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Hungarian National Day celebrated in style in the Capital

Detailed News On Page-08

Hockey in Pak to be revived, says Ishaq Dar

Detailed News On Page-06

Palestine envoy thanks Pakistan for full support

Detailed News On Page-03



Middle East peace

Israel must ease aid into Gaza, rules UN court

Netanyahu signals opposition to any Turkish forces in Gaza;

CENTRELINE REPORT

NEW YORK: The International Court of Justice said Wednesday that Israel was obliged to ease the passage of aid into Gaza, stressing it had to provide Palestinians with "basic needs" essential to survival. The wide-ranging ICJ ruling came as aid groups are scrambling to scale up much-needed humanitarian assistance into Gaza, seizing upon a fragile ceasefire agreed earlier this month. ICJ President Yuji Iwasawa said Israel was "under an obligation to agree to and facilitate relief schemes provided by the United Nations and its entities". Israel rejected the ICJ's ruling which said Israel was obliged to ease the passage of aid into Gaza and meet the "basic needs" of the population.

"Israel categorically rejects the ICJ's 'advisory opinion', which was entirely predictable from the outset regarding Unrwa," foreign ministry spokesman, Oren Marmorstein, posted on X. "This is yet another political attempt to impose political measures against Israel under the guise of 'International Law'." Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Min-

Pak condemns Israel's violations of the Gaza Peace Agreement

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the renewed attacks by the Israeli occupying forces in Gaza, resulting in the loss of numerous civilian lives.

Such actions run contrary to the spirit of the peace agreement signed in Sharm El-Sheikh in the presence of leadership from Muslim and the Arab world, US, Europe, and the UN.

Pakistan urges the international community, to take ur-

ister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted on Wednesday at his opposition to any role for Turkish security forces in the Gaza Strip as part of a mission to monitor a US-backed ceasefire with the Palestinian resistance group Hamas. Speaking in Jerusalem alongside visiting US Vice President JD Vance, Netanyahu said they had discussed

gent and effective measures to end these violations and to ensure full implementation of the ceasefire and protection of Palestinian civilians.

Reaffirming its unwavering support for the Palestinian people, Pakistan calls for an immediate end to Israeli hostilities and reiterates its principled position for the establishment of an independent, sovereign, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, based on pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

the "day-after" for Gaza, including who could provide security in the territory shattered by two years of war. Vance, who said on Tuesday US President Donald Trump's ceasefire plan was going better than expected, reiterated his optimism.

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Public rally in Karachi in Nov

PTI to start nation-wide public engagement drive

Reiterating Imran's message to the nation, Raja said: "Patron in Chief Imran Khan has urged the people to keep faith in Allah Almighty; victory always belongs to truth

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The PTI announced on Wednesday that a "massive public rally" would be held in Karachi during the month of November to kick off a nationwide public engagement campaign. A press release issued to-day said the decision was taken during PTI Secretary General Barrister Salman Akram Raja's visit to Karachi. During his visit, he met party leaders, including PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh, PTI Parliamentary Leader Shabbir Qureshi and Jamal Siddiqui. Raja held detailed discussions on the prevailing political situation, strategy for party founder Imran Khan's release and organisational matters. Addressing the media after the meetings, Raja announced that a "massive public rally will be held in Karachi" in November, followed by similar gatherings in Hyderabad and other major cities as part of a nationwide public engagement campaign.

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ATC again issues warrant for Aleema

Judge orders forfeiture of Aleema's surety bonds worth Rs100,000

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi on Wednesday once again issued non-bailable arrest warrant for Aleema Khan in connection with cases related to the PTI's protest on November 26 last year. ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah, while presiding over the hearing, issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Aleema for the fourth time after she failed to appear before the court despite repeated summons.

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Nothing is secret in Doha ceasefire truce

FROM SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Ministry of Defense of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in a statement said that the ceasefire agreement signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan in Doha contains nothing beyond what has already been disclosed by Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, defense minister.

Reports from Ksbul reveal that following the signing of the agreement, Mujahid discussed its details during an online briefing with Afghan journalists. According to the Ministry's statement, the key elements of the agreement include: a complete ceasefire, mutual respect, no attacks on each other's military or civilian infrastructure, resolving issues through dialogue, and refraining from supporting assaults against one another. Previously, Pakistani Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif had said that the details of the agreement were "classified."

Centre gives bullet proof vehicles to Balochistan

Naqvi accepts CM Bugti's request after KP govt refuses bulletproof vehicles as "substandard and outdated"

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has approved the immediate dispatch of bulletproof vehicles, refused by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, to Balochistan for strengthening counter-terrorism operations in the province governed by the Pakistan People's Party. Naqvi announced on his X account in response to a request from Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti. The Balochistan chief minister had requested the interior minister to transfer those bulletproof vehicles to Balochistan if the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is not willing to acquire them. "Like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan is also affected by terrorism. An appeal to the Interior Minister that if the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is refusing to

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Secretary Ambreen Jan paid a farewell call on the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar is also present on the occasion. – DNA

Justice Mandokhel says

Courts can't be barred from hearing cases even if powers curtailed

During s hearing, former chief justice Jawwad S Khawaja's lawyer Khawaja Ahmed presented his arguments and contended that the 26th Amendment does not prohibit the formation of a full court

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Amid the ongoing debate in the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench over the 26th Amendment, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhil on Wednesday said that the apex court and high courts cannot be barred from hearing cases even if their powers are curtailed. "If the powers of the entire Supreme Court are taken away by an amendment, who will hear the case? [...] the same court would hear the case, right? Justice Mandokhil remarked.

The judge's remarks came during a hearing on pleas against the 26th Amendment being heard by an eight-member bench led by Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan. The bench also includes Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan. Around three dozen petitioners, including the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sunni Ittehad Coun-

cil (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 s hearing, former chief justice Jawwad S Khawaja's lawyer Khawaja Ahmed presented his arguments and contended that the 26th Amendment does not prohibit the formation of a full court.

In his remarks, Justice Amin-Ud-Din noted that most senior lawyers, during the hearing, said to put the 26th Amendment aside altogether in their arguments. Noting that, like judges, lawyers also disagree with each other, counsel Khawaja Ahmed said that he did not agree that a full court needs to comprise all 24 judges. "[I] have two questions: whether there should be a full court and if yes, then which one?" questioned Justice Malik.

Continued on Page 06

PNS YARMOOK seizes narcotics worth \$ 972 mn

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, lauded the crew of PNS YARMOOK for their professionalism, vigilance, and dedication

DNA

RAWALPINDI: In a significant achievement, Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) YARMOOK, operating under the Saudi-led Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), successfully executed a major counter-narcotics operation in the North Arabian Sea, resulting in the seizure of narcotics valued at approximately USD 972 million. This landmark operation underscores Pakistan Navy's unwavering commitment to

regional maritime security, global peace, and the international community's ongoing fight against illicit trafficking at sea. The interception and seizure represent one of the largest successful anti-narcotics operations conducted under the CMF framework in recent months.

Operating as part of the multinational CTF-150, which focuses on ensuring maritime stability and deterring terrorism, piracy, and illegal activities across the high seas, the success of PNS YARMOOK reaffirms Pakistan's role as a responsible maritime partner. It highlights the Navy's operational excellence, professional competence, and its proactive contribution to peace and security in the wider Indian Ocean Region. Upon the successful completion of the operation, Chief of the Naval Staff,

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Punjab local body elections again in shambles

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), which had earlier announced the delimitation of constituencies to ensure that the elections could be held by December this year, has now abruptly withdrawn its decision. The Commission has asked the Punjab government to first carry out the required legislation before proceeding with the polls a move that clearly signals another indefinite delay. This sudden reversal by the ECP has pushed the entire process back to square one. It appears, quite evidently, that the Punjab government is not interested in holding the LG elections any time soon. The reluctance is not administrative or procedural it is political. The provincial government, like many before it, seems unwilling to share power with the people at the grassroots level. This attitude is not new; it has become a hallmark of successive governments across Pakistan, irrespective of their political color. Every ruling elite pays lip service to the ideals of democracy and decentralization, but when it comes to actual empowerment of the people, they pull back. Local governments, by design, are the foundation

of democracy. They ensure that development decisions, governance issues, and public services are managed closer to the people. They help identify local problems, prioritize them, and address them efficiently. Unfortunately, Pakistan's political elite has always viewed local governments as a threat to their centralized power. This mindset has prevented the country from evolving into a true democracy where power is distributed equitably.

It is not only Punjab that suffers from this malaise. The situation across the country is equally discouraging. In Islamabad, there is no functioning local government. Despite elections being held in the past, the elected representatives were never granted real authority or resources. In Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, too, local governments have often been rendered powerless through bureaucratic controls, budgetary restrictions, and legislative loopholes. In Balochistan, LG elections were held after long delays, but the councils remain weak and ineffective. Every time there is a schedule for local elections, something happens to derail it. Either courts intervene, legislation remains incomplete, or administrative excuses are cited to push the matter aside. These repeated disruptions raise serious questions: Who are the forces that do not want the people of this country to prosper? Who benefits from keeping citizens poor, illiterate, and powerless? Who gains from the denial of local governance and from keeping development decisions confined to the elite corridors of power?

The answer is both simple and disturbing it is the elite class that has kept Pakistan perpetually unstable and dependent. This class comprising a mix of politicians, bureaucrats, landed aristocracy, and powerful interest groups thrives on centralized control. They understand that once peo-

ple at the grassroots level are empowered, their monopoly on politics will be broken. Local leaders, closer to the people and more accountable, would rise and challenge the traditional power structure. Vote buying, manipulation, and dynastic politics would become increasingly difficult. The Punjab government's hesitation to hold LG polls exposes this deliberate resistance. Despite tall claims of democracy and service delivery, the ruling elite remains unwilling to devolve power. The irony is that Pakistan's Constitution, under Article 140-A, mandates the establishment of local governments and the devolution of political, administrative, and financial powers to them. Yet, successive governments have treated this constitutional obligation as optional. The ECP, too, often bows to political pressure instead of asserting its autonomy and ensuring timely elections. The current development, where the ECP has withdrawn its own decision on delimitation, reinforces the perception that even independent institutions hesitate to confront political elites. If democracy means representation and accountability, then the absence of local governments makes the entire system hollow. National and provincial assemblies cannot effectively address community-level problems. Even in Islamabad, the capital city that should ideally set an example of governance, the local government structure is paralyzed. The courts have intervened several times, election schedules have been announced and withdrawn, and the elected representatives have often been sent home without being allowed to serve. The citizens of Islamabad, despite living in the heart of the federation, have no say in how their neighborhoods are managed. The situation in Punjab mirrors this dysfunction. After

multiple delays and promises, the hope that elections would finally take place in December has now faded. The ECP's decision to step back and the government's lack of urgency indicates that the issue will once again be shelved indefinitely. This cycle of announcement, delay, and cancellation has eroded public trust in both the electoral process and democratic institutions. The absence of local governance has broader consequences. It deepens inequality, weakens service delivery, and fuels frustration among citizens. It also strengthens the perception that democracy in Pakistan serves only the powerful, not the people. Real progress whether in education, health, sanitation, or economic opportunity depends on effective local governance. When people are excluded from decision-making, corruption flourishes, and development funds are misused. For how long will this continue? For how long will political leaders talk about democracy while denying its essence? For how long will the people be kept poor, uneducated, and dependent? Unless these questions are answered, Pakistan's democratic journey will remain incomplete. The elite class must realize that sustainable progress requires empowering citizens, not controlling them. True democracy begins from the bottom up from the neighborhoods, towns, and villages where real lives unfold. Empowered local governments can become engines of change, development, and accountability. But that will happen only when those in power allow it to happen. Until then, democracy in Pakistan will remain confined to speeches, slogans, and ceremonies. If Pakistan truly wishes to prosper, it must break free from this cycle of centralized control and deliberate disempowerment. The revival of genuine, functional, and empowered local governments is not merely a political necessity; it is a moral and constitutional obligation.

Briefs

Poland DPM Sikorski due today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Poland Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski will arrive in Pakistan tomorrow (Thursday) on a two-day official visit from October 23 to 24, during which both countries will discuss the full spectrum of bilateral relations. In a statement, the Foreign Office said that Sikorski will be paying a visit at the invitation of DPM Senator Ishaq Dar, which would be his second visit to Pakistan. His previous visit took place in 2011. During the visit, DPM Dar will hold a one-on-one meeting as well as delegation-level talks with his Polish counterpart. The two sides are expected to discuss the full spectrum of bilateral relations, and the talks will be followed by a joint press stakeout. The Polish high-up's visit "marks a significant milestone in Pakistan-Poland relations.

Security forces 'crush terrorists

NEWS DESK

QUETTA: The Pakistan Armed Forces have killed six Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists in the Dalbandin area of district Chagai in Balochistan, security sources said. Security forces launched a timely and precise operation after tracking the formation hiding in the mountains through aerial reconnaissance, they added. The operation completely dismantled the formation, reducing threats to forces and civilians, security sources said. In a separate operation in Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan forces eliminated hideouts and tunnels of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) alias Fitna al-Khawarj. A terrorist was killed in an intense fire exchange when security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation at a cave in Shahi Tangi forest, security sources said.

Oncologist sounds alarm on 'Breast Cancer Surge'

ISLAMABAD: Oncologist, Wednesday, during the ongoing October awareness campaign, underscored the necessity of prompt screening and timely diagnosis, revealing that 27 out of every 100 women are afflicted with breast cancer and approximately one lakh new cases emerge annually, emphasizing that early identification is crucial for successful intervention and enhanced survival prospects. While speaking with a local news channel, Oncologist Dr Alia Shama stressed the critical importance of early screening and diagnosis in combating breast cancer, adding, alarming statistics showing that 27 out of every 100 women are affected by the disease. —APP

Support for women lawyers' conference extended

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Ume Laila Azhar, reaffirmed the Commission's strong support for women lawyers advocating equality and justice across Pakistan during the 5th Annual Women Lawyers Conference. The event was organized under the EU-funded Deliver Justice Project, implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and partner organizations. It aimed to highlight the pivotal role of women in the legal profession and to strengthen their contributions toward ensuring equitable access to justice. Addressing the participants, Chairperson Ume Laila Azhar emphasized that empowering women in the legal field is essential to achieving a fair and inclusive justice system. She reiterated NCSW's commitment to fostering a supportive environment that enables women lawyers to lead change and contribute meaningfully to justice reforms in Pakistan. —APP

Farah Naz urges for environment protection

ISLAMABAD: Farah Naz Akbar, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, called every tree planted today, a promise for a healthier future, urging youth to take an active role in environmental protection. She expressed these views during the visit at Islamabad Model College for Boys, I-8/3, where she planted a tree as part of the ongoing Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign under the weekly theme "Aik Beta, Aik Shajar," said a press release on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Farah Naz highlighted that the theme reflected the vision of the Honorable Prime Minister, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, for a greener, cleaner and more sustainable Pakistan. —APP

Construction sector plays vital role in national development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mahmood, has said that the real estate and construction sectors play a vital role in the stability and progress of the national economy. These sectors not only generate thousands of employment opportunities but also contribute significantly to investment, business activities, and government revenues. He added that if the government extends more facilitation and policy support to these sectors, they can serve as a strong engine for economic growth. He expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of a private construction project in Khaira Gali. The ceremony was attended by ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Chaudhry Muhammad Irfan, President of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajirana Ajmal Baloch, project co-owners and former ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Secretary of Anjuman-e-Tajirana Aabpara Market Akhtar Abbasi, Secretary General of UBG and ICCI Council Member Zafar Bakhtawari, ICCI Council Member Mian Shaikat Masood, and several other prominent members of the business community. Sardar Tahir Mahmood said that the project initiated by Ahsan Bakhtawari and Akhtar Abbasi is not only a milestone in the business sector but also a valuable addition to the scenic region of Galiyat. He emphasized that if real estate ventures are pursued with honesty and transparency, they can become an outstanding example of social service. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that this project is being developed to stand apart from other residential projects, offering residents a world-class living experience. He shared that after successfully organizing a tourism summit in Skardu, he had planned to initiate a project there, but on the advice of Akhtar Abbasi, they decided to develop it in Murree or Galiyat, which proved to be an excellent choice. He added that the project aims to provide visiting families and tourists with a complete opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty and pleasant climate of the area. Each apartment, he noted, will feature a private terrace. Bakhtawari further said that private



construction projects contribute significantly to the beautification of cities, improvement of urban facilities, and promotion of public welfare. He expressed confidence that this project, owing to its construction quality, prime location, and modern lifestyle, would become a hallmark of the region. Ajmal Baloch remarked that this project reflects not just a business venture but also a spirit of service, adding beauty to an already beautiful region. Akhtar Abbasi stated that their project reached this level of progress in just six months, showcasing their determination, teamwork, and vision. The target, he said, is to complete the project within two years, aiming to provide a modern and international-standard lifestyle. He also offered the main hall of the project to ICCI and all trade organizations for holding meetings to strengthen mutual relations among the business community. Hasnain Abbasi, son

of Akhtar Abbasi, gave a detailed presentation on the project, saying: In just six months, I have learned from Ahsan Bakhtawari what others might not learn in twenty years. His mentorship has taught me the importance of professional discipline and construction quality. The ceremony was also attended by ICCI Executive Members Mohsin Khalid, Roohail Anwar Butt, Zulqarnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry, Nasir Chaudhry, Shumaila Siddiqui, Fatima Azeem, President of Talagang Chamber Malik Shabir Awan, and prominent trader leaders including Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Waheed Cheema, Yousuf Rajput, Zahid Rafiq, Yasir Jameel Abbasi, Ahmed Khan, Tahir Abbasi, Naeem Akhtar Awan, Zahir Abbasi, Imtiaz Abbasi, Naveed Malik, Najeeb Malik, Shahid Abbasi, Raja Safer, Sajjad Sarwar, Saif ur Rehman, Khalid Chaudhry, Faizan Shehzad, and several others.

Tank admin holds open court to address citizens' problems

TANK: The district administration has held an open court (Kuli Kacheri) to address public complaints and issues at their doorsteps under the provincial government's public agenda. According to administration, the open court was held at the deputy commissioner's office, which was attended by a large number of departmental officers, public representatives, and citizens. During the open court, citizens highlighted various issues pertaining to electricity, gas, education, health, sanitation, and other public services. The Deputy Commissioner Tanvir Khan addressed the forum and directed the concerned officers to utilize all available resources to resolve genuine public issues immediately, ensuring maximum relief for the citizens. He said that the purpose of holding open courts is to directly engage with the public and ensure prompt resolution of their problems. He added that the district administration, in line with the provincial government's public agenda, is committed to providing services to citizens at their doorstep. He further said that under the Open Door Policy, public grievances were also being heard during office hours, and the office doors remain open for citizens at all times to ensure continuous public relief. —APP

Crackdown against drug dealers begins

HYDERABAD: Shaheed Benazirabad Police launched massive crackdown on drug dealers and wanted criminals and has claimed the arrested of 10 offenders. The initiative was taken on the directives of SSP Shaheed Benazirabad, Shabir Ahmed Sethar. The police teams from various police stations across the district conducted effective operations, resulting in the arrest of 10 accused individuals involved in narcotics and criminal activities. Sakrand Police Station carried out two successful operations. In the first operation, Ilyas s/o Muhammad Bakhs Khaskheli was arrested and two packets of Z-21 Gutka were recovered from his possession. A case (FIR No. 283/2025) was registered

under Sections 4/8. In the second, Naeem s/o Umar Lohar was arrested with two packets of Z-21 Gutka and a case (FIR No. 281/2025) was registered under Sections 4/8. The Jam Datar Police Station arrested Zahid Hussain s/o Ghulam Farooq Shar, wanted in case FIR No. 74/2024 under Sections 496-A, 455, and 376 PPC. The Taluka Police Station apprehended Ali Shan Rind and recovered 1,100 grams of charas from his possession. A case (FIR No. 98/2025) was registered under Section 9(1)3C of the CNSA. Daur Police Station, during patrol, arrested drug dealer Shahbaz Ali Dahri with charas. A case (FIR No. 114/2025) was registered under Section 9(1)3C CNSA. The

60-Mile Police Station arrested Waqar alias Mithal alias Toto Chhutto, wanted in FIR No. 56/2025 under Section 392 PPC. Police recovered a snatched CD-70 motorcycle and a 30-bore pistol from him. A separate case (FIR No. 57/2025) was registered under Section 24(A) SAA. Balu Ja Quba Police Station conducted two successful operations. In the first operation, Pappu s/o Gulab Sojhi was arrested with 72 points of whisky and a CNG rickshaw. A case (FIR No. 57/2025) was registered under Sections 3/4 PEHO. In the second, Nihal Chandio was arrested with 1,330 grams of charas, and a case (FIR No. 56/2025) was registered under Section 9(1)3C CNSA. —APP

KIU launches book on CPEC-BRI Nexus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Karakoram International University (KIU) has launched a scholarly book titled "CPEC and BRI Nexus: Perspectives on Economy, Politics, Culture and Environment", offering a comprehensive look into the multidimensional impact of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Compiled by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Attullah Shah, Dr. Faqir Muhammad, Director of the China Study Center (CSC), and Khalid Mahmood Alam, Assistant Professor at the same center, the book was unveiled at a grand ceremony held recently at the university, reports Gwadar Pro. —APP

Pakistan's sesame seed exports increases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's sesame seed exports to China crossed \$68.56 million in the first three quarters of 2025, China Economic Net reported on Wednesday quoting the latest data from the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC). During the same period last year, Pakistan's sesame exports totaled \$36.59 million, representing a remarkable year-on-year increase of over 87%. From January to September 2025, Pakistan exported 55.61 million kilograms of sesame seeds to China at an average price of \$1.23 per kilogram. In the same period last year, the figure was 23.95 million kilograms with an average price of \$1.52 per kilogram. Globally, China's sesame seed imports have continued to grow steadily amid rising demand for edible oils and traditional food processing.

GACC data further showed that Niger remained China's leading sesame supplier with exports worth \$543.02 million, followed by Togo (\$189.10 million) and Tanzania (\$161.68 million) in the first nine months of 2025. Other key suppliers included Ethiopia (\$144.03 million), Mozambique (\$121.18 million), and Myanmar (\$88.56 million). Pakistani exporters believe that the country's strong export performance highlights its improving agricultural production and growing competitiveness in the Chinese market. They added that, in recent years, Chinese enterprises have strengthened cooperation with Pakistani traders to enhance value addition and post-harvest processing, significantly improving export quality and consistency. "In September 2024, we successfully organized the 'Sesame Trade and Investment Oppor-

tunities in China' event. A 23-member Pakistani delegation secured deals for 15,000 metric tons and signed a \$28 million MoU with Daming government-backed enterprises," said Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China. He added that 177 Pakistani sesame companies are now registered in China. Experts noted that sesame seeds are increasingly being used in China's food, oil, and health product industries, driving import demand. Pakistan's sesame seed quality, favorable climatic conditions, and expanding export capacity offer a promising outlook for further trade growth between the two countries. Analysts said that recent floods in Pakistan affected exports, but they expect the country's sesame seed shipments to continue their upward trajectory in the coming years.

Federal Ombudsman extends relief to citizens

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Deputy Registrar of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat Regional Office Dera Ismail Khan, Shafqat Ali, visited district Bhakkar to address citizens' complaints against various federal organizations at their doorsteps. He undertook the visit on the special directives of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi and attended the OCR Program held at the Provincial Ombudsman Office Bhakkar. He heard public complaints against WAPDA FESCO Bhakkar, Sui Gas, State Life Insurance Company, NADRA, Benazir Income Support Programme, and other departments. The Deputy Registrar issued orders on the spot, providing immediate relief to several citizens. The participants lauded the initiative of the Federal Ombudsman, saying that it had not only facilitated citizens but also paved the way for prompt redressal of their grievances. Speaking to the media, Shafqat Ali said that, as per the directions of the Federal Ombudsman, open courts (Khuli Kacheris) and departmental inspections were being held in remote areas to ensure access to justice and services at people's doorsteps. He said that the timely resolution of citizens' complaints was the top priority of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat, and the purpose of today's visit was to enable direct interaction between citizens and government officers for transparent and speedy problem-solving. The Deputy Registrar further instructed the officials of all concerned departments that negligence or delay in addressing public grievances would not be tolerated. People appreciated the Federal Ombudsman's initiative, terming it a positive step toward promoting public relief and ensuring swift justice.

Saudi Arabia launches dates distribution project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) officially launched the Dates Distribution Project Pakistan 2025 at a ceremony held in Islamabad. The project was formally inaugurated by His Excellency Nawaf Saeed Bin Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, in the presence of the Chief Guest His Excellency Senator Captain Shaheen Khalid Butt, Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, along with representatives from government institutions, international organizations, and humanitarian partners. Under this initiative, KSrelief will distribute premium-quality Saudi dates across all provinces and regions of Pakistan including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir in close collaboration with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal.

The project aims to support thousands of vulnerable families, especially those affected by floods and economic hardships, by helping meet their basic nutritional needs. Speaking at the launch event,



the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan highlighted that this initiative embodies the deep-rooted friendship, brotherhood, and humanitarian partnership between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The Dates Distribution Project 2025 forms part of KSrelief's

broader humanitarian efforts across Pakistan. The Centre continues to implement multiple programs in the areas of food security, health, education, water and sanitation, and livelihood support—reaffirming the Kingdom's commitment to serving humanity and promoting

sustainable development. In his closing remarks, Senator Captain Shaheen Khalid Butt, Managing Director of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and KSrelief for their continued support to the people of Pakistan.

Through the eyes of Red Maple Learners

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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



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122

& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

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RGH.....9290301-7

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Pakistan’s kinetic action has brought Taliban regime to dialogue table

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The developments between Pakistan and Afghanistan this time are occurring in different context and tone, unlike in the past, Taliban repeatedly broke pledges and commitments to peace. The new normal set by Pakistan means retaliation targeting the source, stated by Ambassador Jauhar Saleem during an event titled, “Decoding India’s Renewed Engagement with Afghanistan under Taliban: Implications for Pakistan’s Security”, organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, attended by academicians, researchers, journalists, and students. The high-level Taliban regime’s delegation led by the foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi hosted by New Delhi exposed Indian manifestation of expanding its influence in Afghanistan to destabilize Pakistan. Pakistan cautious of the emerging situation, does not intend on influencing Taliban regime but to hostile alignments and overcome security concerns Pakistan would act firmly. India’s strategy to create a two-front situation against Pakistan is not new. It has occurred during both the Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani regimes. The strategic space lost with Taliban in power, limited India’s ability to act against Pakistan. New Delhi having multiple consulates in Afghanistan were involved in promoting terrorism, spying and surveillance in Pakistan. The popular humanitarian projects of India were also carried out for its own benefits. General Naeem Khalid Lodhi emphasized on Pakistan welcoming Doha agreement though still unfolding. The miscalculated political and military attempt of Afghanistan in attacking Pakistani forces having no conventional match, adversely backfired. However, Pakistan must introspect on its own weaknesses for leaving a vacuum, conveniently filled by India. Gen. Lodhi suggested on reviewing and improving both the interior and foreign policies. Ambassador Zamir Akram stressed on analyzing the geopolitical situation in a broader context, witnessing fourth round of the great game. The



historically established Indo-Afghan objectives of collectively competing against Pakistan for pressurizing and gaining leverage remain unchanged. With India’s support, Afghans have been involved in using the border dispute to generate separatist movements within Pakistan. A stable and friendly Afghanistan, despite two-front compunction, is desirable by Pakistan to pursue planned economic connectivity projects with Central Asian states. Ambassador Abrar Hussain pondered upon the power and capacity the Taliban have by sheltering about 20 terrorist groups, including TTP, ISIS, threatening Pakistan. Pakistan-Afghanistan talks aimed to dismantle these terrorist groups, but were denied by the Taliban later. A major shift in the Taliban’s attitude was observed when they called the problem not theirs but Pakistan’s. India’s assistance was reportedly involved in the horrific Jaffer express attack, planned from Kabul. Indian intelligence assets remained in Afghanistan even after the Taliban takeover, using them against both Pakistan and China to weaken CPEC projects. Dr. Qamar Cheema suggested not to glamorize the Taliban as they haven’t contributed to the Islamic system, and both Pakistan and the Taliban have

different concepts of the Islamic state. The Indian ambassador in New York listed every terror group except for the TTP and its presence in Afghanistan. This selective denial must be challenged by Pakistan. India’s neighborhood policy has failed and become stagnant. Therefore, it seeks new partners in Afghanistan and wants to be relevant in the region. Dr. Cheema highlighted that since India will be exposed miserably internationally in high-cost wars so it prefers low-cost wars such as the use of proxy or hybrid conflicts against Pakistan. Hence, a dire need to understand the new Afghanistan is required.

Only 47% of Pakistanis have access to safe drinking water

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) organized a seminar titled “The Thirst for Safety: Water Quality and Public Health in Pakistan” at the A.R. Kemal Hall, Islamabad. The event brought together experts, researchers, and students to deliberate on Pakistan’s growing water-quality crisis and its alarming implications for public health and sustainable development. The keynote speaker, Dr. Hifza Rasheed, Director General (Water Quality) at the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), presented detailed data and analysis on the state of Pakistan’s water resources, while Dr. Shujaat Farooq, Dean (Research) at PIDE, moderated the discussion. Dr. Shujaat Farooq opened the session by noting that access to safe and clean water is both a basic human right and a cornerstone of national productivity. Despite Pakistan’s extensive natural endowments, he said, the country faces significant challenges including contamination, over-extraction, and institutional weaknesses that make water insecurity one of the nation’s gravest public-health challenges. Citing UNICEF data, he emphasized that nearly 70 percent of households use contaminated water, and 30 to 40 percent of diseases—such as diarrhea, hepatitis, and typhoid—stem directly from unsafe water consumption. “The challenge,” he stated, “is not just scarcity—it is coordination and management challenges that affect both human and economic development.” Dr. Hifza Rasheed’s revealed a comprehensive national overview Pakistan’s per-capita freshwater availability has plummeted from 5,260 m in 1951 to below 1,000 m in 2024, officially placing the country in the “water-scarce” category. Agriculture consumes about 93 percent of available freshwater, yet irrigation efficiency remains only around 40 percent due to seepage and outdated systems. She added that over 1.3 million tubewells are operating in Punjab alone, with groundwater extraction now averaging 50 million acre-feet annually, causing severe depletion—depths have reached 600 to 1,200 feet in parts of Baluchistan and Islamabad. PCRWR monitoring shows that only 47 percent of Pakistan’s population currently has access to safe drinking water, a modest rise from 39 percent in 2022, but still far from the SDG 6.1 goal of universal access by 2030. She warned that unsafe water causes an estimated 53,000 child deaths every year and contributes to Pakistan’s high rates of stunting—nearly 44 percent of children nationwide. Industrial waste, pesticides, and untreated sewage are polluting surface and groundwater, with arsenic levels dangerously high across southern Punjab and Sindh. Water quality in the Eastern Rivers (Ravi and Sutlej) has sharply deteriorated due to transboundary pollution and unchecked industrial discharges. Only 38 percent of domestic wastewater in Pakistan is effectively treated.

President, PM commend Pak Navy

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday lauded the officers and personnel of the Pakistan Navy for successfully foiling a major narcotics smuggling bid worth billions of rupees. The operation was carried out by PNS Yarmook under the Saudi-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)’ Combined Task Force (CTF-150), in the Arabian Sea. In separate statements, both leaders praised the Navy’s professional excellence and its growing international recognition. President Zardari described the operation as a matter of national pride and a shining example of the Pakistan Navy’s professional capabilities. He emphasized that Yarmook’s success reflected the Navy’s unwavering commitment to regional peace and stability. “This major anti-narcotics action highlights Pakistan’s critical role in promoting global peace and maritime security,” the president noted, terming it a fine example of mutual Pak-Saudi cooperation. He also extended special appreciation to Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf and the crew of Yarmook for their exemplary performance. The prime minister said the officers and personnel of Pakistan Navy were engaged round the clock in safeguarding the country’s maritime boundaries. “The entire nation including myself takes pride in officers and sailors of Pakistan Navy,” he added.—DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate to the UAE, Shafqat Ali Khan, paid a farewell call on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. The DPM/FM commended Amb. Khan’s contributions as Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly in effectively articulating Pakistan’s foreign policy narrative.—DNA

Palestinian ambassador thanks Pak for unwavering support

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan, Dr Zuhair Zaid, on Wednesday expressed heartfelt gratitude to the government and the people of Pakistan for their unwavering support for the Palestinian cause



on all fronts. He made these remarks during an event organized in connection with United Nations Day, to be observed on October 24. The event was held at Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), where he participated as a guest of honour. Other distinguished guests also attended the event, including former Pakistani ambassadors such as Ibrar Hussain. Zuhair Zaid said that Pakistan always stood against injustice, illegal occupation and human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people.



MILITARY LANDS & CANTONMENTS DEPT
RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT BOARD

The Mall, Rawalpindi Cantt

Tel: 051-9274401-04 Fax No.: 051-9274407

TENDER NOTICE
THROUGH E-PADS

Rawalpindi Cantonment Board being procuring entity invites sealed bids on the basis of MES Schedule of Rates, 2021 (amended upto date) on percentage above/below or at par basis for schedule items and market item rate basis for non-schedule items as per “Single Stage One Envelope Procedure” under Rule 36(a) of PPRA Rules 2004 (as amended upto date), from the contractors / firms having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in Relevant Category for the current fiscal year and are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue for the following Annual Maintenance & Repair Works to be executed during Financial Year 2025-26:-

Tender No.	Name of Work	Est Cost Rs. (M)	Security Deposit (Rs.) (M)	Project Time limit
F-251030509	Repair / maintenance works of CANTT FUND BUILDINGS including original works up to estimated cost of Rs. 2.0 M each.	45.00	9.00	As per work order
F-251030585	Repair / maintenance of CANTT FUND ROADS/ STREETS in Cantt area including original works up to estimated cost of Rs. 2.0 M each (Separate rates for Plant Carpet (JMF), Manual Carpet) and PCC)	55.00	1.100	As per work order
F-251030596	Repair / maintenance of DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE WORKS in Cantt area including original works up to estimated cost of Rs. 2.0 M each.	50.00	1.000	As per work order
F-251030603	Repair/maintenance of WATER SUPPLY LINES / WORKS in Cantt area including original works up to estimated cost of Rs. 2.0 M each (Separate rates for G.I, PE and UPVC pipes).	40.00	8.000	As per work order
F-251030617	MISC. PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT WORKS (i.e. Parks, streetlights, Footpaths, Rubbish Bins etc.) in Cantt area including original works up to estimated cost of Rs. 2.0 M each	85.00	1.700	As per work order

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. Tender Documents/specification of above work available on PPRA EPADS at www.ppra.org.pk, any further information can be obtained on working day during office hours from the office of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board at The Mall Road Saddar Rawalpindi before closing date/time of tender /bid. Tender / bidding documents can also be downloaded from RCB website <https://www.rcb.gov.pk/>

2. The only online bids through EPADS will be accepted. No manual bid(s) will be accepted / entertained.

3. Tenders/ bids can be submitted online on or before 07/11/2025 at 11:00 hours will be opened on same day at 1400 hours in the presence of contractors / firms or their authorized representative who may wish to be present.

4. The eligible contractors / firms are required to submit their Bids online for works in separately.

5. All pages of Bids shall be signed & stamped by the bidder prior to uploading in pdf format.

6. Incomplete/ delayed Tenders / bids will be considered as Non responsive i.e. name of Firm, Quoted rates in words and in figures, signatures of the contractor and stamp of the firm.

7. All the governments taxes (Federal, Provincial & any other) will be deducted as per prevailing government policy.

8. Any bid received in the contravention of enabling provisions of PPRA Rules, 2004 will be declared non-responsive by the procuring entity. Rawalpindi Cantonment Board being procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any tender / bid on technical / administrative grounds under Rule 33 (l) of the PPRA Rules, 2004 (As amended).

9. Successful bidder shall be bound to execute an agreement with the procuring entity and all terms and conditions including tender notice shall be binding on the bidder.

10. Other terms & conditions pertaining to the works can be seen in the Office of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board at any working day during office hours.

11. Rates should be quoted separately for Plant Carpet, Manual Carpet and PCC for work at Ser No. 2 and rates for G.I, P.E and UPVC pipes should also be quoted separately for work at Ser No. 4.

Cantonment Executive Officer
Rawalpindi Cantt

PID(I)NO.3264/25

Briefs

24 new dengue cases in 24 hours

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration intensified efforts under the dengue control action plan, inspecting more than 44,000 sites and completing fogging at 2,418 locations in the past 24 hours, as 24 new dengue cases were reported across rural and urban areas. The district administration on Wednesday issued a fresh dengue surveillance report highlighting ongoing activities to contain the virus across Islamabad. According to the report, field teams completed inspections at 44,843 sites in the past day as part of the anti-dengue campaign. During inspections, dengue larvae were detected at 515 locations, while samples from three sites tested negative. To prevent the spread of the virus, administration teams carried out spraying at 934 houses in high-risk zones and fogging operations at 2,418 points across the city. The report stated that 24 new dengue cases were confirmed in the last 24 hours. Of these, 20 cases were reported from rural areas, while four cases emerged from urban localities. The total number of dengue patients receiving treatment in city hospitals has now reached 64.—APP

IRSA releases 94,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 94,600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 67,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1549.68 feet which was 147.68 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 35,800 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1240.80 feet, which was 190.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 7,400 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 44,200, 46,100, 42,500, and 10,000 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 8,600 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Chairman NTDC calls on SAPM Haroon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) on Wednesday called on the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production (SAPM) Haroon Akhtar Khan and briefed him on modern energy-efficient models designed for both industrial and domestic use. During the meeting, the NTDC Chairman highlighted that the use of insulation in buildings can significantly contribute to energy conservation by maintaining internal temperatures at optimal levels, said a news release. He informed that the Energy Use Building Codes have been introduced for this very purpose, and their implementation has already begun under the directives of the federal government. Haroon emphasized that modern technology and sustainable energy solutions are essential for Pakistan's progress. He noted that energy demand rises sharply during the summer months in both industrial operations and daily life, adding that insulation in buildings is an effective solution to reduce transmission costs and meet the high seasonal demand. "Pakistan's GDP growth is closely linked with energy costs," said SAPM. "To enhance regional competitiveness, adopting sustainable energy practices in industries is the need of the hour." The special assistant directed the Engineering Development Board (EDB) to collaborate with NTDC and submit a progress report on the implementation of energy-efficient models.—APP

Pak-Azerbaijan bridge nations through youth

The Ambassador of Azerbaijan expressed appreciation for the growing partnership, emphasizing that the youth of both nations must learn more about their longstanding friendship and cooperation

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, met with the Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Islamabad, reaffirming both nations' shared commitment to empowering youth through education, innovation, and cultural exchange. The high-level meeting focused on enhancing bilateral relations and advancing the implementation of the landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed earlier this year between the two countries. Chairman

Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan noted that Azerbaijan was the first nation with which the Prime Minister's Youth Programme signed an MoU, a historic step witnessed by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif himself. He stated that this partnership represents a new era of collaboration focused on practical actions and mutual progress. "We are proud of this strategic alliance between the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan," said Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan. "Now, it's time to translate our shared vision into concrete steps that deliver real opportunities for young people

in both countries." The Ambassador of Azerbaijan expressed appreciation for the growing partnership, emphasizing that the youth of both nations must learn more about their longstanding friendship and cooperation. "We are pleased that our ministries are connected under a common purpose of strengthening the bond between our nations through the energy and potential of youth," he remarked. He further highlighted the importance of expanding joint youth programs, educational initiatives, and cultural exchange platforms that foster leadership and innovation among the next generation. "Our collaboration should continue to cre-

ate new avenues for young people to learn, connect, and build the future together," he added. Chairman Mashhood reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to strengthen bilateral ties through shared youth-driven projects. "Both countries stand united in the spirit of brotherhood and friendship," he said. "Together, we will set new benchmarks in youth collaboration and take our partnership to greater heights." He concluded that this cooperation would serve as a model of global youth diplomacy, inspiring other nations to pursue partnerships that prioritize mutual growth, knowledge exchange, and sustainable development.

Pakistan and UNODC join hands to combat Environmental Crimes



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Troels Vester, Country Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Pakistan called on the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik earlier today in Islamabad. Their discussion was focused on

the ever growing nexus between illegal electronic trade, money laundering, and organized illegal logging, posing a significant threat to environmental sustainability and governance. There was deep concern over the rising trend of transnational environmental crimes that not only endanger natural resources but also undermine efforts to promote sustainable de-

velopment. Dr. Musadik Malik insisted on the urgent need to strengthen Pakistan's legal and policy frameworks by making them more stringent, ensuring effective enforcement mechanisms. Mr. Troels Vester, who has previous experience as Country Manager of the Programme Office in Indonesia and Programme Coordinator (Country Manager) in the Country Office

in Myanmar, acknowledged Pakistan's commitment to addressing environmental crimes and reaffirmed UNODC's full support in this area. Both sides agreed to develop a joint project aimed at improving inter-agency coordination and modernizing laws and enforcement mechanisms to curb illegal activities impacting the environment and economy.

Accountability key to national development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal stated on Wednesday that social inclusion and institutional accountability must be integral parts of Pakistan's national development agenda to ensure transparency, active public participation, and sustainable governance. "It is imperative to make social inclusion and accountability of institutional performance part of the national development agenda," he said while addressing the plenary session of the Aawaz-II Voice and Accountability Programme. He said inclusion and accountability were not optional, rather the foundation of a transparent and people-centered governance model, stressing that every citizen and every community had a vital role in Pakistan's progress. The minister said the government was committed to giving the people's voice a central role in the policymaking process. "The Aawaz-II programme has effectively strengthened the representation of marginalized segments, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities," he added. Highlighting the government's comprehensive reform vision, Ahsan Iqbal said that the Uraan Pakistan initiative - anchored in the 5Es Framework - represented a national roadmap for transformation. The framework, he explained, aimed to convert current challenges into opportunities, enabling

Pakistan to emerge as a stronger and more resilient economy. He said that the key pillars of Uraan Pakistan included boosting exports, advancing Digital Pakistan, promoting green energy, ensuring environmental sustainability, and fostering social equity. "The youth remain at the heart of our national reform process," the minister stressed, adding that Young Peace and Development Corps units had been established in 131 campuses across 42 cities to engage young people in constructive development work. Through training programmes for youth fellows, scholars and interns, the minister said the government was ensuring practical exposure to national development processes. Under the Empowered Youth Internship Programme, he said, more than 60,000 paid internships were being provided, while 10,000 special internships had been allocated for the youth of Balochistan. He said the Young Development Fellows Programme was nurturing a new generation of policy professionals, while the Champions of Reforms Network was contributing expert input to national policy formulation. Ahsan Iqbal also disclosed that the Planning Ministry was working to introduce Urdu as an optional language in the Central Superior Services (CSS) examinations to promote linguistic inclusivity.—DNA

Expert stresses 'Stuttering Awareness'

ISLAMABAD: A leading expert Wednesday urged parents, teachers and society at large to recognize the signs of stuttering early and respond with care, stressing that children who stutter should be met with encouragement, not judgment as increased awareness and inclusive environments can help these patients find their voice and grow with confidence. In an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, renowned Speech and Language Pathologist Dr. Raheela Khatoun emphasized the urgent need to raise awareness about stuttering, also known as stammering, especially among children under the age of six. revealed that approximately 5% of children in this age group experience stuttering at some point during their early developmental years. Globally, the condition affects nearly 7 crore (70 million) people, making it a significant communication disorder that deserves greater public understanding and support.—APP

Pak Customs foils misdeclaration of Indian-origin imports

ISLAMABAD: The Collectorate of Customs Appraisal (West) Karachi has successfully detected and thwarted multiple attempts to illegally import Indian-origin goods into Pakistan through misdeclaration of country of origin, in violation of the provisions of the Import Policy Order. The first case came to light when an importer attempted to clear a consignment of textile machinery by falsely declaring its origin as China, whereas the goods were found to be of Indian origin. Prompt action by Customs prevented the clearance of the contraband goods involving an amount of Rs 24.22 million, said a news release issued on Wednesday. Following this initial detection, the Collectorate intensified its vigilance at Karachi International Container Terminal (KICT) and off-dock terminals. As a result, three more consignments were intercepted on suspicion of being of Indian origin. The details of these cases are as follows: Textile Machinery (KICT): A second consignment of textile machinery, declared to be shipped from Jebel Ali and of Chinese origin, was examined. It was found that manufacturer's plates and specification labels had been deliberately removed. However, 'Made in India' markings were discovered on electrical components, and the machine's frame bore the name of a well-known Indian brand. The assessed value of the consignment is Rs. 16.60 million. Power Distribution Unit - Schneider Electric: Another consignment also shipped from Jebel Ali and declared as Chinese origin, was found to contain components with tampered labels. A detailed examination revealed a clear 'Made in India' marking on the main panel door of the Power Distribution Unit. The value of this consignment has been assessed at Rs. 3.76 million. Garnet Mesh 80 (LCL Consignment): A Less-than-Container Load (LCL) shipment declared as Turkish origin and shipped from Ambarli, Turkey, was found to contain packing with clear 'Made in India' markings. The value of the goods is assessed at Rs. 0.154 million. The Collectorate has reiterated its commitment to taking strict action against importers involved in misdeclaration and the illegal import of banned goods. Such malpractices not only violate national trade laws but also pose risks to fair trade and national interests. The Customs department will continue to maintain heightened vigilance and enforce the law rigorously to curb any attempts to bypass import regulations.—DNA

Rawalpindi welcomes 45 new Chinese Buses

RAWALPINDI: As many as 45 Chinese electric buses have arrived in the garrison city of Rawalpindi to operate on 10 routes starting this week. These buses are part of a larger fleet of 1,100 electric buses being introduced across Punjab. Each bus is equipped with air-conditioning and free Wi-Fi, along with an automated ticketing system and a flexible design to meet the needs of passengers with disabilities, reports Gwadar Pro. Safety and comfort measures have also been prioritized. Similar projects are being implemented in other parts of Pakistan. The new electric buses will be linked with the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metro Bus Service, offering a comfortable and affordable commuting option for citizens. Punjab Transport Department PRO Mr. Sheraz told Gwadar Pro that around 200 Chinese electric buses are already operating in nine districts of Punjab. These districts include Mianwali (15 buses), Wazirabad (15), Sargodha (33), Sahiwal (16), Dera Ghazi Khan (24), Faisalabad (30), Pakpattan (15), Lahore (40), and Muzaffarabad (17). The remaining buses will soon begin service in other districts of the province, he added. The fare for this service is proposed to be just 20 rupees, as the provincial government aims to keep it affordable for low-income groups. A total of 80 electric buses will operate in Rawalpindi. In the initial phase, 45 have arrived for the city, while 15 have been dispatched to Gujar Khan. The Punjab Mass Transit Authority (PMA) will supervise the buses in Rawalpindi, whereas the Punjab Transport Company will manage those in Gujar Khan. Uzair Shah, General Manager (Operations) at the PMA, said that the authority has completed arrangements for charging stations and the bus depot. "The buses will start operating next month," he said. He added that, under the law, the PMA has the mandate to operate feeder buses for the Metro Bus Service. "All Chinese electric buses in Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Multan will be managed by the PMA, while the Punjab Transport Company will oversee operations in other parts of the province," he noted. Regarding bus stops, he said shelters to protect passengers from rain and sun would be built by the Regional Transport Authority. "Construction will begin as soon as the buses hit the roads," he added.—DNA

Punjab bearing brunt of climate change: Murtaza

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Punjab Chapter, Syed Hassan Murtaza Wednesday said that the ongoing issues of smog and fog are the direct consequences of climate change and Pakistan, particularly Punjab is bearing its brunt. Addressing a press conference here, he emphasized that Pakistan is not seeking charity or aid from anyone but demanding its rightful due. "International industries are earning massive profits, while countries like Pakistan are paying the price for their emissions. Our leadership must make the world realize that Pakistan deserves its fair share for the losses caused by climate change," he said. Hansaan Murtaza said that the PPP never wanted to derail the democratic system, as the party has rendered countless sacrifices for the sake of democracy. He said that during the Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting of PPP, all the members expressed their views openly and the Executive Committee took decisions with consensus. "The PPP continues its democratic struggle and will keep working for the strengthening of democracy in the country," he added. Asked about the recently passed Local Bodies Act, Hussain Murtaza said that the PPP had serious reservations about the legislation, as non-party-based elections are the beginning of pre-poll rigging. He said that if the governor had refused to sign the bill, the PPP would have been accused of opposing the democratic process. "Despite our objections, we respected the process and signed the bill," he added.—APP

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What comes after the Sharm El-Sheikh summit?

EYAD ABU SHAKRA

IT is clear that last week's Sharm El-Sheikh summit has joined the long list of contentious issues that predictably stir controversy, whether within our Middle Eastern region or in the broader regional environment and the international community. Each side interprets developments based on its own considerations. One must remember that there has never been a shared diagnosis and thus no shared cure. Even within the Israeli camp, there are several "Israels" with varying degrees of extremism and hubris. One of them is represented by Benjamin Netanyahu, with his lack of principle, opportunism and constant evasion of genuine political solutions to the conflict. Dealing with this man and what he represents creates both domestic and foreign challenges. The web of interests he has cultivated over a long period, as well as the collapse of the moderate Israeli alternatives and the unlimited, unconditional American support he has received, have all allowed him to maintain control. On the Palestinian side, there is undoubtedly a real problem as well: political paralysis, a crisis of will, organizational shortcomings and declining local credibility. We are in a complicated situation. No leader can make difficult historic gambles without popular legitimacy. Since President Mahmoud Abbas took the helm, we have seen a gradual erosion of the aura that had once allowed a Palestinian leadership to make concessions and take tactical steps, often paying a price in blood. Palestinians are in a complicated situation. No leader can make difficult gambles without popular legitimacy. It is true that Abbas was Yasser Arafat's comrade-in-arms. Even when Arafat was alive, however, Abbas was a "minimalist" pragmatist willing to place great faith in those whom the Palestinians find hardest to trust. If one were to ask, "what did Arafat's militancy get us?" the opposite question could be posed in response: "What results has pragmatism achieved; where did it succeed where Arafat failed?" The point here, of course, is not to score points but to reach a political arrangement that can allow Palestinians to survive and, eventually, move forward. There is also another dimension of this issue: the splits within the Palestinian leadership and the role of foreign actors in feeding and sustaining that division. On the one hand, a large segment of the Palestinian population has come to believe that the role of the US must be

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accepted as a fact of life. This is a logical position, even though certain factions lost all hope in ever seeing an American (or indeed, a Western) posture that is not fully aligned with Israel's interests. Conversely, another substantial segment believes there is no point in conducting the same failed experiment again. Thus, they see no harm in taking a gamble and betting on forces that claim to represent "rejection," "steadfastness," "defiance" and "resistance," pledging both military and logistical support. Indeed, they were willing to make this bet even if it came at the expense of the fragmentation of the Palestinian arena and meant tying their cause to the considerations of those forces. The suffering and humanitarian disaster we have witnessed since Operation Al-Aqsa Flood were the natural result of the excessive confidence both sides placed in foreign actors. And now we come to the Arab dimension. Here too, we must acknowledge that, despite being generally well-intentioned, the Arabs have always failed to develop a coherent strategy. This is not just for the Palestinian cause, but also on intra-Arab relations and addressing the severe regional disequilibrium in a way that reduces the weakness of the Arabs vis-a-vis the "triangle" of Israel, Turkiye and Iran. Once again, we Arabs have convinced ourselves that we have "allies" we can rely on. In reality, the three corners of that regional triangle are central to the grand strategies of the global powers. How do we compare to Israel, which has outgrown its American shell to become a technological and digital partner in building the world of the future? It has become the most influential "insider" in defining US politics, as well as in determining its allies, enemies and values. Israel produces popular culture and is creating the norms, conceptions and history of the future. It is time to recognize that Israel is not just home to an advanced military or an aircraft carrier anchored off our shores. Today, Israel is the most powerful and influential "voter" in American politics. It produces popular culture and is creating the norms, conceptions and history of the future. Turkiye, in turn, has reawakened religious, national and sectarian dynamics that allow for its return to the Eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, it has expanded its presence in its historic "hinterland" in Central Asia, where the major interests of Turkiye, Iran, Russia, China and India intersect with global trade routes, as well as the flow of technology and arms. Once "the sick man of Europe," it now shows no concern for an aging Europe whose nations are being hijacked by racist and fascist forces in broad daylight. As for Iran, it was "present in its absence" in Sharm El-Sheikh. Iran remains a decisive player, whether it is present or absent and whether it is an adversary or an ally. I would thus argue that anyone who dreams of ending Iran's role in the Middle East is gravely mistaken. Clever (sometimes arrogant) players are the ones that can repeatedly reinvent themselves and rekindle others' need for them, and this need will always be there because everyone needs a partner or an enemy. Finally, a word about America. Donald Trump's America, which is awakening, is beginning to startle many Americans. But that is a topic for another day.

The Root of Evil and the Price of Patience

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Pakistan's patience, though vast, is not infinite. Every drop of the blood of our soldiers and civilians demands accountability. For decades, Pakistan hosted over five million Afghan refugees — a gesture unmatched in modern history. It sacrificed socially and economically to keep its neighbour afloat, built hospitals, educated Afghan youth, and supported reconstruction. But generosity cannot become servitude. The time has come for Afghans to return to their homeland. Their "Islamic revolution" is five years old; it is time they rebuild their own country with dignity. Pakistan's land and resources belong to its 250 million citizens...

I HAVE often heard from the elders that if one truly wishes to eradicate evil, one must strike at its root. Diagnosing the cause of a disease or a problem requires patience, wisdom, and time. Sometimes the diagnosis itself takes longer than the cure. But once the root is known, the healing follows swiftly. However, when the diagnosis is wrong, the consequences are often grave and enduring. Such has been the case with the growing tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan — a crisis whose roots were known to Pakistan from the very beginning, yet whose cure demanded both endurance and resolve. Pakistan's approach has always been cautious, deliberate, and grounded in reality. It understood early on that the hand behind Afghanistan's hostility was not merely ideological but strategic — and that India's invisible role had inflamed the western frontier. That mischief, long allowed to grow in the shadows, was finally confronted and treated decisively this May. Yet, habits of deceit and manipulation, once formed, take time to unlearn; hence, Pakistan had no choice but to apply the "crooked or curved finger" approach — a firm but necessary measure to correct a neighbour who has lost its sense of balance. The recent border flare-up was neither impulsive nor unjustified. It was the direct consequence of years of cross-border terrorism originating from Afghan soil. The core issue remains Afghanistan's refusal to dismantle terrorist networks that continue to wage war against Pakistan. From the TTP to the BLA, these groups act without restraint, their existence and activities verified by numerous international reports, including those from the United Nations. Pakistan has long exercised patience. It has relied on dialogue, diplomacy, and brotherly appeals to encourage Kabul to fulfil its promises. In 2022, Pakistan's revered ulema, led by Mufti Taqi Usmani, visited Kabul to convince both the Taliban and the TTP to halt their violence. A tribal jirga followed soon after, and official delegations led by senior ministers continued to travel to Afghanistan throughout 2023 and 2024, each with a message of peace and cooperation. Yet the response from Kabul

remained one of indifference, even defiance. Despite Pakistan's goodwill — from facilitating trade and easing visa regimes to lobbying for the unfreezing of Afghanistan's assets — the interim government in Kabul allowed its territory to become a sanctuary for those who kill Pakistanis. The irony is painful. When the Taliban took Kabul in 2021, Pakistan kept its embassy open while the world abandoned Afghanistan. Pakistan ensured the safe evacuation of foreign nationals, advocated for humanitarian aid, and urged global powers to recognize the Afghan government. Yet, in return, Pakistan received bullets, bombings, and betrayal. The truth is no longer hidden. Verified intelligence, corroborated by the UN's 36th Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, confirms that the Taliban regime shelters and funds the TTP and Al-Qaeda. Training camps thrive across Kunar, Nuristan, and Paktika; thousands of militants cross the border into Pakistan under official protection. Even TTP leaders lives comfortably in Kabul, drawing funding that sustains his operations against Pakistan. This is not ignorance — it is complicity. It is, by definition, state-backed terrorism. Pakistan's patience, though vast, is not infinite. Every drop of the blood of our soldiers and civilians demands accountability. For decades, Pakistan hosted over five million Afghan refugees — a gesture unmatched in modern history. It sacrificed socially and economically to keep its neighbour afloat, built hospitals, educated Afghan youth, and supported reconstruction. But generosity cannot become servitude. The time has come for Afghans to return to their homeland. Their "Islamic revolution" is five years old; it is time they rebuild their own country with dignity. Pakistan's land and resources belong to its 250 million citizens who have borne enough of the burden. Pakistan's efforts to foster economic cooperation have been equally sincere. The Early Harvest Program reduced tariffs to boost Afghan exports; the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement opened our ports for Afghan goods. Yet, in return, we received cross-border attacks, infiltration, and mar-

tyrdom of our security forces. Pakistan's sovereignty has limits, and when violated repeatedly, those limits turn into red lines. Afghanistan must understand that sovereignty is not a slogan — it is a responsibility. One cannot demand respect for borders while exporting terrorism across them. When Pakistan strikes terrorist hideouts inside Afghanistan, Kabul accuses it of aggression, ignoring the fact that these targets are legitimate threats. Terrorists build homes and training facilities inside Afghan cities; their presence is known, tolerated, and often aided. The Taliban's silence in the face of such open violations of international law is, in truth, an admission of guilt. Afghan soil, once again, has become a playground for foreign intelligence agencies. The weapons left behind by NATO — worth billions — now arm the very militants who murder Pakistanis. Afghan nationals, trained and funded, are part of terrorist teams striking Pakistan's cities and security installations. This can no longer be excused as "internal issues." It is organized aggression. Pakistan's restraint should never be mistaken for weakness. We value dialogue and diplomacy, but the protection of our sovereignty and our people is paramount. If attacks continue, Pakistan reserves the right to eliminate terror bases, wherever they exist. We are a nation of patience, but also of resolve. For over four decades, Pakistan has stood with Afghanistan — through war, famine, and political collapse — guided by faith and fraternity. Yet, true brotherhood cannot be one-sided. Afghanistan must now prove that it values this bond by acting against those who misuse its land to shed innocent blood. The Taliban regime must rise above denial, honour its commitments under the Doha Agreement, and take verifiable action against the TTP and its affiliates. It is still not too late. Afghanistan can choose to walk the path of peace — not for Pakistan's sake, but for its own survival and stability. History will remember those who sowed division, but it will also honour those who had the courage to uproot the evil that threatened two nations bound by faith and fate.

Trump keeps Netanyahu tethered to Gaza deal — for now

Osama Al-Sharif

In fact, Netanyahu and his far-right partners are against any form of international peacekeeping in Gaza. They see it as a dangerous precedent — the fact that such a force is on Palestinian territory could one day be replicated in the West Bank. It is likely that Netanyahu will continue to raise objections regarding the implementation of Trump's plan, hoping to frustrate the US president and his team. He is already doing his best to delay the delivery of aid, putting conditions on what is allowed to go in and what is not

THE Gaza ceasefire is shaky but is holding despite some serious violations by Israel. Since the truce came into effect, Israel has killed tens of Palestinians in Gaza, carrying out multiple airstrikes. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has threatened to resume the war and peddled excuses to block the delivery of aid and keep the Rafah crossing point closed. But he is facing pressure from Israel's closest ally: Donald Trump. The US president and his team of interlocutors have made it clear to Netanyahu that he should not think of endangering the plan that Trump committed to in front of world leaders at Sharm El-Sheikh. The message to Netanyahu is clear: the war has ended. And while the US is keeping Netanyahu at bay, Trump has also threatened Hamas with dire consequences if it does not keep its side of the bargain. So far, the militant movement has shown that it is committed to the 20-point plan, at least delivering on its obligations under the first phase. But Trump and his team are weary of Netanyahu. The president sent his special envoy, Steve Witkoff, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, back to Israel ahead of Vice President J.D. Vance's crucial visit to Tel Aviv. Vance's main mission is to shore up the Gaza truce and prevent Netanyahu from collapsing the fragile ceasefire. Netanyahu is hoping to complicate the enforcement of the many vague points related to the second phase. In an interview this week, Kushner and Witkoff discussed the Trump plan, with the former making it clear that Hamas was acting "in good faith" in delivering on its obligations so far. Both have underlined Trump's personal commitment to ending the war. They made it clear they would like to move to the second phase of the plan as soon as possible. But while Netanyahu appears to be cornered at this point in time, he is hoping to complicate the enforcement of the many vague points related to the second phase, including the process of disarming Hamas and the formation of an international stabilizing force that will be deployed in Gaza. Also, a bone of contention will be the withdrawal of Israeli troops. Netanyahu

is hoping that the issue of demilitarizing Gaza will create so many obstacles that it will test Trump's patience and may allow the Israeli PM to loosen his commitment to Israel's obligations under the plan. Another issue on which Netanyahu will prevaricate is the presence of an international force in Gaza. He has already objected to Turkish participation in both the proposed force and the recovery and salvaging operations. Turkiye is a signatory to the ceasefire plan. Netanyahu is also objecting to Ankara's role in Gaza reconstruction efforts. Turkiye's inclusion in the international stabilization force, according to Israeli media, is a "red line" for Netanyahu. In fact, Netanyahu and his far-right partners are against any form of international peacekeeping in Gaza. They see it as a dangerous precedent — the fact that such a force is on Palestinian territory could one day be replicated in the West Bank. It is likely that Netanyahu will continue to raise objections regarding the implementation of Trump's plan, hoping to frustrate the US president and his team. He is already doing his best to delay the delivery of aid, putting conditions on what is allowed to go in and what is not. He will probably do the same with reconstruction. While his hands are largely tied in Gaza, Netanyahu has unleashed a wave of terror and death in the West Bank. Trump has warned that he will not allow Israel to annex the territory. Still, Netanyahu, seeking to keep his coalition alive, is allowing armed settlers to go on the rampage. He is also considering enforcing Israeli law on the settlements; a symbolic but serious move that could only be interpreted as annexation. While his hands are largely tied in Gaza, Netanyahu has unleashed a wave of terror and death in the West Bank. A majority of the Israeli public supports Trump's plan, particularly the part that guarantees the return of all captives alive and dead. Netanyahu is aware that he is being blamed for failing to embrace previous plans that would have allowed the return of the captives months ago. He is also cognizant that voices are now

being raised in Israel to form an independent commission of inquiry into the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, in which his role and those of other senior government and army officials will be investigated. This is the primary reason why Netanyahu resisted pressure, even from his own army, to end the war. He knows that his political career could be over once the war ends and the long and painful process of digging into the past begins. In addition to the war ending, he would have no excuse to further postpone his ongoing corruption trial. This may be why he announced on Saturday that he will be seeking reelection in the November 2026 polls, when he will be aged 77. He added that he expected to win. While looking for ways to derail the Gaza deal, Netanyahu has shifted attention back to Lebanon. Israel has repeatedly violated the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon that was reached last November. It has refused to withdraw from five military outposts it created in south Lebanon and has prevented displaced Lebanese from returning to their destroyed villages close to the border. Netanyahu is also putting pressure on the US envoy to Syria and Lebanon, Tom Barrack, to threaten the Lebanese government that if it does not disarm Hezbollah, Israel will renew its attacks. In a lengthy post on X this week, Barrack wrote: "If Beirut fails to act, Hezbollah's military arm will inevitably face major confrontation with Israel at a moment of Israel's strength and Iran-backed Hezbollah's weakest point." The Israeli PM will see such threats as a green light to escalate the attacks on Lebanon, whose government finds itself in a difficult position, since Hezbollah has so far refused to hand over its weapons. Netanyahu wants to keep Israel in perpetual war to stay in power for as long as possible. So far, Trump is committed to keeping the Gaza truce alive. However, Netanyahu knows that the road to full implementation of the plan is long and complex, and he hopes that Trump will soon lose interest.

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Briefs

Israel must
ease aid into
Gaza, rules
UN court

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"I never said it was easy. But what I am is optimistic that the ceasefire is going to hold and that we can actually build a better future in the entire Middle East," he said. Having secured a ceasefire, mediators are focused on the second phase of Trump's Gaza plan which demands Hamas disarm and foresees the deployment of an International Stabilisation Force that would train and support vetted Palestinian police.

PTI to start
nation-
wide...

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The senior PTI leader added that the party was united and mobilised for Imran's release. He informed those present that Mahmood Khan Achakzai had been nominated as opposition leader in the National Assembly and Raja Nasir Abbas in the Senate, while Sohail Afridi had been appointed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, terming the recent moves as symbolising "a wave of political renewal within PTI". "We stand firm for the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law," Barrister Raja said. "Truth and justice will prevail. All cases fabricated against Imran Khan are proving false in the courts. However, delaying tactics are being used to hinder justice, but these baseless cases will soon be over." Reiterating Imran's message to the nation, Raja said: "Patron in Chief Imran Khan has urged the people to keep faith in Allah Almighty; victory always belongs to truth. He has directed the party to reach out to the public through rallies across the country to raise awareness against oppression and injustice." Expressing grave concern over the situation in Sindh, Raja said that the PPP had "in the last 17 years ... turned Sindh into ruins". He noted that from Karachi to the interior of the province, cities were in a state of decay, adding that lawlessness and insecurity had made life miserable for citizens. Raja said he had personally visited several cities of Sindh and found a "scene of desolation and hopelessness everywhere". "Rampant corruption by the PPP has plundered Sindh's public resources," he asserted. "But the people of Sindh are now awake. Wherever we went, we witnessed overwhelming support for Imran Khan. The people of Sindh want change; they want a leader like Imran Khan: honest, brave, and dedicated to the nation." Imran, imprisoned since August 2023, is serving a sentence at Adiala Jail in a £190 million corruption case and also faces pending trials under the Anti-Terrorism Act related to the May 9 protests. The PTI has regularly raised concerns about the lack of access to the party founder and how family, friends and party leaders are hindered from meeting him.

ATC again
issues
warrant...

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On November 26 last year, PTI supporters entered Islamabad in defiance of a ban on public gatherings and clashed with law enforcement agencies near D-Chowk. Police used teargas to disperse the crowd. The former ruling party's three-day protests were abruptly ended after fierce clashes erupted between the law enforcers and the protesters. The November 26, 2024, protest was aimed at building pressure on the government to release the PTI founder. The 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician has been behind bars since August 2023 after he was booked in multiple cases ranging from corruption to terrorism since his ouster from power via the opposition's no-trust motion in April 2022. During today's hearing, the ATC judge ordered the forfeiture of Aleema's surety bonds worth Rs100,000 to the state and issued a show-cause notice to her guarantor, Umar Sharif, directing him to submit a reply by October 24.

Rizwan Ali Targets
Knockout of Indian Rival
in Dubai Showdown

"My training is going perfectly," Rizwan says. "Rudra is tough, but I plan to finish him early. I respect every fighter, but I'm confident in my preparation and strategy"

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan-India tensions continue to play out in sports, a new battlefield is emerging — Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). But for Pakistan's undefeated sensation Rizwan Ali, who faces India's Rana Rudra Singh on Thursday (Today) at The Agenda Arena, Dubai. "There's no real Pakistan-India rivalry in MMA," Rizwan says confidently. "In cricket, we lose again and again, but in MMA, I always win. I've beaten every Indian opponent — how can there be a rivalry if they can't compete?" Dubbed a showdown bigger than the Super Bowl, the Rizwan-Rudra clash carries massive hype, high stakes, and political undertones. Promoted by Absolute Championship Akhmat (ACA) — the elite Russian MMA organization backed by Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov — the event promises intense drama and world-class fighting. Undefeated at 10-0, Rizwan has become Pakistan's most dominant MMA fighter, known for his relentless stamina



and knockout power. His Indian opponent, Rana Rudra Singh, once a UFC hopeful, is determined to rewrite the narrative. "My training is going perfectly," Rizwan

says. "Rudra is tough, but I plan to finish him early. I respect every fighter, but I'm confident in my preparation and strategy." The Dubai clash could also be Rizwan's ticket to the UFC, with senior UFC scouts expected ringside. But Rizwan remains grounded: "Whether it's UFC or ACA — a fight is a fight. It's about mindset, fitness, and skill. I'm ready for any stage." He credits his success to Omar Ahmed, President of the Pakistan MMA Federation and founder of Brave Gym. Meeting Omar was a turning point, "Rizwan shares. "He trained, mentored, and believed in me. Because of him, I stand undefeated." Omar's mission is to place a Pakistani fighter in the UFC and redefine the country's global sports image. "We're not just building fighters — we're building a movement," Omar says. "MMA in Pakistan is real, it's growing, and Rizwan is leading it." Rizwan also acknowledges support from his sponsor ACTIVIT and its CEO Dr. Rizwan Aftab Ahmed. "He's like a big brother," Rizwan says. "His help with fitness, nutrition, and support has been priceless."

Women's World Cup: Pakistan's
campaign ends with SA lossGreen Shirts amass
83/7 while chasing
revised 234-run
target in 20 overs

COLOMBO: Pakistan's hopes for advancing to the semi-final ended as South Africa beat them in a rain-affected Women's World Cup 2025 game at the R Premadasa Stadium on Tuesday. Chasing a revised target of 234 in 20 overs after multiple rain interruptions, the Green Shirts were restricted to 83/7, losing the game by 150 runs. Wicketkeeper batter Sidra Nawaz remained the top-scorer for Pakistan with an unbeaten 22 off 33 deliveries, followed by Natalia Pervaiz, who made a 24-ball 20. The duo also shared a 31-run partnership for the fifth wicket. Mari-zanne Kapp led the bowling charge for South Africa, taking three wickets for just 20 runs in her five overs. She was supported by Nondumiso Shangase,

who made two strikes, while Ayabonga Khaka chipped in with one. The 150-run victory lifted South Africa to the top of the ICC Women's World Cup standings as they now have 10 points in six matches with a net run rate of 0.276. Put into bat first, the Proteas Women piled up a formidable total of 312/5 in the allotted 40 overs as the match was reduced due to a two-hour-long rain interruption. Pakistan, however, were initially set to chase the 306-run target in 40 overs as per the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS). South Africa got off to a contrasting start to their innings as Pakistan captain Fatima Sana dismissed Tazmin Brits for a four-ball duck in the second over with just five runs on the board. However, after the rain interruption, Laura Wolvaardt and Luus anchored the innings by putting together a crucial 118-run partnership, which saw both of them amass half-centuries. The stand eventually culminated in

the 17th over when Nashra Sandhu got Luss caught at extra cover. The right-handed batter scored 61 off 59 deliveries, laced with 10 boundaries, including two sixes. South Africa then lost another wicket in quick succession as Annerie Dercksen got run out in the 22nd over after mustering nine off 17 deliveries. Following the back-to-back setbacks, experienced all-rounder Kapp joined skipper Wolvaardt in the middle for a vital 64-run partnership for the fourth wicket until the opener fell victim to Sandhu in the 31st over. Wolvaardt remained the top-scorer for South Africa with 90 off 82 deliveries, studded with 10 fours and two sixes. Kapp, on the other hand, stood her ground firm and bolstered South Africa's total with an unbeaten 68 off 43 deliveries, laced with six fours and three sixes. She was adequately supported by Nadine de Klerk, who played a blistering cameo of 41 runs from just 16 deliveries, featuring three fours and four sixes. — Agencies

Sinner opts out of
Davis Cup, Alcaraz
to represent Spain

BOLOGNA: Jannik Sinner has decided not to take part in this year's Davis Cup Finals with reigning champions Italy confirming his absence in Monday's team announcement, while world number one Carlos Alcaraz will represent Spain at next month's competition. Sinner, ranked number two in the world, led Italy to a successful defence of their title last year in Spain, but will not be on home soil when the Final 8 takes place in Bologna from November 18-23. "Jannik Sinner has not given his availability for 2025," Italian captain Filippo Volandri said. "The Davis Cup is, and will remain, always his home and I am sure that Jannik will soon be part of the team again. In the meantime, I can count on a group ready to fight and give everything for the blue jersey." Volandri's team is made up of Matteo Berrettini, Simone Bolelli, Flavio Cobolli, Lorenzo Musetti and Andrea Vavasori. Sinner, who won the Australian Open and Wimbledon this year and reached the final of all four Grand Slams, will be in Turin a week before the Davis Cup to defend his ATP Finals title, where Alcaraz has also secured his place in the season-ending event. Alcaraz will be bidding to earn Spain their first Davis Cup success since 2019, with Jaume Munar, Pedro Martinez, and Marcel Granollers also selected by the Spaniards. World number three Alexander Zverev is set to make his first appearance at the Davis Cup Finals, with the 28-year-old named on the Germany team. — APP

Noman Ali hits
career-best No 2 in
ICC Test rankings

37-year-old Pakistani gains four spots to achieve 853 rating points, closing in on India's Jasprit Bumrah

DUBAI: Pakistan's left-arm spinner Noman Ali has climbed to second place in the ICC Test bowling rankings, narrowing the gap with top-ranked Jasprit Bumrah after a standout performance in the first Test against South Africa. The 37-year-old gained four spots to achieve a career-best 853 rating points, overtaking South Africa's Kagiso Rabada, who slipped to fifth. India's Bumrah continues to hold the top position, while New Zealand's Jacob Duffy occupies third place. Left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi has also climbed up the ICC Test bowling rankings, moving three spots to reach 19th position with 661 points. Spinner Sajid Khan retained his 21st spot, while Mohammad Abbas and Naseem Shah held their places at 27th and 34th, respectively. Hasan Ali maintained his 42nd position, alongside Abrar Ahmed, who remains 48th. However, pacer Khurram Shahzad slipped two places to 66th, and Aamer Jamal dropped three spots to 74th. Meanwhile, Mir Hamza and Salman Agha fell four and one places to 95th and 96th, respectively, while Zahid Mahmood also went down three places to 100th. — APP

Shehroze Kashif left in lurch amid
govt's 'forgotten promises'

"I sold my land, my car, and remain in debt from past expeditions," says Pakistani mountaineer

ISLAMABAD: Young Pakistani mountaineer Shehroze Kashif, who has proudly raised Pakistan's flag on all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre peaks, has once again voiced his frustration over the "government's failure to fulfil repeated promises of support". Taking to his X handle, the 22-year-old climber — the youngest Pakistani to summit all 14 eight-thousanders — said, "The government promised me a cash prize several times, but everyone has forgotten." Despite national recognition and being honoured with the Hilal-e-Imtiaz earlier this year, Kashif claims the financial rewards have yet to materialise. "My government promised support, but all was forgotten. I sold my land, my car, and remain in debt from past expeditions. How can you do this to someone who raised Pakistan's flag on all 14 eight-thousanders?" He also tagged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Mar-



yam Nawaz and Federal Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar, urging them to take notice. Kashif revealed that his passion for mountaineering has come at a great personal cost. "I've spent nearly 40 million rupees to make my country proud," he said. His journey began at the age of 11, when he climbed the 3,885-metre Makra Peak. — DNA

Ishaq Dar chairs high-level meeting for hockey revival

The DPM/FM emphasized that hockey is a symbol of national pride & deserves renewed investment and attention at every level. He reaffirmed the government's full support for revitalizing the sport and directed the formulation of a comprehensive revival roadmap aimed at enhancing facilities, & reigniting youth participation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting today on the promotion and revival of hockey. The meeting was attended by the Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination, Minister for Information, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, DG PSB, & senior officials including the Secretary and Vice President of the Pakistan

Hockey Federation. Pakistan travel guide Discussions focused on restoring Pakistan's legacy in world hockey through grassroots development, improved infrastructure, modern coaching, and merit-based player growth. The DPM/FM emphasized that hockey is a symbol of national pride & deserves renewed investment and attention at every level. He reaffirmed the government's full support for revitalizing the sport and directed the formulation of a comprehensive revival roadmap aimed at enhancing facilities, & reigniting youth participation.

Courts
can't be
barred from
hearing
cases even...

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Stressing that the Constitutional Bench is not barred from issuing directives to form a full court, the lawyer highlighted that Justice Mazhar had described a full court as separately in the Raja Amir case. To this, Justice Mandokhail observed that the CB will have to see whether they have the authority to order the formation of a full court or not. Expanding on his arguments, the lawyer questioned whether the court will hear the case or not if a 27th Amendment were introduced, due to which an officer of the executive decides all the matters of the SC. "You will definitely hear the case even in such a situation," Khawaja Ahmed said. "None of us has denied that we will not hear the 26th Amendment on its merits," responded Justice Mazhar, adding that the bench will issue an order if the lawyer is able to prove that the amendment is against the basic structure of the Constitution. The counsel further noted that to hear the case, it is necessary to observe that the necessary procedure was not followed for the constitutional amendment. He added that the SC is in its place and the authority to hear cases still lies with it.

PNS
YARMOOK
seizes
narcotics
worth...

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Admiral Naveed Ashraf, lauded the crew of PNS YARMOOK for their professionalism, vigilance, and dedication. He stated that Pakistan Navy remains steadfast in its mission to safeguard national maritime interests while working closely with regional and international partners to counter threats emanating from the sea. Admiral Ashraf emphasized that the Navy's participation in such multinational efforts demonstrates Pakistan's resolve to uphold international maritime laws and maintain freedom of navigation across global sea lanes. He further noted that PNS YARMOOK's successful mission under the Saudi-led task force would not only enhance interoperability between the Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces but also strengthen bilateral defence collaboration between the two countries. The Pakistan Navy, through its continued participation in Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) operations, remains committed to promoting a safe and secure maritime environment. This successful operation once again reflects Pakistan's dedication to contributing to international efforts against drug trafficking, terrorism, and other transnational crimes threatening global maritime stability.

Centre gives
bullet proof
vehicles...

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acquire bulletproof vehicles, then they should be transferred to the Balochistan government so that terrorism can be effectively countered," Bugti posted on X. Naqvi, while accepting the request posted, "CM Sahib done. These bulletproof vehicles will be sent to Balochistan immediately to enhance counterterrorism efforts. Thank you for raising this." The development came after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi announced that the provincial government would return the bulletproof vehicles to the federation, describing them as "substandard and outdated." Presiding over his first formal meeting after assuming the office, CM Afridi said that a couple of days ago, the interior ministry had provided bulletproof vehicles to the KP police to meet the security challenges that they face across the province. Criticising Naqvi, KP chief minister said the bulletproof vehicles were "an insult" to the police force. He also directed that the security provided to former chief ministers be restored to ensure their protection and dignity.

Briefs

UK annual inflation stays high before key budget

LONDON: Britain's annual inflation rate for September remained far above the Bank of England's target, official data showed Wednesday, keeping pressure on the Labour government before its key budget next month. The Consumer Prices Index stood at 3.8 percent in September, unchanged from August, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. While the rate bettered expectations for a rise to 4.0 percent, the Bank of England's target stands at 2.0 percent. "All of us in government are responsible for supporting the Bank of England in bringing inflation down," finance minister Rachel Reeves said as she expressed disappointment at the latest data.—APP

Australians warned to prepare for severe heat

MELBOURNE: Millions of Australians were warned to prepare for severe weather conditions on Wednesday as heatwaves and damaging winds swept across the country. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) on Wednesday morning issued severe weather warnings for damaging winds in the east coast states of New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria as well as South Australia (SA) and heatwave warnings for Queensland and the Northern Territory (NT) in northern Australia. Maximum temperatures were forecast to exceed 35 degrees Celsius (C) along NSW's densely-populated east coast on Wednesday and hit 39C in the state capital of Sydney, which would break the city's October record of 38.2C in 2004. The severe heat, and forecast damaging winds of up to 100 kilometers per hour, prompted an extreme fire danger warning from the BoM for Greater Sydney and neighboring regions. NSW's Health Minister Ryan Park on Wednesday morning warned people to avoid the outdoors and to look out for older friends and family, young children and pregnant women. "We're asking everyone today to take steps to protect themselves from the heat by staying cool and hydrated," he said. It comes after Queensland and NSW both recorded their hottest October day on record on Tuesday, with the maximum temperature hitting 46.1C in Queensland and 44.8C in NSW. Victoria and SA have not been affected by the heatwave, but the BoM said that both states could experience destructive wind gusts on Wednesday as a low pressure system that developed off Australia's southern coast moves east.—APP

Syria, Saudi Arabia hold virtual talks on joint industrial projects

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Economy and Industry and the General Establishment for Geology and Mineral Resources in Syria held a video meeting with the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to follow up on the implementation of the outcomes of the joint committees between the two brotherly countries. During the meeting, the two sides discussed means of enhancing joint industrial cooperation, activating investment and manufacturing opportunities in priority sectors, and exchanging technical and administrative expertise. They also reviewed ways to facilitate the establishment of joint projects that contribute to supporting industrial development and strengthening the productive base in both countries. The two sides underscored the importance of continuing technical coordination between the specialized working teams to ensure the implementation of the items agreed upon within the joint action plan, in preparation for holding subsequent meetings to assess the progress achieved and to develop practical mechanisms to overcome obstacles facing industrial cooperation.—APP

Romanian air chief praises professionalism of the PAF

Pakistan Air Chief calls on Romanian air force chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, during a historic official visit to Romania called on Lieutenant General Leonard-Gabriel Baraboi, Chief of the Romanian Air Force Staff. The visit focused on strengthening bilateral defence ties and exploring avenues for enhanced cooperation between the two Air Forces. Upon his arrival at Romanian Air Force Headquarters, a smartly turned-out contingent of the Romanian Air Force presented Guard of Honour to Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. Later the Air Chief held detailed discussions with Lieutenant General Baraboi centered on advancing operational cooperation, including joint air exercises, exchange programmes and training of air and ground crew. The dignitaries also exchanged views on regional security dynamics and reaffirmed the importance of bilateral cooperation in maintaining both global and regional stability. Lieutenant General Baraboi praised the professionalism of Pakistan Air Force manifested in its recent success



against Indian aggression. He also acknowledged PAF's progress achieved through indigenization initiatives under the visionary leadership of the Air Chief. Both dignitaries agreed to create

robust institutional mechanisms for sustained cooperation in addressing shared aerial defence challenges. During the meeting, the two Air Chiefs also discussed expanding Air Force-to-Air Force

collaboration and delved into prospects of forging defence-industrial partnerships in advanced aerospace technologies. This visit of Chief of the Air Staff to Romania marks a significant milestone

in Pakistan and Romania's military relations highlighting both nations' enduring commitment to peace, development and military collaboration in a rapidly evolving security environment.

Japanese businessmen keen to explore Pakistani markets

ISLAMABAD: A high-profile Japanese business delegation led by Kobayashi Yuji, Member of Parliament from the Hokkaido Assembly, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) to explore new avenues for bilateral trade, investment, and technology cooperation. The delegation was accompanied by Dr Zulfiqar Bhatti, Parliamentary Secretary for Commerce and Ambassador (R) Imtiaz Ahmad, former Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan. ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, and Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry warmly received the dignitaries. Welcoming the delegation, President ICCI Sardar Tahir Mehmood highlighted the vast potential for collaboration in information technology, rare earth minerals, and agro-based industries. He invited Japanese investors to take advantage of Pakistan's emerging investment landscape, assuring full institutional support and facilitation from ICCI. Emphasizing the importance of technology transfer, industrial partnerships, and skill development, he remarked that Japan's innovation and Pakistan's youthful energy could together create a new model of growth for both nations. Kobayashi Yuji expressed appreciation for Pakistan's hospitality and cultural warmth, noting that such goodwill builds lasting bilateral relations. Referring to Japan's ageing population and growing demand for skilled labour, he acknowledged the contribution of Pakistani interns in Japan and expressed optimism for deeper collaboration in workforce training. "Pakistan's youth are a remarkable national asset—energetic, talented, and capable. Japan deeply values this potential and seeks to build structured programs for skill enhancement and industrial training," he stated. Dr. Zulfiqar Bhatti reaffirmed the government's strong commitment to expanding trade, exports, and investment linkages, emphasizing that the Ministry of Commerce maintains an open-door policy for global investors. He urged the private sector to focus on innovation and value addition to enhance competitiveness and productivity. "Under the Prime Minister's vision, export promotion remains central to Pakistan's economic strategy, and the government stands ready to facilitate all initiatives that strengthen our industrial base," he affirmed. Senior ICCI member Mian Shoukat Masood invited the Japanese side to explore Pakistan's rapidly growing IT sector, citing its technical depth, cost efficiency, and strong global footprint. Other participants, including Malik Mohsin, Naveed Satti, Imran Minhas, Ishaq Sial, Waseem Ch, Ambassador (R) Imtiaz Ahmad, Seiko Suzuki, and Masahito Kimura, shared insights on enhancing bilateral trade and industrial cooperation. The meeting concluded with mutual goodwill and optimism, as both sides reaffirmed their resolve to deepen economic and technological collaboration, promote skilled workforce development, and build a future-oriented partnership founded on innovation, sustainability, and shared prosperity.—DNA

Colombia's president embraces war of words with Trump

BOGOTÁ: Donald Trump's decision to freeze millions in aid to Colombia and brand its president a drug trafficker has smashed long-standing ties and could yet shake up the country's 2026 presidential race. With the US president's threat of "significant" punitive tariffs looming, Colombian businesses are panicking and investors are spooked. But one person seems unfazed by the row between Colombia and its largest trading partner: Colombian President Gustavo Petro. The ex-guerrilla-turned-politico has embraced the battle with Trump, using it as a tool to stir his base and, he hopes, Colombian voters ahead of the May presidential elections. He has recalled Colombia's ambassador from Washington, attacked Trump in lengthy social media posts – and at the United Nations – and embraced ever-more nationalist rhetoric. "President Trump doesn't like us being out of his control," he wrote on X Tuesday, while claiming the threat of a US invasion and stating "they want a coup against me". Visiting New York last month, he urged the US military to refuse Trump's orders, earning him a US visa ban. Over the weekend, Petro backed US demonstrations, posting 'No to kings' and sharing protest videos. The shift in US-Colombian relations since Trump and Petro took power could hardly be starker. For decades, the two countries jointly fought drug cartels, traded broadly, and enjoyed close political ties. Colombia was arguably the United States' closest ally in South America. Today, "Petro is looking for a confrontation with Washington," said Theodore Kahn, of global risk consultancy Control Risks in Bogota.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain meeting with the Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan, H.E. Ali bin Mubarak Al Khater.

Hosting of UNESCO General Conference in Samarkand

SAMARKAND: The historic city of Samarkand will host the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2025, marking the first time in 40 years that the global gathering will take place outside Paris. The decision, unanimously supported by all 194 UNESCO Member States at the 42nd session held in Paris in November 2023, is a major diplomatic victory for Uzbekistan and a testament to the country's growing international standing. The selection of Samarkand symbolizes global recognition of Uzbekistan's remarkable progress in culture, science, education, and heritage preservation under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. It highlights the success of Uzbekistan's reforms and its emerging role as a hub of intercultural dialogue and global cooperation. President Mirziyoyev expressed deep gratitude to international partners for supporting Uzbekistan's initiative. He stated that hosting the UNESCO General Conference for the first time in Central Asia "will once again showcase the vast civilizational potential of Uzbekistan and the region" and pledged to ensure the event's organization at the highest level. To

prepare for the event, the President issued a decree in March 2024 establishing an Organizing Committee to oversee logistics, coordination with UNESCO, and arrangements for more than 5,000 participants expected from around the world. Preparations include visa facilitation, transport, accommodation, and cultural programs. Several key events will accompany the General Conference, including the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum and the 12th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO. Discussions will focus on emerging global issues such as artificial intelligence in museums, gender equality, and women's empowerment. UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay praised Uzbekistan's close cooperation and preparations for the conference during her recent meeting with President Mirziyoyev in Paris. She noted that Uzbekistan's progress in education and cultural preservation aligns strongly with UNESCO's mission. Uzbekistan's partnership with UNESCO has deepened since it joined

the organization in 1993. The country has seven World Heritage Sites, including Samarkand's Registan Square and the Historic Centres of Bukhara, Khiva, and Shahrisabz, as well as 16 elements inscribed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list, such as Shashmaqam music, Pilaf culture, and Nowruz celebrations. Recent additions to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register include the Holy Uthman Qur'an, the Mawlana Collection, and the Turkistan Album. Uzbekistan also hosts two biosphere reserves and serves as a member of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2022–2026). Sara Noshadi, Head of the UNESCO Office in Uzbekistan, called the decision to host the conference "an extraordinary milestone," acknowledging Uzbekistan's bold educational and cultural reforms. The 43rd UNESCO General Conference in Samarkand will not only reaffirm Uzbekistan's growing role in global cultural diplomacy but also serve as a powerful symbol of peace, knowledge exchange, and mutual understanding – true to Samarkand's legacy as a crossroads of civilizations.—DNA

Govt agencies must lead Bangladesh's transition

DHAKA: Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said that all government agencies must transition to renewable energy within the next two to three years to set an example for the nation. "Mitigation is not just about how much we produce – it is also about how responsibly we consume," she said, calling for sustainable practices to be adopted across all sectors. Rizwana, also the adviser to the ministry of Water Resources, was speaking as the Chief Guest at the opening plenary session of an international conference titled "Road to COP30: How Can National Interests Be Aligned with Global Climate Goals?" held today at BRAC Centre Inn here. The theme of the conference is "A World Beyond Crisis: Climate Solutions That Work", according to a press release issued by the ministry. Highlighting the country's progress in environmental governance, she said the Department of Environment (DoE), with support from the World Bank, is constructing green office complexes in various regions and developing a model for eco-friendly buildings in collaboration with architects and engineers to promote energy efficiency. Rizwana Hasan warned that double counting of climate finance and weak global governance have undermined trust and slowed the flow of genuine support for climate adaptation. "If emissions from major economies continue to rise, technology transfer alone will not solve the problem," she said, adding that Bangladesh must remain proactive in protecting its national interests, economic activities, and livelihoods.—APP

'Stealth husband' of Japan's new PM vows quiet support

TOKYO: The spouse of Japan's first woman Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi hopes to support her by being a "stealth husband", cooking meals but staying out of the spotlight. Unlike in the West, it is better for a partner to stay out of the spotlight," Fukui Television quoted Taku Yamamoto, 73, as saying on Tuesday after Takaichi became premier. He said it was essential that Takaichi, who won the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership this month, can "pursue her vision of Prime Minister". "I want to provide solid support as 'a stealth husband' to ensure that my presence does not become an obstacle to that," he added, according to the Asahi newspaper, Fuji Television and other media. Yamamoto, a former LDP lawmaker, married Takaichi in 2004, but the couple divorced in 2017 citing "differences in political views". They re-married in 2021, after Yamamoto reportedly supported Takaichi when she ran unsuccessfully for the LDP leadership contest that year. In the subsequent snap election he lost his seat.—APP

GPA invites Bids for Off-Dock Terminal to support CPEC Trade

ISLAMABAD: The Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) has invited electronic bids for the development of an Off-Dock Terminal in Gwadar, a project aimed at expanding the port's cargo handling capacity and supporting trade activities linked to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). According to a tender notice issued by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, firms registered with the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in Category C-3 are eligible to participate. The deadline for bid submission is November 7, 2025, with bids scheduled to open the same day. A pre-bid meeting will be held on October 30, 2025, at the GPA head office on Pak-China Friendship Avenue in Gwadar, according to a Gwadar Pro's report. The Off-Dock Terminal will provide additional space for cargo handling and storage, helping to reduce congestion at the main port and improve logistics efficiency. The facility is part of GPA's broader plan to strengthen port operations and facilitate growing cargo volumes associated with CPEC trade flows.—APP

Briefs

Mohsin Naqvi
meets Sunni
Tehreek Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Chairman of Pakistan Sunni Tehreek, Muhammad Sarwat Ejaz Qadri, during his visit to Karachi, Sindh's Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon and Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah also accompanied the interior minister. During the meeting, the participants paid tribute to the valuable services of religious scholars and emphasized the importance of promoting religious harmony and unity across the country. Addressing concerns circulating on social media and elsewhere, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi clarified that no madrasa or mosque will be closed, dismissing such claims as baseless propaganda. "Islam is a religion of peace and love; there is no room for violence or unrest," Naqvi stated, adding that religious scholars have always played a crucial role in standing up for truth and guiding society. The interior minister said that Pakistan has entered a new phase of development and called on all citizens to play a positive role in maintaining peace and stability. "Everyone has the right to protest within the framework of the law," he added. "At this moment, unity is essential for Pakistan's progress." Chairman of Pakistan Sunni Tehreek, Sarwat Ejaz Qadri, assured full cooperation in promoting interfaith harmony and national solidarity.

Imperial
College
London rejects
Punjab's
govt's claim

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Contrary to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz-led Punjab government's claims, the Imperial College London has refuted "incorrect" reports claiming that the varsity will open overseas campus at Nawaz Sharif IT City in Lahore. "There have been erroneous reports in the media and online that Imperial is opening a campus at Nawaz Sharif IT City in Lahore," the institution said in a statement on Tuesday. "Reports that Imperial College London plans to open a campus overseas are incorrect. Imperial has no such plans, with all the university's campuses based in the UK," the statement clarified. Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb post on X claiming establishment of Imperial College London at Nawaz Sharif IT City in Lahore along with 300-bed hospital.

Pak urges
sustained
Kosovo-Serbia
dialogue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has called for sustained Kosovo-Serbia dialogue and full implementation of their 2013 and 2023 agreements to ensure lasting peace, stability and tranquillity in the Southeast European region. "We hope that both sides will sincerely commit to the political process and refrain from unilateral actions that escalate tensions," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, acting permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council on Tuesday. Speaking in the course of a debate on the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), he expressed concern over the divisive rhetoric, hate speech, and incidents of religious intolerance. "All efforts must be made, by both sides, to effectively curb such negative trends that give rise to communal tensions (between Serbs and Albanians), the Pakistani envoy said, noting UNMIK's efforts to foster dialogue, promote harmony and spirit of co-existence among various communities in Kosovo.

Pakistan, Hungary vow to
strengthen bilateral ties

The event was attended by a distinguished gathering, including diplomats, govt officials, business leaders, cultural figures, and members of civil society. State Minister for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani was the chief guest on the occasion



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Hungary have reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations, particularly in the fields of trade, energy cooperation, education, and cultural exchange. The reaffirmation came during a grand reception hosted by the Ambassador of Hungary, Zoltan Varga, at a local hotel to celebrate the National Day of Hungary and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Hungary. The event was attended by a distinguished gathering, including diplomats, government officials, business leaders, cultural figures, and members of civil society. State Minister for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani

was the chief guest on the occasion. In his address, Ambassador Zoltan Varga said Hungary and Pakistan enjoy excellent and time-tested relations based on mutual respect, shared values, and a growing spirit of cooperation across multiple sectors. He highlighted the active presence of the Hungarian energy company MOL in Pakistan's oil and gas exploration projects, describing it as a cornerstone of bilateral economic engagement. "This collaboration not only strengthens Pakistan's energy security but also deepens economic ties and builds bridges between our two nations," he remarked. Ambassador Varga expressed his determination to further expand cooperation in areas such as trade, education, renewable energy, and cultural exchange. He also noted that Hungary attaches great importance to its rela-



tionship with Pakistan and looks forward to new initiatives in the years to come. State Minister Bilal Azhar Kayani, in his remarks, extended heartfelt congratulations to the people and government of Hungary on their National Day. He lauded Hungary's support in various sectors and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to expanding the relationship further. "Pakistan values its close friendship with Hungary, and we are confident that our ties will continue to flourish in all spheres," he said, adding that people-to-people and cultural linkages were vital in promoting better understanding between the two countries. To commemorate the 60 years of diplomatic relations, a special music concert was held following the main reception. The celebrated Türo Trio from Hungary presented

a spellbinding performance that captivated the audience. The folk music ensemble performed a unique selection of Hungarian and Pakistani melodies from the past six decades, blending traditional instruments and modern rhythms in an enchanting fusion that received loud applause and appreciation from guests. The musical evening not only showcased Hungary's rich cultural heritage but also symbolized the harmony and friendship that both nations cherish. The ceremony concluded with the cutting of a cake, marking six decades of enduring friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Hungary. The event reflected the shared vision of both countries to continue working together for mutual prosperity, cultural understanding, and stronger diplomatic engagement in the years ahead.

IMF lifts Pakistan's growth outlook

Lender says while inflation in Pakistan decelerated significantly this year, it is expected to rise again in 2026

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised Pakistan's economic growth forecast upward to 3.6% for the ongoing fiscal year, while cautioning that recent severe flooding in Q3 2025 may negatively impact growth, inflation, and the current account beyond present expectations. In its Regional Economic Outlook for the Middle East and Central Asia, the IMF noted that while inflation in Pakistan has decelerated significantly this year due to lower food and energy prices, it is expected to rise again in 2026. This anticipated increase is attributed to the normalisation of prices and the phasing out of short-term electricity subsidies. Pakistan's growth is projected to increase to 3.6% in 2026, supported by steady reform implementation, improving financial conditions and growing confidence. This revised figure is an improvement on the Fund's earlier projection of 3.25% to 3.5% for FY26, which was announced last week after a staff-level agreement was reached with Pakistan under the existing Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and Resilience Sustainability Facility (RSF). Pakistan's GDP grew by 3.04% in the last financial year, 2024-25. The report highlighted that in Middle East

and North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (MENAP) oil-importing nations, cyclically adjusted primary fiscal balances are projected to improve. This is due to tax policy and administration reforms helping to mobilise revenues in countries like Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Pakistan, while energy subsidy reforms help contain spending in Egypt, Morocco, and Pakistan. The IMF also cautioned that higher borrowing costs could exacerbate fiscal and financial vulnerabilities across the region, particularly in economies with high projected government gross financing needs and banking sectors holding large shares of sovereign bonds, such as Algeria, Egypt and Pakistan. Since 2020, the Fund has approved \$55.7 billion in financing for countries across the MENAP and CCA regions. A significant portion, \$21.4 billion, has been approved since early 2024 for programmes in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Pakistan. Beyond financing, the IMF has delivered more than 385 technical assistance and capacity development projects across 31 countries in these regions, amounting to \$36.8 million during the fiscal year 2024/25. The report stated that economic performance in the Middle East and Central Asia has shown resilience so far in 2025, despite elevated global uncertainty and regional geopolitical tensions.

Non-proliferation regime
undermined: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS: Reaffirming its commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, Pakistan told a UN panel Tuesday that the global disarmament and arms control framework was under stress. "We are witnessing a troubling regression," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, acting permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said in the course of a thematic debate on nuclear weapons in the General Assembly's First Committee, which deals with disarmament and international security matters. "The salience of nuclear weapons in military doctrines is rising along with modernization of arsenals, heightening new risks of escalation," he warned, while citing India's actions that include expansion of unsafeguarded stockpiles. "Compounding this is the weaponization of emerging technologies – blurring the line between conventional and nuclear domains and increasing risks of miscalculation," the Pakistani envoy said. "We also see States with

vast fissile material stockpiles pushing selective, cost-free proposals, such as focusing only on a cut-off, while ignoring existing asymmetries," Ambassador Jadoon said. At the same time, he added, the non-proliferation regime is weakened by discriminatory waivers and selective safeguards, especially in the transfer of nuclear material and sensitive technology. (India has benefited from special nuclear cooperation agreements primarily by ending its decades-long nuclear isolation and gaining access to international nuclear technology, fuel, and trade. These agreements began with a landmark 2008 waiver from NSG and have continued to evolve, most recently with new commitments to partnership in early 2025.) In his comment, Ambassador Jadoon, without naming India, said, "Our eastern neighbour continues to expand unsafeguarded stockpiles while benefiting from special nuclear cooperation agreements. – Agencies

Finance Minister highlights Pakistan's reform momentum

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to macroeconomic stability, structural reforms, and investor facilitation during a meeting with a delegation of German investors and businessmen led by German Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Ina Lepel. During the meeting, the Finance Minister outlined the government's steady progress in restoring fiscal and external stability, achieving a stable currency and moderating inflation, and securing renewed confidence from international financial institutions and credit rating agencies. He emphasized that Pakistan's economic strategy now rests on deep structural reforms – particularly in taxation, energy, privatization, and public finance – aimed at building a sustainable and competitive economy. Highlighting improving investor sentiment, ongoing privatization efforts, and plans to re-enter international capital markets, Senator Aurangzeb invited the German business community to explore the growing opportunities in Pakistan's key sectors, especially technology, energy, and manufacturing. Welcoming the delegation, the Finance Minister appreciated the role of the Pakistan-based AHK German Bilateral Chamber of Commerce in bringing together both established and new German investors to explore Pakistan's evolving business landscape. He briefed the delegation on Pakistan's recent macroeconomic progress and reform momentum, sharing insights from his recent visit to Washington D.C., where he attended the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings and held extensive discussions with multilateral institutions, global investors,

credit rating agencies, and international counterparts. Senator Aurangzeb highlighted that Pakistan continues to consolidate its gains on the macroeconomic stability front. The currency remains stable, foreign exchange reserves currently provide about two and a half months of import cover and are projected to reach three months by the end of the fiscal year. Inflation is expected to remain within the range of 5 to 7 percent for the ongoing fiscal year, supported by a downward trend in the policy rate. He underscored that Pakistan's economic progress has been externally validated by three major credit rating agencies including Fitch, S&P, and Moody's all of which

have upgraded the country's outlook in recent months. The IMF's staff-level agreement announced last week, following a comprehensive review mission, further reflects international confidence in Pakistan's policy direction. The Minister emphasized that Pakistan's economic stabilization must be accompanied by deep structural reforms in key areas, including taxation, energy, state-owned enterprises, privatization, and public finance. He stated that broadening and deepening the tax base remains a top priority, with the tax-to-GDP ratio targeted to increase from 10.2% to 11% this fiscal year, and up to 13% in the coming years.

KE says
Nepra tariff
cut not
applicable
to consumer
bills

DNA

KARACHI: K-Electric, the city's sole power distributor, has clarified that the recent tariff reduction announced by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) does not apply to customer billing and will therefore not affect consumer electricity bills. In a statement, the power utility spokesperson said that the tariff revision announced under Nepra's multi-year tariff (MYT) determination for the fiscal years 2024 to 2030 does not apply to customer billing. "The recent announcement by the regulator is not applicable to customer bills. Therefore, there is no change or reduction in what customers will be charged," the spokesperson said. The clarification comes after Nepra slashed KE's average tariff by Rs7.6 per unit – from Rs39.97 to Rs32.37 per kilowatt-hour – following a review petition filed by the Power Division. The decision revises the power purchase price and other tariff components under KE's multi-year tariff (MYT) regime for 2024-30. The News reported. Earlier, in May 2025, Nepra had approved a base tariff increase of Rs6.15 per unit – an 18.18% jump – setting KE's average rate at Rs39.97 per unit for FY2023-24. Now, the regulator has not only reversed that hike but added a further reduction of Rs1.45 per unit, bringing the total cut to Rs7.6 per unit. The power utility warned that the latest decision on review motions has significantly altered its earlier determinations – a move the KE warned would have significant consequences for the company's financial health, its stakeholders, including consumers.

Russian
strikes on
Ukraine
capital kill two

KYIV: Strikes on Ukraine's capital killed at least two people, a city official said Wednesday, as Russia bombarded the country's energy infrastructure in a "massive" attack overnight. "The death toll in the capital has risen to two," Tymur Tkachenko said on Telegram as other city officials reported a large drone attack on the capital. Ukraine's Energy Minister Svitlana Grinchuk said on Facebook that Russia had been targeting the country's energy infrastructure overnight in a "massive" attack. Kyiv's Mayor Vitali Klitschko said in a statement a drone attack had hit the capital early in the morning, causing injuries and damaging residential buildings. Ukrainian officials also reported large drone attacks in at least three other regions, including Zaporizhzhia where authorities said several people were wounded and thousands left without power. The attack comes after US President Donald Trump, who has called on Moscow and Kyiv to stop the war at their current battle lines, said Tuesday he had shelved plans for a meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin in Budapest because he did not want a "wasted" meeting. – APP

Iran, Iraq
talk bilateral
cooperation

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held talks with Iraq's National Security Advisor Qasim Al Araj, who is currently visiting Tehran, to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The two officials also exchanged views on regional developments, with a particular focus on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Both sides expressed deep concern over Israel's continued violations of the ceasefire in Gaza and stressed the international community's responsibility to prevent genocide and war crimes. – APP