is a reminder that space, once the preserve of superpowers, now democratizes through such quiet collaborations. For Pakistan, it offers pathways to resilience amid environmental and economic pressures.

Telenor launches whatsapp-based SIM

ISLAMABAD: Marking a significant milestone in its digital transformation journey, Telenor Pakistan has introduced a WhatsApp-based SIM purchase replacement and bundle subscription service, redefining how customers experience mobile connectivity. According to a news release, this innovative service reflects Telenor Pakistan's focus on customer convenience, offering a simple, secure, and contactless way to get a SIM—without visiting a retail outlet. Customers can now buy new SIMs, replace lost ones, and subscribe bundles,—all through WhatsApp, a platform they already trust and use every day. Through this end-to-end digital solution, customers can initiate a conversation on WhatsApp UAN: 051 111-345-100, select their city, preferred number, and bundle, submit required personal details and payment, and have the SIM delivered directly to their doorstep. Biometric verification will be conducted at the time of delivery, ensuring a secure and compliant activation process. This frictionless experience sets a new benchmark for customer service in the telecom industry. "We are proud to be at the forefront of digital innovation," said Waqas Amanullah, Chief Consumer Business Officer, Telenor Pakistan. "By enabling SIM purchases and bundle management through WhatsApp, we are putting the power of connectivity directly into our customers' hands—making it easier, faster, and more accessible than ever. This initiative reflects our broader vision of promoting digital inclusion across Pakistan." The SIM purchase and replacement service is currently available in over 20 cities, including Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Multan, and Faisalabad, with plans for further expansion. Meanwhile, the bundle recharge facility is accessible nationwide. Designed to cater to both urban and semi-urban customers, this service delivers connectivity that is familiar, convenient, and secure, making digital access easier for everyone. This initiative marks another milestone in Telenor Pakistan's ongoing efforts to leverage technology to simplify lives, broaden digital access, and deliver exceptional customer experiences across the country.—DNA

Exports goods worth Rs 2,149m in Q1

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country in rupee term reached to Rs.2,149,784 million during the first quarter (July-September) of the current fiscal year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported. According to the provisional figures released by the bureau, the exports show 2.32 percent decrease during the period under review when compared to the exports of Rs.2,200,891 million during the corresponding period of last year. On year-on-year (YoY) basis the exports during September 2025 decreased by 10.80 percent and were recorded at Rs.703,997 mil-

lion compare to the exports of Rs. 789,220 million in September 2024-25. On month-on-month (MoM) basis, the exports witnessed an increase of 3.04 percent when compared to the exports of Rs.683,209 million in August, 2025. The main commodities of exports during September, 2025 were knitwear (Rs. 130,989 million), ready-made garments (Rs.92,702 million), bed wear (Rs. 80,975 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 42,261 million), towels (Rs.24,218 million), madeup articles, excluding towels & bedwear (Rs. 19,789 million), rice others (Rs. 17,813 million), cotton

yarn (Rs.17,810 million), meat and meat preparations (Rs.12,770 million) and fish and fish preparations (Rs.12,190 million). On the other hand, imports during July –September, 2025 (FY2025-26) totaled Rs. 4,818,758 million as against Rs. 4,169,585 million during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 15.57%. Imports into Pakistan during September, 2025 amounted to Rs. 1,664,582 million as against Rs. 1,495,210 million in August, 2025 and Rs. 1,428,909 million during September, 2024 showing an increase of 11.33% over August,

2025 and of 16.49% over September, 2024. In commodities of imports during September, 2025 were petroleum crude (Rs.152,734 million), petroleum products (Rs.114,414 million), palm oil (Rs. 101,743 million), electrical machinery & apparatus (Rs.74,285 million), plastic materials (Rs.66,535 million), iron and steel (Rs.61,661 million), natural gas liquefied (LNG) (Rs.58,588 million), mobile phones (Rs.56,170 million), iron & steel scrap (Rs.50,097 million) and motor cars (c/d/skd) (Rs.43,098 million).—APP

IRSA releases 78,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 78,500 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 72,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, Tarbela Dam has already attained its maximum conservation level of 1550.00 feet, which was 148.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 35,500 cusecs and 35,100 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1241.70 feet, which was 191.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 8,800 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 40,900, 34,800, 46,400, and 10,100 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 12,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Sherry felicitates Hindu community on Diwali

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Senator Sherry Rehman has extended warm greetings to the Hindu community in Pakistan and across the world on the joyous occasion of Diwali. In her message, Senator Rehman said that Diwali is a festival of happiness, light and love. She prayed for peace and goodwill for all Pakistanis, emphasizing the spirit of unity that defines the nation. Sherry Rehman praised the invaluable contributions of the Hindu community to Pakistan's progress and prosperity, acknowledging their role in the defense, security and development of the country. Highlighting the PPP's longstanding commitment to interfaith harmony, tolerance, and national unity, she said the party firmly believes in the vision of an inclusive Pakistan where all citizens enjoy equal rights. Sherry Rehman said that the Constitution given by Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto guarantees equal rights to minorities, while Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto always championed the protection of minority rights. She said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari continues this legacy by promoting the message of solidarity and tolerance. "Pakistan's true progress lies in our ability to move forward together as one nation," Sherry Rehman added.—APP

PTCL Group expands partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest telecommunications and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G), has signed a strategic partnership with Apple's authorised distributor and service provider in Pakistan, Mercantile, to offer Apple's complete product range to its enterprise customers nationwide. The partnership was signed by Asif Ahmad, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, and Nauman Durrani, CEO Pakistan, SVP Sage - Mercantile on the sidelines of GITEX Global 2025 in Dubai. President & Group CEO Hatem Bamatraf was also present at the signing, along with senior management from both sides. The agreement allows PTCL Group and Mercantile to jointly work toward expanding access to cutting-edge technology, enhancing customer confidence through extended support services, strengthening go-to-market capabilities with joint initiatives, and amplifying market presence through collaborative campaigns. The partnership will also open avenues for innovative financing models through the Device as a Service (DaaS) model that empowers organisations and employees alike, while reducing upfront investment barriers. Sharing his thoughts regarding the partnership, Asif Ahmad, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, said, "We are glad to expand our partnership to enhance access to Apple's cutting-edge technology for our business customers. We are adding further value by embedding the DaaS framework to make the enterprise mobility smarter, scalable, and financially viable. The initiative stems from PTCL Group's firm confidence in the undisputed power of innovative technology to transform businesses."

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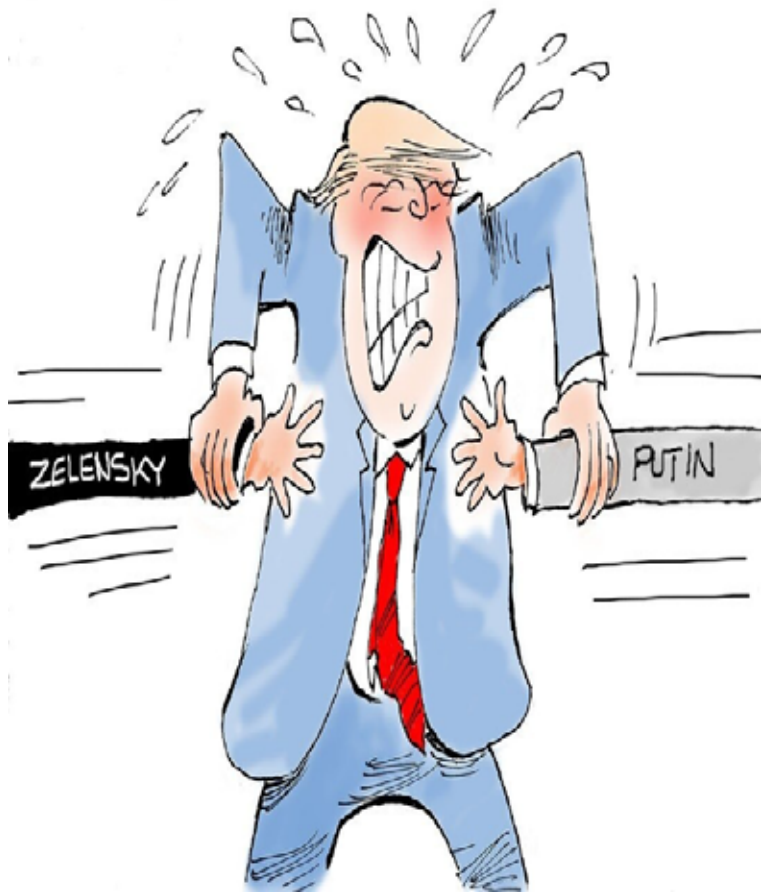
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Israel breaks ceasefire accord, faces global criticism

ISRAEL has once again come under severe international criticism after breaching the recently brokered ceasefire with Palestinian groups in Gaza. The fragile truce, which had raised hopes for a temporary respite in hostilities, was shattered when Israeli forces launched new airstrikes late Sunday night, targeting several locations across the besieged enclave. According to reports from Gaza, multiple explosions rocked residential areas, causing civilian casualties and widespread panic. Palestinian health officials confirmed several deaths and dozens of injuries, including women and children. The strikes came barely 48 hours after the ceasefire took effect, which had been mediated by Egypt and Qatar with the support of the United Nations. The Israeli military claimed that its actions were a "response to renewed rocket fire" from Gaza, but international observers and humanitarian organizations have rejected this justification, calling it a blatant violation of the ceasefire terms. The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres expressed "deep concern" over the developments, urging both parties to exercise restraint and return to dialogue. "The world cannot afford another cycle of violence in Gaza," Guterres said in a statement. "The protection of civilians must remain paramount, and any violation of the ceasefire agreement undermines efforts for lasting peace." The European Union also condemned Israel's actions, calling the airstrikes "disproportionate and unjustified." Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, said that the repeated breaches of truce agreements by Israel "raise serious questions about its commitment to peace and international law." Several European capitals, including Paris and Berlin, have echoed similar sentiments. Meanwhile, in a significant diplomatic development, French President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held a telephone conversation on Monday to discuss the deteriorating situation. According to a statement from the Élysée Palace, both leaders agreed that Israel's breach of the ceasefire was "deeply regrettable" and called for renewed international efforts to prevent further escalation. The Saudi Crown Prince emphasized the need for immediate restraint and reiterated his country's longstanding position in support of Palestinian rights and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. President Macron stressed that France, in coordination with regional partners, would continue to work toward de-escalation and humanitarian relief for Gaza's civilians. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League have also issued strong condemnations, urging the international community to hold Israel accountable for what they termed "a systematic policy of aggression." Protests erupted in several Muslim countries, where demonstrators called on the United Nations to take concrete action. The latest Israeli action could further isolate Tel Aviv on the diplomatic front, as public opinion around the world continues to shift in favor of the Palestinian cause.



Palestinian statehood: the Key to lasting peace

HASSAN AL-MUSTAFA

U.S. President Donald Trump has made his anger unmistakably clear. His blunt warning to Hamas — "We will find ourselves with no choice but to go in and kill them if the bloodshed continues" — came in response to what he called "field executions" of Palestinians accused of collaboration. The killings, condemned by both the Palestinian Authority and France, have become a flashpoint in an already fragile peace process. This was not another impulsive outburst. Rather, it signals a calculated pressure campaign intended to prevent Hamas from consolidating power in Gaza. Trump's approach aims to dismantle the group's military infrastructure and weaken its control, wary of any attempt to create irreversible realities on the ground. Paradoxically, Washington appears willing to tolerate Hamas's limited "policing" role to maintain order in Gaza — a pragmatic concession meant to keep peace efforts alive. Behind this effort lies a larger ambition: making Trump's Gaza peace plan viable. It represents Washington's first serious attempt since October 2023 to end the war, with backing from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Türkiye. Interestingly, Iran has yet to openly obstruct the initiative. The plan has already produced modest but meaningful results — halting Israel's devastating strikes on civilians, initiating hostage and prisoner exchanges, and proposing phased Israeli withdrawals paired with international security supervision. The framework envisions a technocratic transitional government for Gaza, funded by Arab and international donors, leading eventually to massive reconstruction and the enclave's reconnection with the West Bank. If implemented, it could deliver a rare period of calm. Yet, the challenge is immense: donors demand ironclad guarantees that Gaza will not again be reduced to rubble. Without such assurances, the estimated \$70 billion reconstruction drive — spanning nearly a decade — will remain a dream. Only Trump can provide these guarantees by leveraging pressure on Israel's hard-line government and his personal rapport with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

US-India Present Strains and Strategic Convergence

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Establishing regular high-level channels of communication can help prevent disagreements from escalating into public disputes. Institutional mechanisms such as the U.S.-India 2+2 dialogue should be strengthened to address sensitive issues in a constructive manner. Joint military exercises, intelligence sharing and defense technology transfers can reinforce mutual trust. Collaborative initiatives within the Quad (comprising the U.S., India, Japan and Australia) further highlight shared security commitments in the Indo-Pacific. Trade disputes must be managed carefully, with greater emphasis on cooperation...

IN the recent weeks, the United States-India relationship has witnessed a sharp and regrettable downturn, prompted by disputes over tariffs on Russian oil purchases and renewed frictions surrounding Pakistan. The result has been a flurry of public accusations and recriminations, casting a shadow over what has been one of the most promising partnerships in contemporary global politics. While short-term disagreements are inevitable in any bilateral relationship of such magnitude, it is vital for both Washington and New Delhi to avoid losing sight of the larger picture: the strategic rationale that has elevated India into one of America's most consequential partners over the past generation. Equally important is the recognition that sustaining and fortifying this relationship requires deliberate effort, especially at a moment when bipartisan consensus in Washington on foreign policy issues is increasingly rare. The U.S.-India relationship has grown significantly since the end of the Cold War, driven by converging interests across security, economics and ideology. The 2005 U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement marked a turning point, symbolizing Washington's willingness to recognize India as a legitimate nuclear power and a rising global actor. Since then, the relationship has expanded into a comprehensive global partnership encompassing defense cooperation, economic exchange, technological collaboration and shared concerns about regional stability. At the heart of this partnership lies a strategic logic: the Indo-Pacific has emerged as the central theater of Great Power competition and India is indispensable to any sustainable balance of power in this region. While Washington seeks to counterbalance China's growing influence, India, too, perceives Beijing as a direct competitor and security challenge whether on its

Himalayan borders, in the Indian Ocean, or in the realm of technology and infrastructure development. This alignment of threat perceptions has made India a natural partner for U.S. strategic objectives, even as New Delhi maintains its tradition of non-alignment and strategic autonomy. Despite this strong foundation, the relationship has always been characterized by occasional friction. Today, two issues have resurfaced as major irritants. The first concerns India's continued engagement with Russian energy markets. As Western sanctions against Moscow intensified following the Ukraine war, Washington has pressured partners to reduce economic ties with Russia. India, however, has prioritized affordable energy imports to support its domestic needs, arguing that its relationship with Moscow remains critical to national security and economic stability. The imposition of U.S. tariffs in response to India's Russian oil purchases has therefore generated resentment in New Delhi, which views such measures as undermining its sovereign decision-making. The second point of contention involves Pakistan. Historically, Pakistan has complicated U.S.-India relations, given Washington's security cooperation with Islamabad during the Cold War and the war on terror. Renewed tensions whether related to U.S. diplomatic overtures toward Pakistan or differing perspectives on counterterrorism have once again aggravated India's sensitivities. For New Delhi, any U.S. accommodation of Pakistan risks undermining India's security concerns and strategic leverage in South Asia. Yet, it is important to recognize that such disputes, while significant, do not erase the broader structural logic of the partnership. Both the United States and India benefit immensely from closer engagement. For Washington, India represents a critical dem-

ocratic partner in a world where authoritarian challenges are on the rise. India's demographic strength, economic dynamism and technological innovation make it a vital player in shaping the future of global governance. For New Delhi, the U.S. provides indispensable access to advanced defense technologies, investment capital and global platforms that amplify India's influence. Establishing regular high-level channels of communication can help prevent disagreements from escalating into public disputes. Institutional mechanisms such as the U.S.-India 2+2 dialogue should be strengthened to address sensitive issues in a constructive manner. Joint military exercises, intelligence sharing and defense technology transfers can reinforce mutual trust. Collaborative initiatives within the Quad (comprising the U.S., India, Japan and Australia) further highlight shared security commitments in the Indo-Pacific. Trade disputes must be managed carefully, with greater emphasis on cooperation in areas like digital infrastructure, renewable energy and supply chain resilience. Technology partnerships particularly in semiconductors, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity offer opportunities for both nations to achieve shared economic gains. The U.S. can strengthen ties with India by supporting its aspirations for a greater role in international institutions, such as a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Collaborative leadership on climate change, pandemic preparedness and development initiatives would also reinforce global trust. Washington must approach its relations with Pakistan in a manner that acknowledges India's concerns, while New Delhi should recognize that U.S. has diverse global interests. Clear communication and transparency are essential to avoid misperceptions.

When a General's Words Became a Nation's Creed

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



The Field Marshal's insistence that the bond between the people and the Armed Forces is unshakable resonated deeply. He reminded cadets that nothing should be more sacred than the safety of the people and that no duty more binding than the defence of the homeland. He spoke of Pakistan's renewed stature, of its contributions to peacekeeping and regional...

THERE are moments in a man's life that shape him not by the triumphs they bring but by the lessons they leave behind. My earliest dream was as simple and as grand as the sky; to become a pilot in the Pakistan Air Force. After matriculation, I cleared the preliminary examinations and travelled to ISSB Kohat with a heart full of hope. After five or six days of trials, interviews and restless nights, I returned home and then received a letter whose one word — "Not selected" — fell heavier than any storm. The sorrow was sharp, but it did not break my resolve. I decided to cast my lot with another noble calling and, after F.Sc. in 1986, set my sights on the Pakistan Military Academy. Again, I passed the preliminaries and again Kohat summoned me. I faced the stages with steadiness, but on the last day the commandant's interview brought a verdict that bore me the curious consolation of practical counsel: I was told I would perhaps fare better in civil service than in the army. Once more the answer was "No." Those refusals might, to a lesser spirit, have been the end of a story. For me they became the preface to another. I've realized that time transforms the disappointments of youth into the foundation of conviction. Time has shown that you can serve your country no matter where you are, as Allah is the most capable and wise. In 2025, I was once again lost in the windows of my past while listening to a victorious General Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir address his newly minted officers. His address to his officers was like feeding a newborn baby its first "Ghutti". The Field Marshal's words—measured, firm and suffused with faith—were not merely ceremonial. He applauded the professionalism and discipline of the cadets and then held up the history of the Armed Forces as a living testament to sacrifice and cour-

age. He spoke of recent trials and of victory in a tone that fused sober realism with unshakable resolve; that Pakistan's defenders had neutralized threats, downed advanced assets, and displayed multi-domain warfare capabilities; that the nation had stood like a solid wall, renewed in patriotism and unity. What struck me most in that address was its insistence on moral clarity. "You are the heirs of martyrs—live worthy of their memory," he said, reminding young officers that commission is a covenant with history and family alike. He counselled them to value intellectual readiness as much as physical courage, to embrace lifelong learning and technological innovation, and to be wary of the post-truth era where perceptions often eclipse reality. "Do not become tools and victims of Information Disorder," he warned, urging clarity of mind as the greatest of strengths. Throughout his discourse there ran a singular thread; that victory is forged not by rhetoric but by training, character and the courage to stand firm in the face of odds. Hearing such words as one who had once been cast aside by selection boards was humbling and elevating. The general's address closed the river in a jar; it distilled the vastness of national sacrifice, the complexity of modern warfare, and the intimacy of personal duty into instructions one could tuck into the breast pocket of the soul. Where my adolescent ambitions had sought the thrill of flight and the pride of uniform, the speech taught me to revere the larger enterprise—the preservation of a nation's dignity and life. I understood then that service assumes many forms; civil officers, scholars, journalists, parents and soldiers all contribute threads to the same national fabric. The Field Marshal's insistence that the bond between the people and the Armed Forces is un-

shakable resonated deeply. He reminded cadets that nothing should be more sacred than the safety of the people and that no duty more binding than the defence of the homeland. He spoke of Pakistan's renewed stature, of its contributions to peacekeeping and regional stability, and of the enduring duty to stand by oppressed brethren from Kashmir to Palestine. He saluted the martyrs and the ghazis and, with faith unblunted by the harshness of conflict, urged readiness for the challenges ahead: "Pakistan's flag will Insha'Allah continue to rise because its defenders, i.e. Pakistani nation, never fail." From my vantage point, years later, the two refusals that once stung me have become benedictions. They redirected me into the service of the state in different but no less sacred ways. They taught patience, humility and the worth of contributing where one can most effectively serve. The Field Marshal's address, with its blend of piety, professionalism and patriotic clarity, taught me another lesson: that leadership is less about commands than about forging conscience, less about distinction than about duty. It is in that spirit—of resolute humility and unflinching service—that I continue my work for Pakistan, grateful for the roads not taken and steadfast in the road chosen. If destiny denied me the cockpit, it gave me instead a higher vantage; to witness, to record, and to exhort. When a victorious general speaks to his young officers, he plants in their ears something like the "Azaan" to a newborn—the summons to rise, to guard, and to love that which is greater than self. May we all—soldiers and civilians alike—answer that call with hearts full of faith and hands ready for toil. Pakistan Armed Forces Zindabad. Pakistan Hameesha Paidadabad.

Briefs

Public opinion...

FROM PAGE 01
Yet both Afghan leaders consistently reassured Pakistan that India was not a replacement for its western neighbor. Karzai, during a press interaction at Serena Hotel Islamabad, famously remarked: "We are one body with two hearts. No one could replace Pakistan in Afghanistan. A majority of Afghans still consider Pakistan their second home." Dr. Ashraf Ghani, too, maintained a similar stance, emphasizing Afghanistan's natural bond with Pakistan.

Pakistan-Afghan...

FROM PAGE 01
the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. Pakistan also conducted "precision strikes" deep inside Afghanistan, targeting terrorists in Kandahar province and Kabul. A temporary 48-hour ceasefire was announced on October 15 at Afghanistan's request. The temporary ceasefire was extended for another 48 hours on October 17 as delegations from the two countries headed to Doha, Qatar, for further negotiations.

No room for hatred...

FROM PAGE 01
against the country. He said entire Pakistani nation stands united and resolute alongside the security forces to defeat the menace of terrorism and hatred from the country. The Prime Minister said the majority Muslim population of Pakistan has always expressed strong indignation at any despicable acts against the minority communities of the country and stood in unequivocal solidarity with them in any such times. He highlighted some of the major policy steps taken by the government to ensure protection of minorities rights in Pakistan and promote interfaith harmony.

26th Amend...

FROM PAGE 01
the lawyer said, while questioning why there is an insistence for the case to be heard by the existing bench. Stressing that the court has to follow the "stare decisis" (precedent), the lawyer said that an election was held in the country and some people thought that it would be scrutinised. Therefore, Sheikh argued, the foundation was laid for the 26th Amendment.

Super Tax: Supreme...

FROM PAGE 01
Senate recommendations. Following this, counsel for telecom companies, Nauman Haider, began his submissions, stating that his clients provide internet services and that he would try not to repeat previous arguments. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked which arguments he intended to adopt.

US President says Gaza...

FROM PAGE 01
Gaza and difficulties in accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify the tolls and details provided by the civil defence agency or the Israeli military. The army said it had "renewed enforcement of the ceasefire" on Sunday but vowed to "respond firmly to any violation of it". Hamas denied the accusations, one official accusing Israel of fabricating "pretexs" to resume the war.

ATC issues non...

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regard to PTI's November 26 protest. The court indicted Imran's sister and nine other accused, including Sajid Qureshi, Atif Riaz, Faheem Razaq, Adalat Khan Qureshi, Mursalin Kiani, Tayyab Abbas Shah, Umar Shah Muhammad Hanif, and Ali Raza. During the hearing today, 10 other accused named in the same case appeared before the court, while five prosecution witnesses also recorded their statements.

Diplomatic Stars triumph over Pakistan Celebrities in football fest

The Diplomatic Stars featured several foreign diplomats, including Eduard Preda, Deputy Head of Mission of the Romanian Embassy, who also captained the side. Other key players included H.E. Kamal Ahmed, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, and Sahin Atak from the Turkish Embassy



CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: To commemorate Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, the Dream Sports Group organized a series of exhibition football matches at the Jinnah Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex. The thrilling final match, held on Sunday, brought together diplomats, sports enthusiasts, and celebrities in a festive spirit of unity and friendship. In the grand finale, Diplomatic Stars outclassed their rivals, Pakistan Celebrities, with an im-

pressive 5-1 victory, clinching the championship trophy. The atmosphere was electric as both teams displayed great sportsmanship and camaraderie throughout the tournament. The Diplomatic Stars featured several foreign diplomats, including Eduard Preda, Deputy Head of Mission of the Romanian Embassy, who also captained the side. Other key players included H.E. Kamal Ahmed, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, and Sahin Atak from the Turkish Embassy. On the other side, the Pakistan Celebrities team was led by MNA Jamal

Raisani, who was joined by well-known figures from media, sports, and entertainment circles. A large number of foreign diplomats, sports personalities, and local fans attended the event, creating a vibrant and friendly atmosphere. The event served as a unique platform for promoting sports diplomacy, mutual respect, and stronger people-to-people ties between Pakistan and the international community. Dream Sports Group CEO Arslan Mushtaq said that the initiative was designed to "promote sports culture and encourage interaction between diplomats and Pakistani

citizens in a relaxed, positive environment." He added that such events play a vital role in youth engagement and international friendship. During the closing ceremony, shields and trophies were awarded to the winning and runner-up teams, as well as to the chief guests, players, referees, and officials in recognition of their participation and contributions. The event concluded with renewed calls to make such diplomatic sports engagements a regular feature of Pakistan's sporting calendar, reflecting the nation's commitment to peace, friendship, and healthy competition.

Turkish motorcycle racer Toprak Razgatlioglu wins

ANKARA/ISTANBUL: Turkish motorcycle racer Toprak Razgatlioglu on Sunday won the 2025 World Superbike Championship (WSB). Razgatlioglu won the 2025 WSBK world title after finishing third in the season's final race in Spain. Known as "El Turco" by his fans, he had won the 2021 and 2024 championships. With this latest victory, he has won the title three times in total. In an interview with Anadolu, Razgatlioglu said that he dedicates the championship to his country and emphasized the teamwork behind his success. "This is not a victory alone," he said. "You see me on screen by myself, but behind me is a large team. Everyone gives their best, and even a tiny loose bolt could take us out of the race. That's why the team and crew are so important. We succeeded together, and we won together." Razgatlioglu won the 2025 championship with 616 points overall. Nicolo Bulega, an Italian motorcycle racer, finished second overall with 603 points, while Spanish racer Alvaro Bautista came in third with 337 points. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan congratulated Razgatlioglu in a post on the Turkish social media platform NSosyal, saying the rider's victory brought "immense pride and joy to all of us." - APP

Free breast screening camp concludes

The camp was organized under the supervision of Breast Surgeon Dr Shawana Asad, who served as the chief organizer, along with the dedicated team of Surgical Unit C

ABBOTTABAD: A one-week free breast screening camp organized at Ayub Teaching Hospital (ATH) concluded successfully on Monday, providing essential diagnostic and awareness services to women regarding breast cancer. According to the reports, out of 290 women examined during the camp, 14 were diagnosed with advanced-stage breast cancer, where the chances of survival are only 13 per-

cent. Additionally, five women were found to have early-stage cancer, which can be treated effectively with timely medical intervention. Among young women aged 20 to 25 years, 85 were diagnosed with benign lumps, while two women had large breast lumps and 18 reported swelling in breast ducts. During the camp, nearly 300 women and their attendants received awareness sessions on breast cancer prevention, self-examination techniques, and the importance of early detection. The camp was organized under the supervision of Breast Surgeon Dr Shawana Asad, who served as the chief organizer, along with the dedicated team of Surgical Unit C. All female patients were provided free diagnostic tests, while those requiring further treatment or surgery were advised to make appointments at the hospital. Ayub Teaching Hospital continues to uphold its commitment to providing quality healthcare and public awareness. The hospital administration and Board of Governors are ensuring the availability of modern medical facilities and advanced services to help women in the Hazara Division benefit from timely prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer. - Agencies

Asif Afridi makes Test debut for Pakistan

The players and support staff extended their best wishes to Asif Afridi for his debut match

ISLAMABAD: Spin bowler Asif Afridi is set to make his Test debut for Pakistan in the second Test match against South Africa at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. Shahin Shah Afridi will present Asif Afridi with his debut cap. The players and support staff extended their best wishes to Asif Afridi for his debut match, wishing him a successful and memorable outing in Test cricket. - APP

Sei Young Kim wins LPGA South Korea

HAENAM: Decade-long LPGA Tour veteran Sei Young Kim carded a final round 67 to hold off any final round challengers as she claimed a four-stroke victory at the BMW Ladies Championship on Sunday. It was Kim's 13th career title since joining the tour in 2015, and ended a five-year long drought since her last tournament victory at the Women's PGA Championship in 2020. Kim, 32, finished with a four-round total of 24-under-264 at Pine Beach Golf Links on the Korean peninsula, with the South Korean only dropping a shot at the par-3 third before finding six birdies through the remainder of the round to comfortably hold her closest rival, Nasa Hataoka, at bay. Hataoka of Japan also had a final round 67 to finish at 20-under 268, with Celine Boutier (67) and Kim A-lim (66) a further two shots back in a share for third place. Defending champion Hannah Green shot 66 and finished at 17-under 271 in a share for fifth with Yealimi Noh (70) of the United States. Fellow American Lindy Duncan (65) was a shot further back in a three-way tie for seventh with South Korean pair Choi Hye-jin (63) and An Na-rin (63) who shared the lowest round of the day. Jeeno Thitikul last week became the first multiple winner on the LPGA this season with a five-hole playoff win in Shanghai over Minami Katsu. - Agencies

Al Dhafra Dates Festival, Auction launches its 4th edition

This year's edition will feature 21 competitions with 173 prizes valued at more than AED5.5 million, spanning date beauty contests, honey competitions, cooking, date packaging, painting, and photography

AL DHAFRA: Under the patronage of Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in Al Dhafra Region, the fourth edition of Al Dhafra Dates Festival and Auction, organised by the Abu Dhabi Heritage Authority, was launched in Al Dhafra, Abu Dhabi. The festival, which will run until 26 October 2025, seeks to strengthen its standing as a leading international heritage event by promoting date production, showcasing premium varieties, supporting national food security goals,

encouraging farmers to improve quality standards, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge in palm cultivation. This year's edition will feature 21 competitions with 173 prizes valued at more than AED5.5 million, spanning date beauty contests, honey competitions, cooking, date packaging, painting, and photography. At the heart of the festival is the daily Date Auction, the most anticipated event for date enthusiasts, where visitors will have the opportunity to bid on premium Emirati

dates of various types and grades presented on dedicated display tables. Alongside the competitions and auctions, the event will offer a wide variety of cultural and educational activities, including traditional folk performances, photography and paintings exhibitions, heritage crafts, awareness lectures, and creative workshops for all age groups. Attendees can also explore retail outlets offering dates and date products, farming equipment, and a dedicated Honey Village.

Government and private sector entities will also take part with pavilions featuring interactive programmes, awareness platforms for farmers and visitors, and displays of their latest services and innovations in the agricultural field. This year, the festival will host the Kingdom of Morocco as the guest of honour, highlighting cultural and agricultural exchange and deepening cooperation between the two nations, particularly in palm cultivation and date production, as well as across other key sectors. - APP

Morocco crowned world champions

SANTIAGO: Morocco became the first Arab nation to win the FIFA U-20 World Cup after beating Argentina 2-0 in the final in Santiago. Yassir Zabiri opened the scoring in the 12th minute with a free kick and doubled Morocco's lead 17 minutes later from a close-range shot. - Agencies

PM for promotion...

FROM PAGE 01
He emphasised setting up a clear timeline for the implementation of SMDA's roadmap and its early execution. The prime minister said that the country's industrial growth was linked with the development of cottage SMEs and cited the developed countries where they provide raw material to large industries. He directed to conduct the training for SMEs in rural areas for processing of agricultural commodities.

EU in 'contact'...

FROM PAGE 01
authorities in Afghanistan," he said. The Taliban have been largely isolated on the global stage since they imposed a strict law upon returning to power in 2021, following the withdrawal of US-led forces. But in a letter initiated by Belgium, 20 EU member states called on the commission to take action to enable both voluntary and forced returns of Afghans with no right to stay.

Two key terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01
The killed terrorists have been identified as Nauman alias Maneh, son of Makin Shah, and Abdul Basit, son of Talawat Shah, both residents of Malik Abad, Swabi. They were members of the TTP Syed-ul-Akbar group and were wanted in several terrorist activities, including the martyrdom of two police constables, Driver Zahid and Jamaluddin, in Gadoon.

Briefs

India lights up as millions celebrate Diwali festival

NEW DELHI: Millions of Indians celebrated on Monday the festival of lights, Diwali, one of Hinduism's most significant and widely observed holidays. Diwali symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. In the northern parts of India, it marks Rama's return to Ayodhya after defeating the demon king Ravana, while in other parts of the country it is associated with Lakshmi, the deity of fortune. It is celebrated with bright lights, prayers for wealth, health, and prosperity, and exchanging gifts and sweets. Homes and temples are cleaned and decorated with diyas — oil lamps — candles, paper lamps and traditional colorful designs known as rangoli to invite good luck. Across the country, markets in cities and towns bustle with shoppers buying sweets, gifts, decorations, and firecrackers. "Kids are mostly excited about bursting crackers. Diwali night looks beautiful with all houses lit up and different types of colorful crackers brightening the sky too," said Kanchan Mala, a homemaker in Mokama, in the eastern Indian state of Bihar. "Special dishes are prepared and at night we light earthen lamps. These oil lamps are filled with mustard oil and a cotton wick is dipped into it and lit, and we put them in front of our houses or on the terrace. —APP

Corruption concerns hit record high in Philippines

MANILA: Corruption has emerged as one of the main national concerns among Filipinos, a new survey showed on Monday, amid controversy over irregularities in flood control projects. Nationwide outrage in the Philippines has grown since August as investigators uncovered massive fund misappropriation in flood prevention and mitigation projects. An audit ordered by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. found that of the 545 billion pesos (\$9.54 billion) allocated to the projects since 2022, thousands were substandard, poorly documented, or nonexistent. Several powerful political figures have been implicated, fueling public backlash in one of the world's most typhoon-prone countries. The situation has catapulted concerns over corruption to the second biggest worry of Filipinos, right after the increase in prices of basic goods and services, according to a survey by OCTA Research, an independent group of Philippine academics specialized in public opinion polls. The survey asked respondents about the most important issues that the Marcos administration must act on immediately. —APP

EU states agree to end Russian gas imports by end 2027

BRUSSELS: EU countries on Monday agreed to phase out their remaining gas imports from Russia by the end of 2027, breaking a dependency the bloc has struggled to end despite Moscow's war on Ukraine. Energy ministers meeting in Luxembourg approved a plan by the European Commission to phase out both pipeline gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports from Russia, subject to approval by the bloc's parliament. Lars Aagaard, energy minister of Denmark, which holds the European Union's rotating presidency, called it a "crucial" step to make Europe energy independent. The plan is part of a broader EU strategy to wean the bloc off Russian energy supplies. "Although we have worked hard and pushed to get Russian gas and oil out of Europe in recent years, we are not there yet," Aagaard said. The commission is in parallel pushing for LNG imports to be phased out one year earlier, by January 2027, as part of a new package of sanctions aimed at sapping Moscow's war chest. But sanctions need unanimous approval from the EU's 27 nations, which has at times been hard to reach. —APP

ICCI, PSW & DRAP host awareness session on drugs import facilitation

ICCI fully supports technology-driven reforms align with business-friendly environment:Tahir Mehmood

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and Drug Regulator Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) organized an awareness session on "Introducing Pre-Import Release Order for Clearance of Drugs" here on Monday.

The session, led by the PSW team, focused on how the integration of the DRAP Clearance Gateway with the PSW platform is revolutionizing the import clearance process for pharmaceuticals. It provided detailed guidance to participants on the new workflow, emphasizing digital efficiency, transparency, and user convenience. Director DRAP Zeshan Nazir Bajar showcased the traits of the faster, more transparent, and reliable pharmaceutical trade ecosystem by simplifying the Pre-Import Release Order (PIRO) process for drugs. He said that the Importers can now apply online through the PSW portal to obtain release orders for imported drugs and raw materials. The system enables digital submission of applications, online payments, and improved coordination between traders and DRAP. He further informed that the Pakistan Single Window is designed to enhance the efficiency of Pakistan's international trade operations and that the integration reduces delays, minimizes manual paperwork, and ensures greater transparency by allowing traders to track the real-time status of their applications. He said that through this digital transformation, the pharmaceutical



sector will benefit from a simplified, faster, and more predictable clearance process, ultimately contributing to a stronger and more compliant trade ecosystem. Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Sardar Tahir Mehmood appreciated PSW and DRAP for introducing this progressive digital reform. He said, that the initiative marks a major milestone in Pakistan's trade facilitation efforts. By digitizing and integrating clearance systems, PSW and DRAP have significantly reduced red tape and improved business

convenience, particularly for pharmaceutical importers. ICCI fully supports such technology-driven reforms that align with our vision of a transparent and business-friendly environment, he added. He added that Pharmaceutical Industry is not just a business sector but is a strategic pillar of Pakistan's public health and economic landscape and that streamlining its imports mechanisms through PSW will improve compliance, curb delays at ports and promote a safer, more competitive marketplace. The session concluded with an interactive Q&A segment, allowing pharmaceutical

importers, traders, and clearing agents to discuss challenges, share feedback, and enhance their understanding of the new digital process. Domain Officer Umair Mahmood said that PSW's aim is to drive Pakistan's trade transformation towards a secure, transparent and technology drive ecosystem. Staff Business Analyst Maryam Saeed showcased the entire online procedure through a presentation. Representatives from the business community appreciated the initiative and expressed confidence that the collaboration would greatly facilitate pharmaceutical trade and ensure

compliance with global best practices. Those present on the occasion included ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, Executive Members, Faisal Muzzamal, Ch. Kalimullah, Atiqe ur Rehman and others. Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Standing Committee at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Faisal Muzammal, played a pivotal role in organizing and ensuring the success of the session. His efforts significantly contributed to the event's productive outcome.

10 South Koreans held, 2 rescued in Cambodia crackdown

Over the weekend, Cambodia sent home 64 South Korean nationals who had been held for their alleged links to "pig butchering" scams – so-called for the method of building trust with victims over time before stealing funds

SEOUL: Ten South Koreans have been arrested in Cambodia for alleged involvement in cyberscams and two more rescued, Seoul's top diplomat said Monday, days after dozens accused of working in the vast fraud operation were repatriated. A multibillion-dollar scam industry has ballooned in Cambodia in recent years, with thousands involved, some willingly and others forced by the organised criminal groups, experts say. Over the weekend, Cambodia sent home 64 South Korean nationals who had been held for their alleged links to "pig butchering" scams – so-called for the method of building trust with victims over time before stealing funds. On Monday, South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun said that 10 more people were arrested and two individuals rescued. They were detained on Thursday and will be repatriated this week, he said. Seoul is also working to locate 80 South Korean nationals still unaccounted for in Cambodia, Cho said. About 550 South Koreans had been reported missing or held against their will after entering Cambodia since last year, the foreign ministry said last week. Seoul has estimated around 1,000 South Koreans are among the 200,000 people working in scam operations in Cambodia. Some have been forced under threat of violence to execute "pig butchering" or romance scams. Those deported over the weekend were detained as soon as they boarded a chartered flight home and were escorted off the plane in handcuffs. Seoul's National Police Agency said Monday it was seeking arrest warrants for 59 of them. The repatriated individuals have been implicated in crimes like voice phishing, romance scams and so-called "no-show" fraud schemes, Park Sung-joo, head of the National Office of Investigation, told reporters last week. The group included both "voluntary and involuntary participants", National Security Adviser Yi Sung-lac has said. The high-profile repatriations follow public outcry over the torture and killing of a South Korean college student in Cambodia this year, reportedly by a crime ring. Last week, South Korean foreign ministry officials met with Cambodia's prime minister and local police to discuss fake jobs and scam centres. —Agencies

Uzbek Airways doubles flights to Pak amid soaring demand

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan Airways, the national carrier of Uzbekistan, has announced a significant expansion of its flight schedule between Tashkent and Islamabad. Starting October 28, 2025, the Airline doubles the frequency of its regular flights on the "Tashkent-Islamabad-Tashkent" route: from once a week to twice a week. This decision reflects the Uzbekistan Airways's commitment to strengthening air connectivity between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, supporting the growing flow of travelers, businesspeople, and tourists between the two countries. Uzbekistan and Pakistan share deep historical, cultural, and spiritual ties. In recent years, these bonds have been further reinforced through expanding cooperation in trade, investment, education, and tourism. The increase in flight frequency symbolizes this evolving partnership, transforming shared aspirations into tangible connections. Currently, Uzbekistan Airways operates two weekly flights on the "Tashkent-Lahore-Tashkent" route and one weekly flight on the "Tashkent-Islamabad-Tashkent" route. However, due to high and consistent passenger demand, with flights frequently operating at full capacity and tickets selling out days in advance, the airline has decided to add a second weekly Islamabad service. For Pakistani travelers, the new schedule offers greater flexibility and convenience. With more options for travel days and shorter booking lead times, passengers can now plan business trips, family visits, and leisure tours more comfortably. Beyond direct travel between the two capitals, Tashkent International Airport serves as a key transit hub in Central Asia, connecting Pakistan to over 50 international destinations across Europe, North America, the Middle East, East and South-East Asia. Passengers flying via Tashkent can enjoy smooth transit connections to popular destinations such as Istanbul, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York, Moscow, Tokyo, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Baku, and Astana, making Uzbekistan Airways an increasingly attractive choice for global travelers. The additional flights are expected to strengthen tourism cooperation between the two nations. Uzbekistan, home to the ancient Silk Road cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, offers Pakistani tourists a unique opportunity to explore Islamic heritage, shared cultural roots, and architectural wonders, all just a short flight away. In return, easier connectivity will encourage more Uzbek visitors to discover Pakistan's scenic landscapes, spiritual sites, and hospitality, fostering people-to-people exchanges and greater mutual understanding. Expanding the "Tashkent-Islamabad" route aligns with Uzbekistan's and Pakistan's shared vision of strengthening regional cooperation, trade, and connectivity. Enhanced air transport not only facilitates business and tourism but also contributes to economic diplomacy and regional integration across Central and South Asia. This milestone move by Uzbekistan Airways stands as a testament to the deepening friendship and forward-looking partnership between the two nations. It represents more than just an increase in flight frequency. It is a bridge that connects people, economies, and cultures. —DNA

Torkham border closure causes huge losses to both countries: Shinwari

Zahid Shinwari, even in areas of the world where wars are ongoing, borders are not closed but are kept open so that trade is not affected

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Former President of the Border Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zahid Shinwari has said that traders, transporters and the public on both sides are suffering huge losses due to the closure of the border. He said that there is an annual trade of about one billion dollars between the two countries, while the national treasury is losing Rs 700 to 800 million on a daily basis. While talking to the media, Zahid Shinwari said that more than a week has passed since the closure of Torkham and other borders, as a result of which there has been a significant increase in the wave of inflation on both sides. According to him, fruits and other goods coming to Pakistan from Afghanistan are stuck at the border, due to which they are spoiling, while the people there are also facing severe difficulties and inflation due to the closure of goods going from Pakistan to Afghanistan. He further said that after the peace talks in Doha, the capital of Qatar, it was expected that all the borders would be opened immediately so that trade ac-

tivities could resume, but unfortunately this did not happen. According to Zahid Shinwari, even in areas of the world where wars are ongoing, borders are not closed but are kept open so that trade is not affected. He said that if any problem arises, the two governments should sit down and find a solution through negotiations, instead of closing the border, continue trade activities because the border closure is causing huge losses to both countries. Drivers and Torkham workers are facing severe difficulties due to the closure of the Pak-Afghan Torkham border. The closure of the Torkham border has badly affected not only trade but also the lives of the general public, workers and drivers. It has been a week since the border was closed, due to which the prices of grapes, pomegranates, apples and other fruits have doubled, while hundreds of vehicles are stranded on various highways. According to market sources, the price of grapes per kg has increased from Rs 400 to Rs 800, pomegranate from Rs 300 to Rs 600 and apples from Rs 200 to Rs 400 per kg. Traders say that the closure of the Torkham border has affected the supply of fruits and created a shortage in the market. On the other hand, drivers of trucks and trailers parked on the highways

Seious, popular, besties with Trump

Italy's Meloni marks three years

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni marks three years in office this week with her far-right party more popular than ever, her government remarkably durable and the economy stable, if not exactly booming. "She's a serious person," said Giulia Devescovi, a 31-year-old doctor who joined a rally with hundreds of supporters of Meloni's Brothers of Italy party in Florence earlier this month. "She's perhaps one of the best prime ministers since Silvio Berlusconi," she told AFP among a sea of Brothers of Italy flags. Meloni is way off the late Berlusconi's record of nine years as prime minister, but her coalition stands out for its longevity among the 70-odd post-war governments in Italy. Her party tops opinion polls with support levels consistently above the 26 percent it secured to win 2022 elections, which saw Meloni installed as Italy's first woman prime minister on October 22 that year. In three regional elections in recent weeks, her party increased its support, even in Tuscany, a bastion of the left. Headlining the campaign event in the picturesque Piazza San Lorenzo in central Florence, Meloni hailed at the left who she said were happy to see Italy confined to junior partner to EU giants France and Germany. She particularly noted the economic progress of her indebted country, emphasising that borrowing costs are now lower than those of France. "A leading nation like Italy doesn't act as anyone's spare tyre," she declared to cheers and applause from the crowd. As a stateswoman, Meloni appears to have a seat at every table, almost a regular at the White House and recently the only woman leader to attend the signing of the Gaza ceasefire in Egypt. There, US President Donald Trump interrupted a speech on his peace efforts for the Middle East to praise Meloni as "incredible," a "very successful politician" and a "beautiful young woman." "Italians are proud of the way she represents them on the international stage. And she communicates brilliantly," noted one European diplomat. In Garbatella, the working-class neighborhood of Rome where Meloni grew up, local resident Martina Ladina agreed. "When she speaks with the other heads of state, she speaks all these languages — she manages to stand up to the men," the 36-year-old told AFP last week. "She's got balls." For Lorenzo Pregliasco, founder of the YouTrend polling institute, the prime minister's diplomatic "activism" has "consolidated her image as leader" while "she has not suffered any major slip-ups." On the domestic front, too, he noted that she has not made major changes that might alienate her electorate. "I don't think it's a contradiction that doing little in government is accompanied by stable support — I believe it's one of the reasons," Pregliasco told AFP. Irregular immigration — a key campaign issue for Meloni and her allies — is down, but the government has also ramped up the number of visas for non-EU legal workers. Rome has cut taxes, toughened penalties for protesters and has taken steps on judicial reform, but has yet to confront the structural issues that many believe hold Italy back. Surveys show that Italians are most concerned about purchasing power, with wages stagnating. Another major complaint is the state of the public health system, investment in which has not kept pace with inflation. Italy hopes its deficit will fall within EU limits this year, but debt remains an eye-watering 135 percent of gross domestic product. —DNA

Tanveer to open summit on Pak's high-value olive future

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With Pakistan identified as a highly favorable country for olive cultivation, a major national summit is set to chart a course for developing a safe, sustainable, and export-ready olive supply chain, positioning the nation to become one of the world's leading olive producers in the coming years. The Al Baraka Olive Summit-2025, organized by the National Alliance for Safe Food (NAFS) and Al Baraka Bank, will be held on October 21, 2025, at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. The event aims to bring together key stakeholders from the agriculture, banking, and policy sectors to strategize on unlocking the immense potential of Pakistan's olive industry. The summit will be inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, underscoring the government's commitment to this emerging agricultural sector.

PBF hails Wheat Procurement Policy

ISLAMABAD: Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad, Chief Organizer of the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) commended Prime Minister's decision to procure wheat of upcoming crop season, calling it a timely and commendable move that would offer critical financial relief to farmers and a much-needed boost to the country's agricultural sector. While talking to media, he stated that under the newly announced Wheat Procurement Policy 2025-26, the federal and provincial governments planned to purchase 6.2 million tons of wheat, said a press release on Monday. "Under this policy, if the government succeeds in achieving the wheat procurement target, it will not only strengthen the agricultural sector but also revive financial activity in rural areas, where the economy is largely driven by wheat cultivation," he said. He emphasized that this policy would directly benefit farmers, especially in light of the severe economic setbacks caused by recent floods, which had inflicted financial damages worth over Rs. 430 billion to the agricultural economy. "This policy brings a ray of hope to farmers across the country. By ensuring early procurement and financial liquidity before the sowing season, it empowers growers to plan effectively for the year ahead," said Jawad during a media briefing. —APP

Briefs

Trump threatens India with 'massive tariffs'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has again threatened India with "massive" tariffs unless it limits its purchases of Russian oil, while reiterating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally assured him that New Delhi would halt such imports. "I spoke with Prime Minister Modi of India, and he said he's not going to be doing the Russian oil thing," President Trump told media on board Air Force 1, as he returned to Washington. When questioned about the Indian government's denial of any such conversation between Modi and Trump, he said, "But if they want to say that, then they'll just continue to pay massive tariffs, and they don't want to do that." Last week, Trump said Modi had assured him India would stop purchasing Russian oil after the US levied additional tariffs on India over these imports. "He's assured me there will be no oil purchased from Russia," Trump told reporters at the White House on Oct. 15. "You know, you can't do it immediately. It's a little bit of a process, but the process is going to be over with soon." – Agencies

Arrest of Afghan suicide bomber confirms use of Afghan soil

DNA

PESHAWAR: Brigadier (Retd.) Mahmood Shah, former Secretary Law and Order of erstwhile FATA, said here Monday that the recent arrest of a suspected Afghan suicide bomber by Frontier Corps (FC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is clear evidence of Afghanistan's soil being exploited by Fitna al-Khawarij and other terrorist groups for nefarious acts against Pakistan. Brigadier Shah emphasized that Pakistani officials have long warned about the presence and activities of proscribed groups, particularly the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), operating from within Afghanistan. The arrest of the suspected suicide bomber serves as further confirmation of these concerns repeatedly expressed by Pakistani authorities. The arrested bomber has been identified as 22-year-old Naimatullah, son of Musa Jan, a resident of Kandahar province in Afghanistan. He was apprehended by FC KP during an intelligence-based operation in South Waziristan, security sources said. This arrest comes at a time of heightened tensions along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, following several days of deadly cross-border clashes that resulted in numerous casualties. A ceasefire agreement between the two countries was brokered in Doha, Qatar, on Sunday.

Pakistan to host on advanced materials

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Advanced Materials Forum (PAMF) has announced to hold the 19th International Symposium on Advanced Materials (ISAM) in Islamabad from October 27-31, bringing together leading global scientists, engineers, academicians and industry experts to discuss the latest innovations in materials science and engineering. Since its inception in 1989, ISAM has become Pakistan's flagship scientific event and one of the most prestigious international forums in South and South-east Asia. The symposium highlights the critical role of materials science in driving Pakistan's transformation toward a knowledge-based, high-tech, and sustainable economy. This year's symposium will feature plenary and keynote lectures by world-renowned experts. – Agencies

PM for boosting domestic industrial production

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on a potential reform package focused on the comprehensive and efficient utilization of the country's power resources

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday instructed the Power Division to develop effective policy recommendations aimed at enhancing domestic industrial production. He also urged all institutions involved in industrial production to take comprehensive measures to facilitate investors and industrialists. Emphasizing the government's commitment to supporting the agriculture and industrial sectors, the prime minister directed the formulation of a policy to maximize the beneficial use of the country's power production. "Electricity production can be best leveraged to increase the output of agricultural and industrial goods," he said while chairing a meeting on power sector reforms. During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on a potential reform package focused on the comprehensive and efficient utilization of the country's power resources. The meeting was attended by Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Advisor on Industries Haroon Akhtar, and other senior government officials.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presiding over a meeting on reforms in power sector on 20 October 2025. – DNA

Stocks rise due to Pak-Afghan ceasefire, deal with the IMF

KSE-100 Index surges to an intraday high of 165,348.04 points, gaining 1,541.83 points, or 0.94%

DNA

KARACHI: The stock market extended gains on Monday, with bullish activity driven by optimism over the ceasefire agreement with Afghanistan and confirmation of a staff-level deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the release of the next tranche. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's benchmark KSE-100 Index surged to an intraday high of 165,348.04 points, gaining 1,541.83 points, or 0.94%, from the previous close of 163,806.21 points, and registered a low of 164,281.95 points, up 475.74 points, or 0.29%. "Bullish activity was witnessed amid reports of a ceasefire in cross-border conflict with Afghanistan and the IMF staff-level deal for the release of the IMF tranche," said Ahsan Mehanti, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities. Surging global equities and speculation during the earnings season played a catalyst role in bullish activity at PSX, he added. Investor confidence strengthened after Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to an immediate ceasefire during talks in Doha, confirmed by Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, who said both sides would reconvene in Istanbul

on October 25 for further discussions. The breakthrough came after a week of intense border clashes – the worst since the Taliban takeover in 2021. Market optimism was further buoyed by the IMF's staff-level agreement for the second review of the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the first under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), with the lender projecting GDP growth at 3.6% and inflation at 6% for FY26. Falling fixed-income yields, improved credit ratings, and limited alternative investment avenues also encouraged continued inflows into equities. Pakistan also signed a RMB 5 billion memorandum of understanding with China to address the water crisis, while the government raised Rs507 billion through Pakistan Investment Bonds (PIBs) and Rs776 billion via T-bills, with PIB yields increasing by 13–21 basis points. On the external front, the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) foreign exchange reserves improved by \$21 million week-on-week to \$14.4 billion, while the rupee appreciated marginally by 0.03%, closing at 281.1 against the US dollar. On Friday, the KSE-100 Index closed down 638.50 points, or 0.39%, at 163,806.22 points, after hitting a high of 165,030.82 and a low of 163,118.01. For the week, the index still gained 708 points, or 0.4%.

Unicef's Yemen chief among 20 UN staff held by Houthis

Houthis make "unauthorised entry" into UN compound, detaining five national and 15 international staff

NEWS DESK

YEMEN: The United Nations' (UN) office in Yemen said on Sunday that Houthi rebels were still holding 20 of their staff following their raid on their building in Sanaa a day earlier. On Saturday, the UN office said Houthi security forces had made an "unauthorised entry" into their compound, adding that the staff there were "safe and accounted for". "Five national staff and fifteen international staff remain detained within the compound," Jean Alam, spokesperson for the UN resident coordinator, said on Sunday. The UN was in touch with the authorities in Sanaa, with the relevant member states and the government of Yemen "to resolve this serious situation as swiftly as possible, end the detention of all personnel, and restore full control over its facilities in Sanaa", it added. Late on Sunday, a UN official, requesting anonymity, told AFP that United Nations

Children's Fund's (Unicef) representative in Yemen was among those detained. "Peter Hawkins is among the 15 international employees detained in the complex" the Huthis raided the previous day, the official said. The rebels had already stormed UN offices in Sanaa on August 31, detaining more than 11 employees, according to the UN. Those employees were suspected of spying for the United States and Israel, a senior Houthi official told AFP at the time on condition of anonymity. In a statement on Saturday, UN Secretary-General Stephane Dujarric's spokesperson said: "We will continue to call for an end to the arbitrary detention of 53 of our colleagues." He was responding to a televised address on Thursday by rebel leader Abdelmalek al-Huthi. He claimed his forces had dismantled "one of the most dangerous spy cells", which he said was "linked to humanitarian organisations such as the World Food Program and Unicef".

Meeting with Imran

IHC issues notices to authorities on Chief Minister Afridi's plea

Court removes registrar's objections and issues notices to Adiala jail superintendent, others on CM's petition



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday removed registrar office's objections on a petition filed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi seeking meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan in Adiala jail. IHC Justice Arab Muhammad Tahir heard the plea and issued notices to the interior secretary, the Punjab Home Department secre-

tary, the inspector general of police, and the superintendent of Adiala jail. The court directed authorities to submit their responses by October 23. Afridi moved IHC on October 17, just two days after being sworn in as KP chief minister on October 15. A day earlier, on October 16, he had obtained protective bail from the PHC and proceeded to Adiala jail – where PTI founding chairman Imran Khan has been incarcerated – to seek a meeting with him. However, the prison authorities denied the request. Following the denial, he approached IHC but the registrar's office initially raised objections over the maintainability of his petition. During the hearing, Afridi's counsel Advocate Ali Bukhari appeared before the court and informed IHC that the registrar's office had raised multiple objections to the petition. Subsequently, after hearing arguments, the court issued notices to the Adiala jail superintendent and others for October 23. In his plea, CM Afridi maintained that consultation with PTI founder is must for the formation of cabinet in KP and guidance on provincial governance. In the application, CM Afridi stated that he is the elected chief minister and represents a population of 45 million people. He added that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa voted for the PTI in the 2024 general elections, through which the party secured 92 seats.

Khankendi hosts Cooperation Forum

KHANKENDI: The Cooperation Forum of Azerbaijani Non-Governmental Organizations dedicated to the "Year of the Constitution and Sovereignty" has opened at the Congress Center in Khankendi. The event, which brought together nearly 300 NGOs, started with the screening of a video titled "Letter to a Martyr." Subsequently, the national anthem of Azerbaijan was played. The event features panel sessions on "Turkman Heritage: Loyalty to Historical Roots," "Towards WUF13: New Opportunities for NGOs," "Azerbaijani NGOs on the Global Stage: Techniques for Unity Against Isolation," and "The Digital NGO Concept: Artificial Intelligence and Digital Solutions." The event will conclude with an artistic program. – APP

French police hunt Louvre jewel thieves

PARIS: The hunt was on Monday for the band of thieves who stole eight priceless royal pieces of jewellery from the Louvre Museum in the heart of Paris in broad daylight. Officials said a team of 60 investigators were working on the theory that the raid was planned and executed by an organised crime group. In France, it reignited a row over the lack of security in France's museums, which the new Interior Minister Laurent Nunez acknowledged Sunday was a "major weak spot". The thieves arrived between 9:30 and 9:40 am (0730 and 0740 GMT) Sunday, shortly after the museum opened to the public at 9:00 am, a source close to the investigation said. – APP

Over 700 Afghan refugees repatriated

KOHAT: As Pakistan intensifies efforts to repatriate undocumented Afghan nationals, the district witnessed the return of 770 Afghan refugees to their homeland, the official sources said on Monday. The repatriation came ahead of the third and final deadline set by the federal government for voluntary return, expiring on August 31, they added. – DNA

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