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Pakistan keen to have deep defence ties with Egypt: Field Marshal

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan, US relations are indispensable

Detailed News On Page-08



Babar Azam Back in the T20 squad

Detailed News On Page-06



Bonds cemented

Pak, Poland agree to boost bilateral ties

Dar also announced that the foreign ministries of the two countries had signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) that envisioned regular bilateral consultations, which he said aimed at further enhancing cooperation between the two sides

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar hailed the visit of his Polish counterpart to Pakistan on Thursday as "significant", saying that during the delegation-level talks, the two sides had agreed to expand bilateral cooperation. "During the delegation-level talks, Minister Sikorski and I took stock of the Pakistan-Poland bilateral ties, which continue to develop on a very positive trajectory. We have over a billion-dollar bilateral trade and both sides agreed that there remains immense untapped potential to further expand trade and economic cooperation."

"We agreed to expand bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, infrastructure, defence, counter-terrorism, science and technology and education," Dar said during a joint press conference with Poland's Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, who landed in Islamabad today on a two-day official visit. Dar also announced that the foreign ministries of the two countries had signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) that envisioned regular bilateral consultations, which he said aimed at further enhancing cooperation between the two sides. Moreover, he said an MoU had also been signed on cooperation between the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad and the Polish Institute of International Affairs. At the outset of the press conference, Dar welcomed his Polish counterpart, mentioning that this was his second visit to Pakistan, the last being in 2011. Moreover, he said, Sikorski was "no stranger in this part of the world", having

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Pak committed to cross-border facilitation: Dar

Says China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a catalyst for energy infrastructure development

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Thursday calling Pakistan a regional hub for connectivity, said that the country was ready to coordinate transport, enhance cross-border facilitation, mobilize joint investments, and strengthen regional value chains. The deputy prime minister, addressing the Regional Transport Ministers' Conference held here, said that by turning geography into opportunity, Pakistan was building pathways for inclusive growth and cooperation. Hosted by the Ministry of Communications, with a theme "Regional Connectivity: Opportunities for the Region," the conference was attended by transport ministers from Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, Belarus,

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ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Poland H.E. Radoslaw Sikorski calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif (Thursday, 23 October, 2025). - DNA

Pakistan condemns Israeli intentions

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday strongly condemned Israel's attempt to extend its so-called "sovereignty" over parts of the Occupied West Bank, including illegal Israeli settlements, through a draft law introduced in the legislature of the occupying power. "These actions constitute a flagrant violation of international law, relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people," the Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement. He said that such provocative and unlawful measures

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On Punjab govt request

Cabinet okays ban on TLP

Sources said the government remains open to dialogue with religious groups committed to peaceful political engagement but emphasized that no organization will be allowed to challenge the authority of the state

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet on Thursday approved a ban on the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) under the Anti-Terrorism Act, citing the party's involvement in activities detrimental to public order and national security. The decision was taken during a special cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The Interior Ministry presented a detailed report highlighting the party's recent violent protests, road blockades, and attacks on law enforcement personnel, which caused significant disruption to public life across the country. Officials said the ban aims to ensure the writ of the state and protect citizens from violence and extremism. The Interior Ministry has been directed to issue a formal notification and initiate the legal process to dissolve the organization, freeze its assets, and block its online platforms. Law enforcement agencies have also been instructed to remain on

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PM Shehbaz unveils "Roshan Maeshat" power package

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has announced a special "Roshan Maeshat" (Bright Economy) Power Package aimed at accelerating the growth of Pakistan's industrial and agricultural sectors. The announcement came during his meeting with experts and representatives from both sectors. Under the new package, industries and farmers will receive additional electricity at discounted rates over the next three years—from November 2025 to October 2028.

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Briefs

Afghan journalist arrested in Attock

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Another Afghan journalist has reportedly been arrested in Pakistan amid the ongoing crackdown on undocumented Afghan refugees involving forced detentions and deportations. According to sources, Afghan journalist Javed Qureshi said in an audio message that he had been arrested by police in Attock district, Punjab. His arrest comes as operations against Afghan refugees have intensified across the country following eight days of clashes between the Taliban and Pakistani security forces along the border region. Earlier, police in Islamabad had arrested another Afghan journalist, Mohammad Agha Sailani, from Faisal Town.

Afghan transit trade all set to resume

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to resume the Afghan transit trade following the recent ceasefire agreement between Islamabad and Kabul, with the Directorate of Transit Trade issuing a phased restoration procedure. In a statement, the directorate said that the cargo clearance process would be completed in three stages. In the first phase, nine vehicles that were sent back after the closure of Babe-Dosti will be cleared. The second phase will involve the processing of 74 vehicles that had returned from the NLC terminal, while in the third phase, 217 vehicles parked at the halting yard will be cleared for onward movement to Afghanistan.

KP CM denied meeting with Imran

Prisoners cannot take part in political discussions: IHC

Punjab govt's appeal against single bench ruling on prison rule accepted for hearing

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC)'s larger bench on Thursday suspended the single bench verdict that had struck down a clause in the Punjab Prison Rules banning political conversations among inmates in jails. The order came in response to an intra-court appeal filed by the Punjab government, challenging the earlier ruling issued by Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan. The single bench had previously declared the ban unconstitutional, stating that it violated the right to freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution. The clause, under Section 265 of the Pakistan Prison Rules (1978), had prohibited prisoners from engaging in political discussions within jail premises. During Thursday's hearing, Punjab Advocate General Amjad Pervaiz presented arguments in support of

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Justice Mazhar says Constitutional Bench and SC are not separate

FIAZ CHAUDRY

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar has observed that the Constitutional Bench and the apex court are not separate entities. "We are also judges of the SC," Justice Mazhar remarked on Thursday during a hearing of pleas against the 26th Constitutional Amendment. Justice Mazhar is part of the eight-member bench led by Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan and also includes Justice Ayesha

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Court to give Hasina case verdict on Nov 13

NEWS DESK

DHAKA: The verdict in the crimes against humanity case against ousted Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina will be delivered on November 13, the attorney general said, as the trial ended on Thursday. Hasina, 78, has defied court orders to return from India to face charges of ordering a deadly crackdown in a failed attempt to crush a student-led uprising. "If she believed in the justice system, she should have returned," Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman said in his closing speech of the nearly five-month-long trial in Dhaka.

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PAF chief strengthens defence ties with Romania

The Romanian State Secretary of Defence praised the Pakistan Air Force's outstanding combat history and operational excellence, expressing Romania's interest in learning from PAF's rich operational experience



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the

Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), met with Mr. Eduard Bachide, State Secretary of Defence, and General Gheorgita Vlad, Chief of Defence of Romania, during his official visit to

Romania. The high-level meeting focused on enhancing military-to-military cooperation and exploring new avenues of strategic collaboration between the two countries. During the meeting, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu emphasized that Pakistan greatly values its strong diplomatic and defence relations with Romania, which are rooted in shared perspectives on regional peace and stability. He reaffirmed PAF's commitment to expanding the scope of bilateral defence cooperation, particularly in the fields of training, joint exercises, and operational synergy. The Romanian State Secretary of Defence praised the Pakistan Air Force's outstanding combat history and operational excellence, expressing Romania's interest in learning from

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Naqvi orders to appoint separate directors for each scheme

The meeting also discussed plans to revitalize the Gandhara Citizen Club, which will offer a range of sports and recreational facilities to the public. Officials decided that the club would provide better and more diverse amenities than the existing clubs in the city

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired a high-level meeting at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Headquarters on Thursday to review ongoing and upcoming development projects in the federal capital. During the session, a key decision was made to appoint dedicated Project Directors for each major development initiative. Minister Naqvi said that the appointment of separate directors for individual projects would significantly improve the pace and quality of progress, ensuring timely completion. "Each Project Director will be personally responsible for the timely and quality completion of their respective projects," Mohsin Naqvi emphasized. The meeting also discussed plans to revitalize the

Gandhara Citizen Club, which will offer a range of sports and recreational facilities to the public. Officials decided that the club would provide better and more diverse amenities than the existing clubs in the city. Minister Naqvi announced that the revamped Gandhara Club would feature modern attractions such as Top Golf and Go-Karting tracks, making it a standout recreational hub in the capital. "Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, the new Gandhara Club will become a central landmark of Islamabad," the Interior Minister stated. Officials briefed the minister that the topographic survey of Gandhara Club has already been completed. The meeting further reviewed progress on the construction of the new Convention Centre,

with the minister directing officials to present a comprehensive development plan for the project. Naqvi also instructed the CDA to prepare an alternative plan for the CDA Hospital, ensuring improved medical facilities for CDA employees. Other development updates included the extension of Margalla Road to the Motorway, development of various residential sectors, and the construction of hotels and a cricket stadium. Minister Naqvi directed authorities to accelerate the pace of all ongoing projects to meet deadlines and uphold quality standards. The meeting was attended by CDA Chairman, Inspector General of Islamabad Police, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, and other senior officials.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Irfan Choudhury Vice President ICCI, Khalid Choudhury Former SVP ICCI & Ghulam Murtiza Secretary General ICCI Presented Flowers Tahir Ayub Acting President ICCI.

Quality education top priority: Mandokhel

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhel said that we should raise the academic stature of our universities so that instead of students leaving our province, students from other provinces should come here to quench their thirst for knowledge. He said that this would be possible only when each of us plays his or her full role, the teachers of public universities should focus on applied research instead of paper research along with teaching their curriculum. He said this while talking to the faculty members of the tenure track system during his visit to the University of Balochistan. Vice Chancellor Dr. Zahoor Bazzi and Pro-Vice Shahwani were also present on the occasion. The Governor said that ensuring that research benefits the society as much as possible, by bridging the gap between education and research, we could promote innovation and advance economic development. Talking to the TTH faculty members, the Governor said that today I wanted to hear you directly so that I could get accurate information about the ground realities. He expressed his confidence that we would never repeat the mistakes we made in the past.—APP

‘Govt committed to modernizing Railways’

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Thursday said that the government was committed to transforming Pakistan Railways into a modern and efficient service provider that meets global standards. Addressing the Regional Transport Ministers' International Conference, the minister said the event was a reminder that transport was not merely about the movement of goods and people, but also about creating new opportunities, fostering economic growth, and strengthening regional and global ties. He highlighted that Pakistan Railways, one of the

oldest and most extensive railway networks in South Asia, had embarked on a journey of modernization focused on efficiency, transparency and improved service delivery in both passenger and freight sectors. Abbasi said that digitization and modernization were central to enhancing the railway's digital footprint and improving service delivery. To increase efficiency and service quality, a number of passenger and freight trains were being outsourced to the private sector under public-private partnership models. The minister described Main Line-I (ML-I) as the "main

artery" of Pakistan Railways, carrying around 80 percent of passenger and 90 percent of freight operations. He said that its up-gradation was critical for enhancing operational capacity and opening new avenues for regional connectivity. He also underlined the importance of upgrading Main Line-II (Kotri-Attock) and mentioned the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Corridor (UAPRC) as a transformative project connecting Pakistan's seaports with landlocked Central Asian Republics. The project includes the construction of a 192-kilometer rail link from Kohat to Kharlachi.—APP

CTD busts network behind recent target killings

KARACHI: Sindh Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has arrested members of a gang involved in recent target killings in Karachi, DIGP CTD Ghulam Azfar Mahesar announced during a press conference on Thursday. According to the DIGP, the CTD conducted 32 intelligence-based operations in connection with the investigation. Two target killers belonging to the Zainabiyyun Brigade have been arrested, while one of the key suspects, identified as Imran Mota, was among the most wanted criminals. The arrested suspects confessed to involvement in the target killings of Abdul Rehman in Korangi and Anas Rehman on University Road. DIGP Azfar Mahesar said the group was operating from a neighboring country, and several of its local supporters have also been identified. CTD has launched a crackdown against the network and is pursuing cases related to terror financing. The DIGP further stated that the culprits had arrived in Karachi 20 days before the first murder and had several people on their hit list. CTD has already warned potential targets to remain cautious. He added that investigations are underway to determine whether the same group was involved in the New Karachi killings. The CTD has also recovered valuable data from the suspects' mobile phones and received information about dumped weapons belonging to sleeper cells. Azfar Mahesar said that in recent weeks, two convicts in Hyderabad and three in Karachi were sentenced to life imprisonment in terrorism cases. The Sindh government has appointed dedicated prosecutors for CTD cases, significantly improving the department's performance.—APP

Govt committed to make agri sector profitable

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for National Food Security and Research Minister Malik Rasheed Ahmed Khan on Thursday said that the government was committed to making the agriculture sector a profitable and sustainable source of livelihood by ensuring the provision of agricultural inputs at subsidized rates, besides increasing the import limit for quality seeds. Addressing the 25th meeting of the Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA), the minister said that the government is introducing a bio-pesticide regulatory framework to promote safe pest control and compliance with international export standards. The meeting was also attended by provincial secretaries of agriculture, senior officials from the federal and provincial departments and representatives of relevant organizations, said a press release issued by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. The minister said that the Federal Committee on Agriculture serves as an essential platform where the

federation and provinces engage in collective decision-making for sustainable agricultural development and food security. He emphasized that achieving food security requires enhancing per-acre yield and ensuring efficient utilization of available resources. He highlighted the immense potential in Pakistan's agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors. Malik Rasheed Ahmed Khan stressed the need to adopt modern agricultural technologies and develop effective marketing systems linked to both domestic as well as international markets and underlined that open trade policies and reduced trade barriers were vital to strengthening the agricultural economy. Addressing the challenges posed by recent floods in Punjab, the minister informed that the federal and provincial governments were jointly assessing damages and working on rehabilitation measures for affected farmers. He appreciated the efforts of research institutions developing climate-resilient crop varieties to mit-

igate future risks caused by climate change. Malik Rasheed further informed that the National Seed Policy and Biotechnology Policy were in their final stages of approval. These policies aim to promote the use of certified seeds, strengthen public-private partnerships, and encourage biotechnology-based innovations for sustainable agricultural productivity, he added. Under the Prime Minister's economic transformation agenda, he said that the ministry, in collaboration with provincial governments and the Green Pakistan Initiative, has formulated a comprehensive roadmap for the revival and modernization of the agriculture sector. The roadmap includes measures for mechanization, seed reforms, cotton revival, value addition, financial inclusion, and enhanced agricultural exports, he added. Highlighting institutional reforms, the minister said that the government has established the National Agri Trade and Food Safety Authority to harmonize food quality standards.—APP

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Governor Punjab visits Rawalpindi Chamber

At the conclusion of the ceremony, a commemorative shield was presented to the Governor of Punjab

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), where he was warmly welcomed by RCCI President Usman Shaukat, Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, and other office bearers. During the visit, the Governor inaugurated the Groundwater Recharge System within the Chamber premises and also planted a tree as part of the Green Punjab initiative. The event was attended by members of the Executive Committee, representatives of the traders' associations, and prominent business figures including Shahid Ghafoor Pracha, Sheikh Hafeez, Arshad Awan, Tariq Waheed Butt, and others. In his welcome address, RCCI President Usman Shaukat expressed

gratitude to the Governor for his continued support and close association with the

access road, development of Economic Zones along the Ring Road, and urged

to improve the economic situation. Governor Punjab assured the business com-

traders. He appreciated the resilience of the business community, acknowledging their role in sustaining Pakistan's economy amid challenging circumstances. Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that Pakistan's stature has risen on the global stage after recent events. "It is a matter of pride that Pakistan will safeguard Makkah and Madinah under the defense agreement with Saudi Arabia. Even the U.S. President considers it an honor to meet our Field Marshal," he added. The Governor emphasized unity and collective efforts for the country's progress, stating that the practice of road blockades should come to an end. He lauded the business community for investing in Pakistan despite difficult conditions, terming their contribution "highly commendable." At the conclusion of the ceremony, a commemorative shield was presented to the Governor of Punjab.



business community. He highlighted the Chamber's initiatives and projects, including the construction of the Rawat Industrial Estate

for the installation of Smog Towers in Rawalpindi under the Green Punjab program. Group Leader Sohail Altaf also presented suggestions

munity that he would take up their issues with the relevant authorities, reaffirming that the Governor's Office remains open for

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

Oct 01/China
National Day

Oct 01/Cyprus
National Day

Oct 01/Republic of Korea
Armed Forces Day

Oct 01/Nigeria
Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea
National Day

Oct 03/Germany
Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea
National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia
Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt
Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda
Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain
National Day

Oct 23/Hungary
National Day

October 24/United Nations
United Nations Day

Oct/25/Romania
Armed Forces Day

Oct 26/Austria
National Day

Oct 27/Turkmenistan
Independence Day

Oct 28/Czech Republic
National Day

Oct 29/Turkey
Republic Day



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Water Tank	
Islamabad.....	0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar attends the 80th Anniversary Celebration of the United Nations reception held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. Chairman Seante Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Deputy Speaker of National Assembly also attended the event. – DNA

Pak, Egypt to strengthen educational coop: Wajiha

Both sides agreed to continue dialogue for developing a structured framework to facilitate student mobility, scholarship opportunities, and joint research programmes between universities of the two countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar, met with the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dr. Ihab Abdel Hamid, here on Thursday.

During the meeting, both sides discussed avenues for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of education, particularly focusing on student exchange programmes, academic collaboration, and institutional linkages between Pakistan and Egypt. Wajiha Qamar emphasized the government's commitment to expanding interna-

tional educational partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and cultural understanding for Pakistani students. She appreciated Egypt's longstanding academic ties with Pakistan and expressed interest in exploring new areas of collaboration in higher education and technical training. Ambassador Dr. Ihab Abdel Hamid reaffirmed

Egypt's willingness to work closely with Pakistan in promoting educational exchange and mutual learning initiatives. Both sides agreed to continue dialogue for developing a structured framework to facilitate student mobility, scholarship opportunities, and joint research programmes between universities of the two countries.

President ICCI calls for promoting investment, industrial growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Sardar Tahir Mehmood has reaffirmed ICCI's unwavering commitment to advocating for a stable, predictable, and business-friendly environment that promotes investment, industrial growth, and job creation. He expressed these views while talking to an eleven-member delegation of the Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers (PALSP) led by its Chairman Javaid Iqbal, which called on him at the ICCI. The delegation included Patron-in-Chief Abbas Akberali, Vice Chairman Ilyas Aziz Malik, Secretary General Wajid Bukhari, and other senior members. From ICCI, Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, Council Member Chaudhry Masood, and Executive Member Umair Aziz Malik were also present. Sardar Tahir Mehmood emphasized

that sustainable economic development can only be achieved through consistent policies and close coordination among the government, private sector, and regulatory institutions. He announced that ICCI is planning to organize an "All Chambers Presidents Conclave" in late November or early December to develop a comprehensive working paper, in consultation with major business stakeholders. The document will be presented to the government as a proposal for formulating long-term and growth-oriented economic policies that ensure a level playing field for all industries. He assured that ICCI will continue to act as a strong voice of the business community and will work closely with industry associations like PALSP to advocate for reforms that strengthen the industrial base, generate employment, and enhance national economic stability. During the meeting, PALSP Chairman Javaid Iqbal expressed concerns over the absence of stable and long-

term government policies, saying that policy inconsistency and frequent reversals have created uncertainty for investors and compelled many industrialists to move their operations to neighboring countries offering more predictable environments. He stressed the need for clear and supportive industrial policies to safeguard Pakistan's manufacturing sector. Patron-in-Chief Abbas Akberali cautioned that the current policy framework and rising cost of doing business could lead to the collapse of the domestic steel industry. He strongly opposed any reduction in import duties on steel products without parallel measures to reduce local production costs, warning that such steps could flood the market with cheap imports, causing plant closures and job losses. He also voiced alarm over the unchecked production of substandard steel, which, he said, poses a serious threat to national infrastructure and undermines compliant, tax-paying manufacturers.

Student Council vital for fostering leadership qualities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Student Council has consistently played an instrumental role in fostering leadership qualities and providing valuable learning opportunities to the students of the institution. It actively collaborates with both the faculty and the student body to achieve the curricular and co-curricular objectives of the college. At Islamabad Model College for Girls (Postgraduate), F-7/2, elections for the Student Council for the academic session 2025–26 were conducted in October 2025. A dignified Investiture Ceremony for the newly elected Executive Members and Class Representatives was held on 23rd October, 2025 in the College Auditorium. The ceremony was graced by the honourable Minister of the State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajiha Qamar as the Chief Guest. She has proven her mettle as a true patron of girl education in her previous assignment as Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training and in her current role as the Minister of State. Mr. Shahid Mahmood Abbasi (Director Colleges), Mr. Muhammad Qamar ud din (Director Urban I) and Ms. Fasiha Fayaz Khan (Deputy Director, Quality Control) from the Federal Directorate of Education were also in attendance. Principals from various educational institutions attended the event as well. The parents of the new-

ly elected Executive Council Members were also invited to witness the auspicious occasion. The programme commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran along with its translation by Mehr un Nisa Arshad followed by a Naate-Rasool-e-Maqbool (s.a.w.w) rendered by Faiza Naseer. The host, Ms. Sara Bibi, extended a warm welcome to the honourable Chief Guest. The Stage Secretary elaborated on the pivotal role of the Student Council in organizing inter-class and inter-collegiate competitions. Ms. Sara Bibi also highlighted the academic and co-curricular achievements of the college during the session 2024–25. Subsequently, the College Anthem was melodiously presented by a group of talented students. The outgoing President, Ms. Huda Khalid, delivered a heartfelt farewell address and formally handed over her responsibilities to the incoming President, Ms. Aoon Muskan. She also presented the college activities report for the session 2024-2025 to the Principal of the college, Prof. Dr. Fauzia Tanveer Sheikh. Ms. Wajiha Qamar administered the oath of office to President Ms. Aoon Muskan, Vice President Ms. Areeba Aziz, General Secretary Ms. Amna Azhar, Joint Secretary Ms. Samiya Malik, the Secretaries of various societies, and the Class Representatives. The Chief Guest also distributed badges among the newly appointed office bearers of the Student Council 2025–

26. In her address to the audience, the Chief Guest lauded the Student Council for ensuring a smooth and democratic process for electing the Student Council 2025-26. She appreciated the Principal of the college, Dr. Fauzia Tanveer Sheikh, for her dedication and commitment towards her profession. She emphasized upon the character building role of the teachers in the lives of the students. The Chief Guest encouraged the teachers to evolve and equip themselves to maintain pace with the requirements the 21st century. She urged the students to maintain faith in their abilities, asserting that the youth possess the strength and potential to reshape society for the better. Her eloquent and thought-provoking address was received with great appreciation and admiration by the audience. Thereafter, the Principal presented the College Insignia to the Chief Guest as a token of gratitude. In her concluding remarks, Dr. Fauzia Tanveer Sheikh expressed sincere thanks to the Chief Guest for her gracious presence and extended heartfelt felicitations to the In-Charge Student Council and her team for organizing a splendid and well-coordinated ceremony. Aoon Muskan, President Student Council, presented a vote of gratitude on behalf of the newly elected Student Council. The event concluded on a patriotic note with the rendition of the National Anthem, marking the end of a memorable and ceremony.

Call for depositing second installment by Nov 15

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousuf on Thursday urged intending pilgrims to deposit their second installment of Hajj dues between November 3 and 15 in designated banks. Addressing a press conference, the minister said that the intending pilgrims would deposit the second installment of Rs 6.5 million and receive a confirmation message through the mobile application 'Pak Hajj' after payment. Highlighting the arrangements for Hajj 2026, the minister said the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in collaboration with the Saudi government, had successfully controlled the Hajj expenses while ensuring quality facilities for pilgrims. He added that the submission process for Hajj applications, including an additional quota of 30,000, had been completed successfully. "The cost of the 40-day Hajj package has been fixed at Rs 1.15 million, while the 25-day short Hajj package will cost Rs 1.2 million," Sardar Yousuf stated. Sharing details about the facilities, the minister said that pilgrims would be provided with a large trolley bag, a hand-carry bag, and scarves for women, similar to previous years. He added that each pilgrim would also receive a Saudi mobile SIM card with internet access and 300 to 600 free minutes to facilitate communication with their families. The minister further said that pilgrims would have access to folding mattresses, air-conditioned camps, and chip-sam walls as provided in the previous year. Referring to the Hajj Nazim Scheme, introduced last year to guide pilgrims, Yousuf said that it would be made more effective this year, with one Hajj Nazim appointed for every 150 pilgrims. The minister said the process of returning Rs 3.5 billion to pilgrims had begun, following differences in accommodation costs in the Mina and Mecca zones.—APP

NOTICE COURT

IN THE COURT OF SHAMLA YASEEN JUDGE FAMILY COURT RAWALPINDI
Petition Under Section 25 Guardian and ward act 1980 Faisal Mehmood Versus Siria Begum Notice to Siria Begum W/o Muhammad Jahngir R/o Ali Town, Chahatta Market, Adyala Road, Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 25-10-2025 at 8 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

87% work completed on Tarbela 5th extension transmission line project

ISLAMABAD: Significant progress has been achieved on the World Bank-funded 500kV Tarbela 5th Extension Transmission Line Project, which has recorded 87.5 percent physical and 87 percent financial completion by the end of September 2025. The project, a vital component of the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), is being implemented by a joint venture of M/s Netracon and MMP-BIDR (JV) with an approved PC-I cost of Rs4,140.33 million and a contracted value of Rs2,504 million. Its main objective is to ensure reliable and efficient evacuation of additional power from the Tarbela Hydropower Station into the national grid. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the design and engineering work has reached 97.5 percent completion, while procurement activities stand at 97.2 percent, ensuring that all essential materials have been secured. On-site construction work is also advancing steadily, with civil works completed up to 85 percent and erection of transmission structures at 76 percent. The stringing process, involving installation of the transmission lines, has achieved 29 percent progress, and testing and commissioning will commence once physical construction is fully completed. Alongside the Tarbela project, several other major World Bank-funded initiatives are also advancing under the national transmission expansion programme. The 500kV Double Circuit Overhead Transmission Line Project for the 500kV Nowshera Grid Station has achieved 93 percent physical progress as of September 29, 2025. The project, being executed by M/s Netracon in collaboration with M/s Barqaab Consulting Services, has a total contract value of US\$6.28 million (Rs406.3 million) and an approved PC-I cost of Rs41,111 million. Its contractual completion date was April 17, 2025, but the timeline has been extended to December 31, 2025 to allow for final testing and commissioning. Meanwhile, the World Bank-funded Dasu Transmission Line Project is also advancing to enhance Pakistan's high-voltage grid and improve power evacuation from upcoming hydropower plants in the north. The project comprises two main components – Lot-I (765kV Dasu–Mansehra, 157km) and Lot-II (765kV Mansehra–Islamabad West, 97.6km). As of September-end, the Dasu–Mansehra section has achieved 38 percent physical and 21 percent financial progress, while the Mansehra–Islamabad West section has reached 42 percent physical and 34 percent financial completion. The design and engineering work for both segments has been completed, procurement has advanced between 40 and 50 percent, and civil and erection works are proceeding steadily. The Dasu Transmission Line Project, with a total estimated cost of Rs132,249.76 million (US\$123.46 million plus Rs11,070 million), is a cornerstone of Pakistan's broader transmission enhancement strategy. Officials from the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) said the initiative is essential for integrating clean and affordable hydropower into the national grid, reducing dependence on imported fuels, and ensuring a stable power supply to northern and central regions of the country. Upon completion, the Tarbela 5th Extension Transmission Line, together with the Dasu–Mansehra–Islamabad corridor, will form a major backbone for long-distance power transfer in Pakistan. These projects, collectively funded and supported under international development frameworks, are expected to play a decisive role in strengthening national energy security, increasing grid reliability, and ensuring efficient utilization of future hydropower generation.—DNA

Call for depositing second installment by Nov 15

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousuf on Thursday urged intending pilgrims to deposit their second installment of Hajj dues between November 3 and 15 in designated banks. Addressing a press conference, the minister said that the intending pilgrims would deposit the second installment of Rs 6.5 million and receive a confirmation message through the mobile application 'Pak Hajj' after payment. Highlighting the arrangements for Hajj 2026, the minister said the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in collaboration with the Saudi government, had successfully controlled the Hajj expenses while ensuring quality facilities for pilgrims. He added that the submission process for Hajj applications, including an additional quota of 30,000, had been completed successfully. "The cost of the 40-day Hajj package has been fixed at Rs 1.15 million, while the 25-day short Hajj package will cost Rs 1.2 million," Sardar Yousuf stated. Sharing details about the facilities, the minister said that pilgrims would be provided with a large trolley bag, a hand-carry bag, and scarves for women, similar to previous years. He added that each pilgrim would also receive a Saudi mobile SIM card with internet access and 300 to 600 free minutes to facilitate communication with their families. The minister further said that pilgrims would have access to folding mattresses, air-conditioned camps, and chip-sam walls as provided in the previous year. Referring to the Hajj Nazim Scheme, introduced last year to guide pilgrims, Yousuf said that it would be made more effective this year, with one Hajj Nazim appointed for every 150 pilgrims. The minister said the process of returning Rs 3.5 billion to pilgrims had begun, following differences in accommodation costs in the Mina and Mecca zones.—APP

Briefs

80% work
completed
on Islamabad
IT Park

ISLAMABAD: Around 80 percent of work on the Islamabad IT Park project has been completed, and it is expected to be completed within its revised deadline of December 31, 2025. An official of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication said that the Prime Minister has issued clear directions to ensure the project's completion within the current year. The official further informed that the ministry is establishing Special Technology Parks in smaller cities through the private sector, under which interest-free loans are being provided to support such initiatives. "These projects are aimed at facilitating entrepreneurs and local investors while promoting technology-based industries in underdeveloped regions," the official added.—APP

25 new
dengue cases
reported
in ICT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration has intensified efforts to control dengue as 25 new cases were reported in the last 24 hours, according to the latest surveillance report issued on Thursday. Of the new cases, 16 were recorded in rural areas and nine in urban localities of the federal capital. The report said that 55 patients are currently under treatment at various hospitals across the city. To curb the spread of dengue, the district administration carried out a large-scale anti-dengue operation. District teams conducted 47,283 inspections in residential, commercial, and public areas. Fogging was carried out at 2,169 locations, while 974 sites were sprayed with anti-dengue chemicals, primarily in high-risk zones identified during field surveys. Larvae testing continued across the capital, revealing 412 positive and 5 negative results, indicating the persistent presence of dengue breeding sites in different localities. District officers have directed teams to further accelerate fogging operations in high-risk sectors and rural clusters, particularly in areas where dengue larvae were detected. The administration also reiterated that all identified breeding sites must be cleared immediately to prevent further spread of the virus. The report stated that any individual or entity found responsible for allowing mosquito breeding on their premises will face legal action. The administration has instructed field inspectors to report all such violations for the registration of formal cases.—APP

Pak, China
agricultural
cooperation
deepens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from China's agricultural technology sector visited the Confucius Institute at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF), marking a new step in practical agricultural cooperation between the two sides. The visit focused on transferring China's advanced seed technologies to strengthen Pakistan's food security and agricultural modernization, Gwadar Pro reports. The delegation, led by General Manager Wu Zhonghua and International Market Manager Zhou Yumpeng of Hubei Allwin High-Tech Seed Co., held in-depth discussions with Dr. Saddam Hussain, Dean and Vice President of the Confucius Institute, to establish a framework for long-term collaboration. During a technical seminar titled "China's Pathway to Resilience: Hybrid Rice Innovations for Robust Seed Systems and Sustainable Livelihoods," Chinese experts shared insights from five decades of hybrid rice development. They highlighted how stress-tolerant Chinese rice varieties achieve higher yields in similar South Asian environments, offering practical solutions for Pakistan's agricultural challenges.—APP

3 Pakistani provinces
commit to child protection

The provincial governments of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh have pledged to continue reforms on addressing child marriage, birth registration, child protection, gender-based violence and social inclusion

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The UK's Aawaz II programme, which started in 2017, has supported pilots such as the Anti-Rape Crisis Cells, District Child Protection Units and Women Protection Centres (WPC) which the provincial governments are now using as models to scale and expand. The innovative digital birth registration model, which facilitated over 3.5 million registrations, has already been scaled up by the respective provincial governments. The community engagement in 42 districts of Pakistan has demonstrated meaningful ways to address gender-based violence, child marriage, and exclusion of vulnerable communities. It has also developed Early Warning Systems to pre-empt conflicts while working closely with the local administration.

Speaking at a National Learning Event held to celebrate the success of the Aawaz II programme on Wednesday 22 October, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal and Federal Minister for Law and Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar committed to building on this work, ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalised populations of society are protected in the long-run. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "From supporting the Child Labour Survey in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to facilitating over 3 million birth registrations, the success of Aawaz II is a testament to what we can achieve together to serve communi-



ties. Let us continue to work together to build a safer, more inclusive, and prosperous Pakistan for all."

Dinner hosted in honour
of Baku delegation
highlights growing ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A dinner was graciously hosted by Rohail Anwar Butt, Executive Member of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI), in honor of the delegation of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry (APJCCI) that recently visited Baku. The event was graced by Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, who delivered an inspiring address highlighting the growing partnership between the two brotherly nations. Ambassador Khazar Farhadov, in his remarks, shared that there are currently three weekly flights from Islamabad to Baku and six from Lahore to Baku, with plans underway to start daily flights to further enhance connectivity. He noted that Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of

the United Business Group (UBG), was among the first to propose the idea of direct air links between Pakistan and Azerbaijan—an idea that has now become reality. The Ambassador praised the Bakhtawari family as a "brand of patriotism in Pakistan," lauding their continuous efforts to promote friendship and cooperation between the two countries. He further mentioned that the two consecutive visits of Azerbaijan's leadership to Pakistan in recent months had been highly productive, yielding tangible progress in trade, investment, and tourism collaboration. In the welcome address, Rohail Anwar Butt executive member icci expressed heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Khazar Farhadov for gracing the occasion and acknowledged his dynamic role in deepening bilateral ties. Sharing his impressions from the recent visit to Baku, he described it as a "memorable and cordial experience"

that left a lasting positive impression. He emphasized that such visits are crucial for expanding business opportunities and cultural understanding between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari, President of APJCCI, in his address, expressed deep appreciation to Ambassador Farhadov for his personal involvement in organizing meaningful business meetings and interactions during the delegation's visit to Baku. He described the launch of the Halal Food Festival in Baku, initiated by the APJCCI, as a "landmark achievement" that will help promote trade and cultural linkages. He highlighted the vast potential for economic, commercial, and investment partnerships between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, expressing optimism that with continued engagement and shared vision, both nations will see remarkable growth in trade and tourism in the coming years. Khalid Iqbal,

former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also praised Ambassador Khazar Farhadov for his tireless commitment and leadership in advancing bilateral economic and cultural cooperation. The event was attended by several prominent businessmen and dignitaries, including Abid Bakhtawari, Haris Bakhtawari, Malik Mohsin, Umer Khayyam Abbasi, Rayan Anwar Butt, Usman Anwar Butt, Malik Shabbir, Awais Satti, Yousaf Rajpoot, Zargham Shah, Malik Nadeem Akhtar, Asad Aziz, Khalid Abbasi, Waheed Cheema, Shumaila Sadique, Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi, and Rana Billal, among others. The evening concluded with a renewed commitment from both sides to continue working together to strengthen business, cultural, and people-to-people ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Senator calls on
PPP leadership to
engage in dialogue

ISLAMABAD: PML-N Senator Dr Afnan Ullah Khan on Thursday urged the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to sit down for talks and resolve issues through dialogue, stressing that both parties should concentrate on the upcoming local body elections in Punjab rather than indulging in blame games or using harsh language. While speaking with a local news channel, Senator Afnanullah expressed his confidence that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) holds a strong position in Punjab, where most of the MPAs belong to his party. He asserted that the PPP has little to no political presence in the province. He further advised the PPP to channel its efforts toward preparing for the elections rather than resorting to criticism, adding that constructive political engagement and cooperation between parties are essential for strengthening democracy and ensuring progress in the country. The senator further stated that while the PPP is an allied party, its leaders should refrain from unnecessary criticism and choose their words carefully in the media. Afnanullah added that maintaining a respectful tone and unity among coalition partners is vital for the stability of the government and the success of democratic processes. He said that the PML-N is performing effectively not only in Punjab but also at the federal level, where its leadership has regained international recognition due to its sound policies and diplomatic approach. He added that these efforts are paving the way for sustainable national growth and that the country is set to witness further progress under the party's governance.—DNA

Dengue wiped out
in Murree

RAWALPINDI: Murree witnesses zero dengue cases in the last 10 days as a result of intensified dengue preventive measures by the district administration. Following special instructions from Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, the district administration and health department teams have ramped up coordinated and effective operations to eradicate dengue. According to the details, CEO Health Dr. Azhar Mahmood Abbasi conducted a detailed visit of the Angoori and Trait areas in Tehsil Murree, where he reviewed anti-dengue activities, fogging operations, and inspections for mosquito larvae in homes. Meanwhile, teams comprising Tehsil Health Inspectors, dengue focal persons (Legal) and entomologists carried out surveillance in various parts of Misiyari, Nambal, and Murree City, during which two locations homes and shops were sealed for violations of dengue SOPs. Dr. Zulfiqar Satti, Deputy District Officer Health Murree too, along with health team, inspected multiple sites. Entomologist teams completed indoor residual spraying (IRS) and fogging operations across several areas. According to the Health Department a total of 118 dengue cases have been recorded in District Murree to date. The Health Department has appealed to citizens to fully cooperate with the health teams, ensure no stagnant water accumulates in their homes, shops, or surroundings and maintain strict cleanliness to facilitate the complete elimination of dengue. Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi said that public cooperation is the most crucial element in preventing dengue.—DNA

IRSA releases
101,400
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 101,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 69,100 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1549.33 feet which was 147.33 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet.

Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 35,300 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs, respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1240.25 feet, which was 190.25 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 46,400, 46,100, 42,700, and 9,100 cusecs, respectively.

Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,400 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 10,300 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Pak's rice
exports to
China surge
63% in Q3 2025

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's rice exports to China reached \$45.27 million in the third quarter of 2025, up 63% year-on-year from \$27.85 million in the same period last year, according to the latest data from the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC).

During this period, Pakistan exported semi- or wholly-milled rice (commodity code 10063020) worth \$34.30 million, totaling 76.36 million kilograms at an average price of \$0.44 per kilogram. In the same quarter of 2024, the export value was just over \$6 million, with a volume of 7.42 million kilograms, marking a sharp rise in both quantity and export earnings. Exports of broken rice (commodity code 10064020) also performed strongly, reaching \$8.04 million, while another category of broken rice (of length =6mm and length-width ratio =2, commodity code 10064080) recorded \$2.92 million during the first nine months of 2025. Overall, Pakistan exported 109,494 tons of various rice categories to China during this period.—APP

‘Breast Cancer Deaths’
could drop 40%

ISLAMABAD: An oncologist Thursday declared during 'Breast Cancer Awareness Month' that early treatment can reduce mortality by 40% and raised alarm over the 90,000 women affected annually by this lethal disease calling for urgent awareness and early intervention. While speaking with a local news channel, leading surgeon and oncologist Dr. Sana Zeeshan emphasized the critical importance of early detection in breast cancer. She explained that identifying the disease at an early stage not only significantly increases the chances of successful treatment but also drastically reduces the emotional and physical toll on patients, adding, early diagnosis allows women to seek timely medical intervention, improving survival rates and quality of life. Expert highlighted the financial benefits of early detection, adding, treating breast cancer in its initial stages is far less expensive than managing advanced cancer, which often requires more complex and prolonged treatments. She urged all women to prioritize regular self-examinations and medical checkups and called on healthcare providers to strengthen awareness campaigns and provide easier access to screening facilities. "Early detection can save lives and protect families from financial hardship," Dr. Zeeshan said, stressing that increased vigilance and education are key to combating breast cancer effectively. Responding a query, Sana Zeeshan specifically highlighted October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, urging women to use this time to learn about the key symptoms such as lumps in the breast, changes in breast shape or size, nipple discharge and persistent pain.—DNA

Healthy Edible
Oil campaign
under CPEC

ISLAMABAD: In several regions in Pakistan were affected by severe flooding, bringing considerable challenges to local production and livelihoods. As a result, public welfare and health needs have become particularly urgent. To actively fulfill its corporate social responsibility and support Pakistan's post-disaster livelihood recovery and rural revitalization, As CPEC Agricultural project company, Wuhan Qingfa Hesheng seed company and its partner EYVOL Group jointly organized the "2025 Pakistan HC-021C Healthy Edible Oil Campus Campaign" from September to October across Multan, Khanpur, Layyah, and Liaquatpur in Punjab Province. As an important practice of "rooting locally and serving locally," the campaign focused on the core goals of "Empowering Livelihoods and Promoting Health." It was carefully designed to meet the actual needs of local people, with over 50 events held in total. The campaign mainly targeted school students and nearby villagers, reaching more than 30,000 participants. By bringing quality agricultural resources and health knowledge directly to the people, the campaign contributed to sustainable development and improved well-being in Pakistan. The activities combined theoretical learning with hands-on experience. On one hand, professionals gave systematic lectures on the advantages, nutritional value, and industrial potential of the HC-021C double-low hybrid rapeseed variety. On the other hand, they conducted live demonstrations of preparing local dishes using HC-021C canola oil, allowing participants to experience its high quality firsthand. Students actively engaged in interactive Q&A sessions, while villagers eagerly exchanged ideas on cultivation and dietary practices.—APP

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Stepping up our collective action on gender equality

AUDREY LESPERRES

HOW can we unite, act and resist together in order to defend gender equality and the rights of women and girls? This is the guiding question of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy, which France is hosting this week. This conference brings together foreign ministers from all regions of the world, representatives of international organizations and public development banks, as well as civil society, research bodies and philanthropic foundations. Since 2019, France has pursued a feminist foreign policy, making gender equality and women's rights a cross-cutting priority of its external action in the fields of development, democratic governance, peace and security, and humanitarian action, among others. Yet feminist foreign policy is not just about lofty ideals; it follows through with concrete public policies and strong partnerships. Saudi Arabia has undertaken an ambitious transformation under Vision 2030, placing women's empowerment at the core of its national modernization strategy. Over the past decade, the Kingdom has recorded unprecedented milestones: women's participation in the workforce has more than doubled – from about 17 percent in 2016 to more than 36 percent in 2024 – while women now occupy leadership positions across government, diplomacy and business. Saudi Arabia is a key interlocutor for France in promoting women's leadership and inclusive growth on the global stage. The Kingdom today has more than a dozen female ambassadors and women lead key public institutions such as the Human Rights Commission and the Saudi stock exchange Tadawul. In the private sector, Saudi women chair major companies in the fields of finance, energy and technology and make up more than 40 percent of new entrepreneurs. Riyadh has also introduced reforms on travel, guardianship and political participation, allowing women to assume decision-making roles in line with international standards. These changes

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es illustrate how gender equality can evolve in a context of rapid societal transformation, making Saudi Arabia a key interlocutor for France in promoting women's leadership and inclusive growth on the global stage. France has made gender equality and defending women's and girls' rights a strategic and geopolitical priority in order to build just, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies. Research shows that the participation of women in negotiation processes increases the likelihood that a process will be sustainable by 35 percent. Similarly, policies that effectively mainstream gender equality make it possible to combat global warming more effectively, stimulate growth and strengthen the resilience of societies. In March, France presented its International Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy. A central tenet of this strategy is the defense of rights and sexual and reproductive health. New priorities have been established, placing gender equality at the heart of France's response to contemporary global challenges, including crises and conflicts, climate change, health, international finance, digital technology and artificial intelligence. Despite these initiatives and the progress made by the international community, much remains to be done. As part of its feminist foreign policy, France is implementing a number of flagship initiatives, including the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations, launched in 2020 to help more than 1,400 organizations in 75 countries. Another example is the Laboratory for Women's Rights Online, created in 2024. As the first of its kind, it offers an international platform for the exchange of ideas and serves as an incubator for projects to fight gender-based violence in the digital environment. Despite these initiatives and the progress made by the international community, much remains to be done. According to UN Women, at the current pace of change, it would take close to 300 years to achieve real gender equality in the world. Gender inequalities persist and in some cases are worsening. Conflict-related sexual violence rose by 50 percent from 2022 to 2023. In far too many countries, millions of women are denied the fundamental right to bodily autonomy. Wherever crises are shaking the foundations of society – in Afghanistan, Iran, Gaza, Ukraine or Sudan – it is women's rights that are the first to suffer. In an international context marked by a significant decline in dedicated funding and the rise of anti-rights movements, the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy will reaffirm our common determination to defend and promote women's rights and gender equality and to accept no regression. Together, we will keep moving forward.

Trump's Gaza Gamble Backfires on Both Israel and Iran

Qamar Bashir



In fact, this peace plan has effectively neutralized Israel's long-term objectives and reset the situation to zero. It has stopped Israel from achieving its ultimate ambition—not merely the destruction of Gaza and the West Bank, but the complete occupation and denial of the Palestinian right to statehood and self-determination. Israel had sought to permanently expel Palestinians under the pretext of a Hamas-led war, using Hamas as a convenient scapegoat to justify atrocities, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the transformation of Gaza...

IN recent days, Israel has launched another devastating assault on the Gaza Strip, killing more than 40 civilians and wounding dozens. The attack, which Israeli officials claim was a response to the killing of two of its soldiers by Hamas, has reignited international outrage and raised urgent questions about the fate of President Donald Trump's 21-point Middle East peace plan. Many observers believe that this assault, like the wars before it, was less a response to provocation and more an attempt to derail the peace framework that could constrain Israel's territorial ambitions. In an urgent diplomatic push, President Trump dispatched Vice President J.D. Vance to Israel to secure the government's commitment to at least the first stage of the plan. At a joint press conference with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the contrast between Washington's tone and Jerusalem's defiance was striking. Throughout the entire event, Netanyahu avoided any reference to the peace plan or to Israel's obligations under it. Vice President Vance, on the other hand, stressed that the plan would allow international agencies to feed the starving population of Gaza, rebuild shattered infrastructure, and ensure security guarantees for both Israelis and Palestinians. In fact, this peace plan has effectively neutralized Israel's long-term objectives and reset the situation to zero. It has stopped Israel from achieving its ultimate ambition—not merely the destruction of Gaza and the West Bank, but the complete occupation and denial of the Palestinian right to statehood and self-determination. Israel had sought to permanently expel Palestinians under the pretext of a Hamas-led war, using Hamas as a convenient scapegoat to justify atrocities, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the transformation of Gaza into a slaughterhouse. However, all of that—the killings, the political maneuvering, the massive financial and military investment, and the loss of soft power, credibility, and global image—has now gone in vain. This peace plan has practically reversed the gains Israel had made over the last three years, despite the enormous resources spent on sustaining its military operations, engaging in open confrontation with Iran, and bearing the immense costs of trade losses, investor flight, and international isolation. Consequently, the plan represents a terrible blow to Israel, one it may neither easily digest nor forgive. In the coming days, Israel is likely to take every possible

measure to sabotage this peace process and return to its earlier trajectory—resuming the killing, reoccupying Gaza and the West Bank, expanding illegal settlements, and advancing toward its long-cherished dream of a "Greater Israel." Analysts note that this political and psychological blow explains Netanyahu's open hostility to the plan. His far-right cabinet views Trump's initiative as an existential threat to their vision of a regional Israel dominating the Middle East under the banner of divine entitlement. For them, the peace plan undermines decades of ideological investment and military strategy, forcing Israel to confront a future where Palestinian sovereignty is not just tolerated but internationally guaranteed. Ironically, Hamas—the very organization long branded as the obstacle to peace—appears more willing than Israel to accept the plan's early conditions. For Hamas, exhausted by siege and isolation, participation offers a chance to regain legitimacy and to attract Arab reconstruction funds. Arab monarchies, too, now see in this plan an opportunity to curtail Iran's influence in the region by weakening Hamas, Hezbollah, and other Tehran-aligned groups. Their alignment with Washington and Trump's diplomacy has become a tool to re-engineer Middle Eastern politics around a new Sunni-led order. Yet the geopolitical centerpiece remains Iran. Tehran, though not a signatory to the plan, looms over every conversation. It alone among Muslim powers retains both the will and the capability to confront Israel militarily. Were it not for U.S. intervention, Israel could have faced a deeper crisis during the recent regional escalation, when Iran demonstrated unprecedented drone and missile capabilities. For this reason, the peace plan's architects understand that no durable arrangement is possible without Iran's eventual inclusion or at least tacit restraint. Still, Israel and Iran now stand on opposite sides of Trump's initiative—each rejecting it for different reasons. Israel sees it as a brake on its territorial expansion; Iran views it as an American-Israeli tool to marginalize its regional role. Meanwhile, the so-called "middle bloc" of Muslim nations—Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and several Gulf states—support the plan conditionally. They will fund Gaza's reconstruction only after Hamas is dismantled and new governance structures are in place. This triangulation has created an uneasy balance: two

powerful opponents of the plan, Israel and Iran, confronting a coalition of pragmatic states determined to stabilize the region under U.S. oversight. European nations, pressured by outraged publics and student protests, have also pivoted toward endorsing Palestinian statehood and humanitarian aid. They now see peace in Gaza not as a moral luxury but as a political necessity to preserve their own credibility. If Israel continues to resist implementation, it risks isolation not only diplomatically but also domestically. American universities, churches, and media outlets are increasingly critical of Israel's conduct. The moral authority Israel once claimed as a besieged democracy is collapsing under the weight of documented atrocities and live-streamed destruction. Without Trump's backing, its expansionist agenda could face unprecedented limits. In this new geopolitical equation, the probable losers are Israel, Iran, and Hamas—each for different reasons. Israel loses because it is constrained; Iran loses because its influence may shrink; Hamas loses because it is being rendered irrelevant. The relative winners are the Sunni Arab states, Turkey, Pakistan, and European nations, whose commitment to reconstruction and stability aligns with public opinion and global expectations. Yet the success of this ambitious plan depends on unprecedented diplomatic coordination. It demands financial commitment from the Arab world, political discipline from Israel, and restraint from Iran. It also requires sustained U.S. engagement—an uncertain prospect in an election year when domestic divisions are deep and foreign entanglements unpopular. If these elements can somehow be harmonized, Trump's peace plan could usher in the first tangible path toward Palestinian sovereignty in decades. If they fail, the region will once again descend into chaos—driven by the same forces of mistrust and ambition that have defined the Middle East for generations. For now, the world watches anxiously, hoping that sanity prevails, that Israel resists the temptation of renewed aggression, and that the people of Gaza may finally reclaim the right to live with dignity, freedom, and peace.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC
Macomb, Michigan, USA

Trump's caution and the South Asian chessboard

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Israel's growing presence in South Asia, particularly its covert defense cooperation with India, cannot be ignored in this context. Over the past decade, Israel has become one of India's leading suppliers of advanced military technology, ranging from missile defense systems to surveillance drones. This alliance, while justified by both nations...

THERE are moments in the theatre of international politics when words uttered by a world leader are not merely statements but signals—coded warnings that reflect the hidden undercurrents of global power play. When the President of the United States, Donald Trump, repeatedly cautioned Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi against launching an attack on Pakistan, it was not without reason. The American President is not known for diplomatic restraint; his remarks, often blunt and unconventional, have at times carried more truth than the carefully scripted statements of professional diplomats. Therefore, when President Trump chose to issue such warnings, one must assume that the information at his disposal was both credible and alarming. The question that arises is simple yet profound; why would the United States, a strategic partner of India and a country that has long cultivated military and economic ties with New Delhi, find it necessary to restrain its ally? The answer lies in the complex geopolitical reality of South Asia, where every move is weighed not merely in terms of national interest but global consequence. Any miscalculation on the part of India—particularly against a nuclear-armed Pakistan—could ignite a chain reaction that might destabilize the entire region, disrupt trade corridors, and drag major powers into a conflict that none desire. Trump, known for his transactional worldview, must have realized that the cost of an Indian misadventure would far outweigh the benefits of appeasing New Delhi's nationalist impulses. The recent history of the Sub Continent reveals that India, under the Modi administration, has consistently pursued a policy of regional dominance. Its attempts to isolate Pakistan diplomatically, its continuous violations along the Line of Control, and its internal oppression in Kashmir all point towards a mindset that seeks to expand influence through coercion rather than cooperation. Yet, despite its loud rhetoric, India understands that a direct military confrontation with Pakistan could result in unpredictable outcomes. The

episodes of misadventure in 2019 and 2025 from India towards Pakistan is a reminder that even limited strikes can spiral out of control, and US administration warnings perhaps stem from intelligence suggesting that some elements within India's security establishment are once again flirting with that perilous path. For Pakistan, the implications of such developments are twofold. First, it must assess whether these threats are genuine preparations for aggression or calculated psychological warfare aimed at unsettling its leadership. Second, it must recognize that its adversaries—both regional and global—are operating in tandem to keep it strategically off balance. The recent provocations from Afghanistan, for instance, are unlikely to be spontaneous. The instability across the western border, the rise of hostile elements encouraged by certain foreign agencies, and the consistent efforts to disrupt Pakistan's internal peace cannot be seen in isolation. They form part of a broader design to stretch Pakistan's security apparatus and test its diplomatic resilience. Israel's growing presence in South Asia, particularly its covert defense cooperation with India, cannot be ignored in this context. Over the past decade, Israel has become one of India's leading suppliers of advanced military technology, ranging from missile defense systems to surveillance drones. This alliance, while justified by both nations as a counterterrorism partnership, carries deeper strategic implications. It strengthens India's offensive capabilities and encourages a mindset of military adventurism, while simultaneously allowing Israel to extend its influence into a region where it previously had little direct access. Trump, aware of Israel's regional ambitions and its role in shaping India's defense posture, likely saw the need to prevent a situation where an emboldened India might act beyond control. In such a scenario, Pakistan's response must be both measured and multidimensional. Military preparedness is essential, but it must be accompanied by proactive diplomacy. Islamabad should take its traditional allies—particularly Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and

China—into confidence. The support of these nations carries weight not only because of their economic or military power but because their voices are respected in international forums. By engaging its allies, Pakistan can expose the destabilizing designs of its adversaries and ensure that any potential aggression against it is seen as an attack on regional peace rather than a bilateral dispute. Moreover, Pakistan must also strengthen its engagement with the United States. Despite the fluctuating nature of Pakistan-U.S. relations, Washington remains an influential actor in South Asian affairs. Trump's remarks, if properly interpreted, may present an opportunity for Islamabad to rebuild channels of communication and mutual understanding. The era of strategic neglect must give way to one of cautious engagement, where Pakistan asserts its role as a responsible regional power committed to stability and peace. At the same time, Pakistan must not overlook the psychological dimension of the situation. Disinformation campaigns, diplomatic isolation efforts, and economic pressures are all part of the modern hybrid warfare that nations face today. Pakistan must counter these through a strong narrative rooted in truth, resilience, and national unity. The world must be reminded that Pakistan has been a frontline state in the global fight against terrorism, that it has sacrificed more lives than many of its critics combined, and that it seeks peace not out of weakness but wisdom. In conclusion, President Trump's warnings to Prime Minister Modi serve as a timely reminder that the balance of power in South Asia remains delicate. The forces that seek to destabilize Pakistan operate not only on the battlefield but in the realm of perception and policy. For Pakistan, the task ahead is clear; remain vigilant, act with prudence, strengthen alliances, and expose the hidden hands that wish to turn the region into a theatre of chaos. Peace in South Asia depends not on the ambition of one nation but on the collective restraint of all—and history will judge harshly those who mistake patience for weakness or diplomacy for fear.

Briefs

Pak, Poland agree to boost bilateral ties

FROM PAGE 01
served as a war correspondent in the region during 1980s. Dar underlined that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Poland. "Poland's struggle for freedom and independence is exemplary," he said, further stating that Pakistan and Poland shared a "unique historical connection". "During World War II, thousands of Polish refugees found shelter in present-day Pakistan i.e. in Karachi and Quetta." He also recalled and lauded the role of Polish pilots and engineers in laying the foundation of the Pakistan Air Force. Dar continued that with this shared historical context, Pakistan viewed Poland as an important partner, bilaterally, as well as in the European Union. "We rejoice the economic progress Poland has made to now become a trillion-dollar economy," he said, further congratulating the European country on the "successful and smooth presidential election and for its it able stewardship of the European Union".

Pakistan committed to cross...

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Turkmenistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, besides delegates from the Asian Development Bank, Economic Cooperation Organization, International Road Transport Union, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The event will convene transport ministers, policy-makers, and development partners from 27 nations to enhance regional connectivity and sustainable transport cooperation. Calling the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a catalyst for energy infrastructure development, transport connectivity, and enhanced trade across South and Central Asia, he said the project also embodied the commitment to building partnerships for the benefit of Pakistan, China, as well as the entire region.

Prisoners cannot take part...

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the government's plea, urging the court to restore the enforcement of the prison rules until a final decision is reached. The larger bench accepted the appeal and temporarily suspended the earlier judgment. Separately, the larger bench – headed by Chief Justice Sarfraz Dogar – also took up all 11 petitions filed by PTI leaders regarding Imran's jail visitation. The court directed the Adiala jail superintendent to implement the court's March 24 decision regarding jail meetings with the PTI founder. It is pertinent to mention here that in March this year, the same three-member bench had reinstated twice-weekly meetings with the jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, allowing them to take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays in accordance with the prescribed standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Pakistan condemns...

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undetermined ongoing efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region, reiterating Pakistan's call for the international community to take urgent and decisive action to halt these illegal steps and to hold the Israeli occupying forces accountable for their continued violations of international law. Meanwhile, Pakistan welcomes the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), issued on 22 October 2025, on the "Obligations of Israel in Relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The Court has unequivocally established that Israel, as the occupying power, is under a legal obligation to facilitate and not obstruct humanitarian relief operations by the UN and its entities.

South Africa thump Pakistan to win Pindi Test

Proteas batters chase down 68-run target in 13th over on Day 4 of final Test

DNA

RAWALPINDI: South Africa beat Pakistan by eight wickets in the second Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday to level a two-match series 1-1. Chasing a meager 68-run target, the visitors got over the line with eight wickets to spare. Pakistan had won the first match of the series – part of the ICC Championship 2025-27 – by 93 runs at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. Resuming Day 4 on 94-4, Pakistan's batters folded, adding just 44 runs. Off-spin-

ner Simon Harmer took six wickets to help dismiss Pakistan for 138. The 36-year-old finished with 6-50 for a maiden five-wicket haul – also completing 1,000 first-class wickets – on a deteriorating Rawalpindi stadium pitch. International relations courses Harmer jolted Pakistan's hopes of saving the Test when he trapped Babar Azam leg-before with the fifth ball of the day after the batsman had reached his 30th Test half-century. Pakistan's hopes had rested on Azam ending his century drought, having not scored a ton since December 2022.

Nine runs later, Harmer had Mohammad Rizwan caught by close-in fielder Tony de Zorzi for 18. In his next over, the spinner dismissed Noman Ali for nought, caught behind for Harmer's 1,000th wicket in his 235th first-class match. Shaheen Shah Afridi was run out without scoring, while Keshav Maharaj dismissed Salman Agha for 28 and Sajid Khan for 13 to swiftly wrap up the innings. In their first innings, Pakistan were bundled out for 333, with skipper Shan Masood top-scoring with 87 Saud Shakeel contributed 66. For South Africa, Keshav Maharaj finished with brilliant figures of 7/102 in

42.4 overs, while Simon Harmer claimed two wickets and Kagiso Rabada picked up one. Pakistan travel guide In response to Pakistan's first-innings total, South Africa posted 404 runs, thanks to outstanding contributions from Senuran Muthusamy and Kagiso Rabada. Muthusamy made a career-best 89* while Rabada scored 71 off 61 balls. For Pakistan, Asif Afridi finished with figures of 6/79 in 34.3 overs, followed by Noman Ali with two wickets, while Shaheen Shah Afridi and Sajid Khan picked up one wicket each.

Babar Azam returns to T20I squad; Rizwan ignored



LAHORE: Pakistan's ace batter Babar Azam made a successful return to the T20I squad after while wicket-keeper batter was ignored as the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) National Selection Committee named a 15-member squad for the T20I series against South Africa. Babar Azam remained out of the T20I squad and had missed the Asia Cup 2025 while fast-bowler Naseem Shah and power-hitter Abdul Samad also made a come back. Wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan has been ignored in the T20I squad but he has been retained in the ODI squad despite being stripped of captaincy. Shaheen Shah Afridi is the new ODI captain while Salman Ali Agha has been retained as T20I captain despite the dip in form as batter and poor showing as leader of the team in the shorter format of the white-ball Cricket. Wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Haris made way for

Wicket-keeper batter Usman Khan in the T20I squad. Off-spinner Usman Tariq may debut for Pakistan as he is the only uncapped player in the squad. The PCB has persisted with Saim. Ayub as opener despite his recent failure in the Asia Cup 2025. The T20I series between Pakistan and South Africa will be played in Rawalpindi and Lahore from 28 October to 1 November, while the T20I tri-series, involving Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, will be staged at the same venues from 17 to 29 November. **15-member T20I squad:** Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Nawaz, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (wicket-keeper), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha Stadium, Faisalabad. – DNA

Reserves: Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Sufiyan Moqim: The PCB also announced a 16-member squad for the three-match ODI series against South Africa to be played in Faisalabad. The same squad will play a three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka in Rawalpindi before the tri-series in Rawalpindi and Lahore. Pakistan and South Africa, who are currently playing the second Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, will also feature in a three-match ODI series to be held at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad from November 4 to 8. The ODI series will be followed by another three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from November 11 to 15. In the ODI squad, Faisal Akram, Haris Rauf and Haseebullah return to the side. **16-member ODI squad:** Shaheen Shah Afridi (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Faisal Akram, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (wicket-keeper), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha Stadium, Lahore. **Schedule:** South Africa tour to Pakistan: 28 October – First T20I at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi 31 October – Second T20I at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore 1 November – Third T20I at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore 4 November – First ODI at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad 6 November – Second ODI at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad 8 November – Third ODI at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad. – DNA

US claims two dead in strike on alleged drug-smuggling boat

WASHINGTON: A new US strike on an alleged drug-smuggling boat killed two people, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Wednesday, announcing Washington's first such attack on a vessel in the Pacific Ocean. The strike – which Hegseth announced in a post on X that featured a video of a boat being engulfed in flames – brings the total number to at least eight, leaving at least 34 people dead. "There were two narco-terrorists aboard the vessel during the strike, which was conducted in international waters. Both terrorists were killed and no US forces were harmed in this strike," Hegseth said of Tuesday's action in the eastern Pacific. "Just as Al-Qaeda waged war on our homeland, these cartels are waging war on our border and our people. There will be no refuge or forgiveness – only justice," he wrote. President Donald Trump's administration has said in a notice to Congress that the United States is engaged in "armed conflict" with Latin American drug cartels, describing them as terrorist groups as part of its justification for the strikes. "The president determined these cartels are non-state armed groups, designated them as terrorist organizations, and determined that their actions constitute an armed attack against the United States," said the notice from the Pentagon, which also described suspected smugglers as "unlawful combatants." But Washington has not released evidence to support its assertion that the targets of its strikes are drug smugglers, and experts say the summary killings are illegal even if they target confirmed narcotics traffickers. There were survivors of a US strike for the first time last week, but Washington chose to repatriate them rather than put them on trial for their alleged crimes. Ecuador released one after finding no evidence that he had committed a crime, while authorities in Colombia said the other – who "arrived with brain trauma, sedated, drugged, breathing with a ventilator" – would face prosecution. The US military campaign – which has seen Washington deploy stealth warplanes and Navy ships as part of what it says are counter-narcotics efforts – has fueled tensions with countries in the region. This is especially the case with Venezuela, where the buildup of US forces has sparked fears that the ultimate goal is the overthrow of President Nicolas Maduro, whom Washington accuses of heading a drug cartel. – DNA

PM Shehbaz unveils "Roshan Maeeshat"...

FROM PAGE 01
The Prime Minister said the power tariff for industrial units, currently at Rs 34 per unit, and for agriculture, at Rs 38 per unit, will be significantly reduced. The sectors will now get additional electricity at Rs 22.98 per unit throughout the year. PM Shehbaz emphasized that the cost of this relief will not burden domestic consumers or other sectors, ensuring that the subsidy directly benefits producers. He lauded Minister for Power Sardar Awais Leghari and his team for their dedicated efforts in preparing the package.

PAF chief strengthens defence...

FROM PAGE 01
PAF's rich operational experience. Similarly, the Romanian Chief of Defence lauded the professionalism and capabilities of PAF personnel, highlighting Romania's desire to strengthen interoperability and promote long-term strategic collaboration through training programs and defence exchanges. The visit of the PAF Chief marks an important milestone in fortifying Pakistan-Romania defence relations, reaffirming the mutual commitment of both nations to address emerging security challenges through enhanced cooperation and sustained engagement.

Cabinet okays ban on TLP

FROM PAGE 01
high alert to prevent any untoward incidents following the announcement. Sources said the government remains open to dialogue with religious groups committed to peaceful political engagement but emphasized that no organization will be allowed to challenge the authority of the state through violent means. The cabinet also issued directives to the Ministry of Interior to complete legal procedures for enforcing the ban. Well-placed sources said that the matter regarding the ban on the TLP would be sent to the Ministry of Law and Justice, which will formally file a reference with the Supreme Court within 15 days following the cabinet's approval to meet legal requirements. The TLP would be denotified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) once the top court approves the federal government's reference, he sources added.

Court to give Hasina case verdict..

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"She was the prime minister but fled, leaving behind the entire nation – her fleeing corroborates the allegations." Her trial in absentia, which opened on June 1, heard months of testimony alleging Hasina ordered mass killings. Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August 2024, according to the United Nations. Prosecutors have filed five charges, including failure to prevent murder, amounting to crimes against humanity under Bangladeshi law. They have demanded the death penalty if she is found guilty. Chief prosecutor Tajul Islam has accused Hasina of being "the nucleus around whom all the crimes were committed" during the uprising.

Justice Mazhar...

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A Malik, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan. Dozens of petitioners, including the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamaate-Islami (JI), Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), Lahore High Court Bar Association, Lahore Bar Association, Karachi Bar Association as well as the former seven presidents of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and various individuals in personal capacity, had challenged the validity of 26th Constitutional Amendment.

Climate crunch time in Brussels as EU leaders meet

Tensions between the EU's desire to play a starring role in the fight against global warming and boost its sluggish economy have been bubbling up for months

BRUSSELS: The European Union's climate ambitions and its hopes for an industrial revival will come to a head Thursday as the bloc's 27 leaders meet to chart a way forward – with the clock ticking to set a key emissions goal. The EU is under pressure to agree on a 10-year target to cut carbon emissions ahead of the United Nations COP30 climate summit next month. But competing concerns over supporting ailing businesses including Europe's cherished car industry have stalled progress. "Leaders now have a narrow window to break the deadlock and send a clear signal ahead of COP30," said Elisa Giannelli, of the E3G climate advocacy group. Tensions between the EU's desire to play a starring role in the fight against global warming and boost its sluggish economy have been bubbling up for months. In July, the European Commission said it wanted to cut emissions by 90 percent by 2040, compared to 1990 levels – a major milestone towards the overarching goal of reaching net-zero by 2050. The EU executive hoped for member states to greenlight the target ahead of COP30, which starts in Brazil on November 10. Signatories to the Paris Agreement are supposed to bring an updated 2035 emission reduction plan to the summit, which Brussels was aiming to derive from its 2040 target. But this has not been forthcoming. Unable to reach an agreement, last month EU environment ministers passed the ball to the bloc's leaders, who will discuss matter Thursday. – APP

Frustrated federal employees line up for food as US shutdown wears on

NORTH BETHESDA: Standing in the middle of a parking lot in suburban Washington, surrounded by hundreds of federal employees waiting for food handouts amid the US government shutdown, Diane Miller summed it up simply. "How am I gonna eat?" the 74-year-old public servant asked bitterly. When her turn came, she showed her government employee card and received two boxes, one with fresh fruits and vegetables, the other with shelf-stable goods. Every bit of it is necessary since her paycheck went to zero. The vast majority of federal employees have been furloughed since October 1 and are going without income because a budget impasse between Republicans and Democrats has forced a shutdown of the government. Overall, more than 600,000 federal workers have been affected by the shutdown, according to media reports. "I need to put food on my table, too, even if it's going to make me fat," Miller said with a laugh, but her eyes shone with anger. "I deserve to be in line, getting whatever benefits I can get." Federal employees all over the country are turning to food banks and charities for a lifeline. On Wednesday in Washington, over 310 boxes packed with \$75 worth of groceries were distributed in less than an hour.

"You have people that two weeks ago had a steady paycheck and had nice, normal lives, and suddenly the rug is pulled out from under you, and you find yourself in a food line," said Dave Silbert, head of So What Else, the food bank co-organizing the distribution. Miller has worked in federal and local government for more than 50 years. "No one deserves to be treated the way that we're being treated right now – and to watch them tear down the people's house and to build some fancy ballroom when that money could be taking care of Americans," she said, referring to the \$250-million White House renovation that broke ground this week. "We should be a proud country right now. I'm sad to be an American." Waiting in line, Adrian, a tax law expert who has worked in public service for 33 years, vents painful frustrations. "We can barely make a mortgage payment, but we have other bills to pay, utilities, cell phones, like everything. It's a domino effect," said Adrian, who declined to disclose her last name for fear of reprisals. "All of those congressmen, senators, they're getting paid. We're not," she added. "So they should not have a paycheck. If we don't have a paycheck, they should feel what we're

feeling." Adrian points to how federal workers were vilified under President Donald Trump's policies, which included sweeping job cuts carried out through Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). "We're just doing our jobs, which is part of the federal government, and all of a sudden we became the enemy of the state," she said. The budget paralysis has lasted for 22 days, already the second-longest shutdown in the country's history. The political gridlock worries Amber, a mother of two children and human resources worker for the US Army. "I'm actually in the middle of a divorce as well, so I already had to take out a \$20,000 loan just to afford housing. So now with no paycheck, I'm really struggling, so that's why I'm here today to get food." As the federal shutdown wears on, affected employees can't help but look ahead – to colder winter months and the holidays. "How do you think people feel? They're struggling. And it's not just one group of people, it's everybody," Miller said. With a strained smile, as a Black woman who says she has dedicated her life to civil rights, Miller blames Trump for the country's current condition. – Agencies

Chief of Naval Staff Golf Cup kick starts

The tournament will be held from 22 to 26 October 2025, featuring competitions in Amateurs, Seniors, Ladies, and Juniors categories, along with an invitational match for guests and sponsors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Media Brief and Opening Ceremony of 18th Chief of the Naval Staff Amateur Golf Cup 2025 was held at the Margalla Greens Golf Club (MGGC), Islamabad. The ceremony marked the formal commencement of one of the most prestigious events on the national golf calendar. During the media briefing, Rear Admiral Saqib Ilyas, Patron of Pakistan Navy Golf (North), highlighted the salient features of the championship and outlined details regarding its format and participation across various categories. The tournament will be held from

22 to 26 October 2025, featuring competitions in Amateurs, Seniors, Ladies, and Juniors categories, along with an invitational match for guests and sponsors. Since its inception in 2007, the Chief of the Naval Staff Amateur Golf Cup has evolved into a prominent fixture on Pakistan's golfing circuit. Beyond fostering competitive excellence, the event underscores Pakistan Navy's enduring commitment to promoting sportsmanship, projecting a positive image of the country and encouraging healthy recreational activities within society. The opening ceremony was attended by sponsors, golf players and media representatives.



Briefs

Israel launches series of strikes on east Lebanon

BEIRUT: Israel launched a series of strikes on mountainous areas in eastern Lebanon on Thursday, with the Israeli military saying it struck Hezbollah targets. "Israeli warplanes launched a series of violent strikes on the eastern mountain range" in the Bekaa region near the border with Syria, Lebanon's official National News Agency said. It also said two Israel strikes targeted the Hermel range in the country's northeast. The Israeli military meanwhile said it had targeted Hezbollah sites in east and north Lebanon, including a "a military camp and a site for the production of precision missiles" in the Bekaa. The military said in a statement that it "struck several terrorist targets" in the Bekaa, including "a camp used for training Hezbollah militants." It added that it "struck military infrastructure at a site for the production of precision missiles." It also targeted "a Hezbollah military site in the Sharbin area in northern Lebanon." Israel has repeatedly bombed Lebanon despite a November ceasefire that brought to an end more than a year of hostilities with the militant group Hezbollah that culminated in two months of open war. As part of that deal, Israeli forces were to withdraw from southern Lebanon and Hezbollah was to dismantle its forces in the region.—APP

Syrian forces agree truce with French-led jihadist group

IDLIB: Syrian authorities have agreed a ceasefire with a group of jihadists led by Frenchman Omar Diaby in northwest Syria, sources from both sides told AFP on Thursday. Government forces surrounded the camp of Firqatul Ghuraba ("the Foreigners' Brigade") on Wednesday, leading to the first clashes with jihadists under Syria's new leadership since the ousting in December of longtime ruler Bashar Assad. Diaby, also known as Omar Omsen, was accused of kidnapping a girl and had sought to prevent troops entering the camp in the Harem region near the Turkish border, which is home to a few dozen fighters "An agreement was reached providing for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons (by the army)," and allowing the Syrian government to enter the camp, a local security official who requested anonymity told AFP. The written agreement, seen by AFP, also stipulates that a criminal investigation will be opened into the allegations of kidnapping against Diaby. The ceasefire was being respected on Thursday, according to the local security official and a source among the French jihadists contacted by AFP. Since taking power, Syria's new leaders have sought to break from their own radical Islamist past and present a moderate image more tolerable to ordinary Syrians and foreign powers.—APP

Finance Minister, Dutch envoy for strengthening investment ties

Senator Aurangzeb informed that the government was focused on restoring investor confidence and creating an enabling ecosystem for private sector investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Netherlands on Thursday reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and investment cooperation, with both sides expressing interest in expanding collaboration across agriculture, IT, textiles and other potential sectors. The commitment was made during a call on meeting of the new Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Pakistan, Robert-Jan Siegert, with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. The Finance Minister welcomed the Ambassador on his diplomatic assignment in Pakistan and conveyed appreciation for the longstanding and historic ties between the two countries, acknowledging Dutch support across development, trade and private sector-led initiatives. The Finance Minister shared that Pakistan, after navigating a difficult period of macroeconomic adjustment, has now transitioned towards stability with a renewed emphasis on investment and structural reforms. He highlighted that Pakistan's economic fundamentals have strengthened over the past two years, with all three global rating agencies up-

grading the country's outlook. He briefed the Ambassador on the progress under the IMF programme, noting that the IMF management has expressed confidence in Pakistan's reform trajectory, particularly with respect to tax reforms, energy sector stabilization, governance improvements in State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and the on-going privatization agenda. Senator Aurangzeb informed that the government was focused on restoring investor confidence and creating an enabling ecosystem for private sector investment. He shared that profit repatriation constraints faced by foreign investors have been eased, and the profits and dividends are being repatriated as a routine matter. He added that Pakistan is now shifting from consumption-led growth to investment- and export-led growth to break the recurring boom-bust cycles of the past. The minister underscored that major areas of investment interest whether from GCC, Europe, the US or China remain consistent, with actionable opportunities in minerals and mining, agriculture, IT, infrastructure and pharmaceuticals. He added that Pakistan was now moving towards sustainable foreign inflows through trade



and investment partnerships rather than reliance on bilateral deposits or external loans. The Finance Minister elaborated on efforts to broaden the tax base, reduce informality and ensure equitable taxation across sectors including retail, real estate and agriculture. He highlighted

the rapid digitalization of revenue processes through AI-based monitoring systems to curb leakages in multiple sectors. He also apprised the Ambassador of progress on SOE reforms, right-sizing of federal entities, and the privatization of select institutions, noting the recent suc-

cessful divestment of a financial institution and upcoming transactions for power distribution companies. Recalling the Netherlands' export-led economic model, the minister emphasized the need for Pakistan's industries to enhance competitiveness in global markets. He pointed

out that Pakistan has initiated a phased reduction in additional customs duties over the next four to five years to gradually remove long-standing protectionism and strengthen export orientation. On the occasion, Ambassador Siegert reaffirmed the Netherlands' commitment to expanding trade and investment ties with Pakistan. He noted that around 50 Dutch companies are currently operating in the country and expressed interest in exploring opportunities in agriculture, IT, textiles and other sectors where the Netherlands has strong expertise. He also referenced FMO's role as a key Dutch development finance institution that could support future investments in Pakistan. The Ambassador highlighted the importance of GSP+ for Pakistan's export sector and appreciated Pakistan's proactive engagement on related matters and acknowledged the government's intent to remain constructively engaged as the new GSP+ cycle approaches. Senator Aurangzeb reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to meeting its reform and compliance obligations and assured continued engagement with the EU and its member states, including the Netherlands, on matters related to GSP+.

Indonesia, Brazil strike coop deals as leaders meet

JAKARTA: Indonesia and Brazil agreed to boost ties and struck a series of agreements on Thursday as their leaders met in Jakarta, with Southeast Asia's biggest economy looking to make further inroads into South American markets. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was greeted by a marching band and national anthems at a ceremony at the presidential palace in Jakarta before talks with Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto. The pair witnessed the signing of agreements on oil, gas, electricity, technology, mining and agriculture, coming several months after US President Donald Trump imposed a tariff rate of 19 percent on imports from Indonesia under a new pact, and a 50-percent tariff on Brazilian products. "How is it that two important countries in the world, such as Indonesia and Brazil, which together have a population of almost 500 million, only have a trade volume of \$6 billion?" said Lula at a joint press conference after talks. "This is not enough for Indonesia, and it is not enough for Brazil." The Indonesian leader said both countries were working to establish a free trade agreement between the Southeast Asian powerhouse and the South American bloc Mercosur, which consists of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay. "I believe this will strengthen our relations and will make both of our economies and the economies of Latin America grow rapidly," Prabowo told Lula. In the press conference Prabowo called both countries "two new economic powers that are rising" which must "increase trade." Brazil has deepened relations with Southeast Asia in recent years, and Lula's participation at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Malaysia that starts on Sunday — the first by a Brazilian president — marks the country's growing political engagement in the region Brazil is also one of Indonesia's main trading partners in South America. Total trade between the two nations between January and August was worth \$4.3 billion, according to Statistics Indonesia data. The Southeast Asian nation is looking to bolster ties in Latin America, and in August signed a trade agreement with Peru. It also joined the BRICS bloc of major emerging economies, of which Brazil is a member, in January.—APP

Zelensky hails 'strong' message' of US sanctions on Russia

BRUSSELS: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday hailed the "strong and much-needed" message sent by US sanctions on Russia's energy sector, after President Donald Trump moved to ratchet up pressure on Moscow in step with the EU. "We waited for this. God bless it will work and this is very important," Zelensky told journalists at an EU summit in Brussels, saying Washington had sent "a good signal to other countries in the world to join the sanctions." Trump slapped sanctions on Russia's two largest oil companies Rosneft and Lukoil on Wednesday, complaining that his talks with Vladimir Putin to end the Ukraine war "don't go anywhere." Posting on X as he arrived in Brussels, Zelensky thanked Trump for a "resolute and well-targeted decision." He said the US sanctions were a "clear signal that prolonging the war and spreading terror come at a cost." "It is a strong and much-needed message that aggression will not go unanswered," he said. Meanwhile, Russia said that new US sanctions on its oil industry risked hurting diplomatic efforts to end the Ukraine war, and that it had developed a "strong immunity" to them. "We view this step as being entirely counterproductive, including in terms of signalling the need to achieve meaningful negotiated solutions to the Ukrainian conflict," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told a weekly briefing. "Our country has developed a strong immunity to Western restrictions and will continue to confidently develop its economic potential, including its energy potential," she added. Trump has held off pulling the trigger on sanctions against Russia for months but his patience snapped after plans for a fresh summit with Putin in Budapest collapsed. His move came as the European Union approved a 19th package of sanctions to pressure Russia to end its relentless, three-and-a-half-year invasion of its neighbor. As part of its new measures, the 27-nation bloc likewise targeted Russia's fossil fuels by bringing forward a ban on the import of liquefied natural gas by a year to the start of 2027. It also blacklisted over 100 more tankers from Moscow's so-called "shadow fleet" of aging oil vessels and imposed controls on the travel of Russian diplomats suspected of espionage. The package was formally adopted Thursday, just before Zelensky joined EU leaders for summit talks focused on shoring up support for Ukraine.—DNA

PSX sheds 1,962 points to close at 164,590

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Thursday, losing 1,962.87 points, a negative change of 1.18 percent, closing at 164,590.41 points against 166,553.28 points on the previous trading day. A total of 474 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 147 recorded gains, 291 sustained losses, and 36 remained unchanged. The total trading volume was 1,504.58 million shares compared to 1,568.82 million shares on Wednesday, while the traded value decreased to Rs49.52 billion from Rs55.06 billion. The market capitalization also declined to Rs18.99 trillion from Rs19.21 trillion. WorldCall Telecom led the volume chart with 162.20 million shares, followed by K-Electric Ltd. with 138.24 million shares and Telecard Limited with 90.64 million shares. _APP

Türkiye becomes Europe's top steel producer, ranks 7th globally

ISTANBUL: Türkiye has become Europe's largest and the world's seventh-largest steel producer as of August, producing 36.9 million tons last year, according to a sector representative. Veyssel Yayan, secretary-general of the Türkiye Steel Producers' Association (TCUD), told Anadolu that steel remains a vital raw material for the global economy due to its widespread use in construction, automotive, energy, and machinery. He said its durability, recyclability, and wide range of applications make it indispensable for industrial growth. Steel production is not only a measure of industrialization but also a reflection of a country's economic power, highlighting its role in renewable energy and infrastructure projects. According to the World Steel Association, China led global crude steel output last year with 1 billion tons, followed by India with 149 million tons, Japan with 84 million tons, and the US with 79.5 million tons. Russia produced 71 million tons, South Korea 63.6 million, Türkiye 39.6 million, Germany 37.2 million, Brazil 33.8 million, and Iran 31.4 million tons. As for Türkiye, the Turkish steel sector exports to a wide range of countries stretching across the globe, as Yayan stated that the sector has a special position in the global supply chain, reaching over 180 countries. "Türkiye was the world's eighth largest and Europe's seventh largest steel producer last year, but it has climbed the ranks to seventh largest worldwide and the largest in Europe in the first eight months of 2025," he said. "Our flexible and resilient production, structure, quality, and early delivery set us apart from other countries' steel sectors, while ours can continue to produce without interruptions during economic fluctuations and global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic." Yayan noted that fluctuations in China — which accounts for 53% of global crude steel supply — have wide repercussions for other markets. Protectionist measures, particularly those introduced under US President Donald Trump's administration, have also reshaped trade flows. "After the US imposed a 50% tariff on steel, the EU's bid to reduce steel product quotas by 57%, and countries like Mexico and Canada's plans to take similar measures showed that a large part of the global steel market will be closed to external supply, which makes it so that large-scale producers like China, other countries in the Asia-Pacific, and Russia will turn to the Turkish market as they can't export to those other markets with barriers in place," he said. He warned that such restrictions could reduce Türkiye's sales in Europe — its largest export destination — affecting capacity use and profitability. In the long term, these measures could weaken the sector's investment appetite and delay expansion plans for further capacity expansion.—DNA

UK govt should adopt new Islamophobia definition

LONDON: A former faith minister in the UK has urged the government to fully adopt a new definition of Islamophobia to help tackle hate against Muslims. Lord Khan, who oversaw the start of the review into the legal definition of the term, told Sky News: "I hope it's a clear definition which reflects the terms of reference which protects people, and it's clear." The government is expected to change the technical legal term to "anti-Muslim hostility" after a working group, chaired by former Conservative Minister Dominic Grieve, was tasked in February with defining "unacceptable treatment, prejudice, discrimination and hate targeting Muslims or anyone who is perceived to be Muslim." Lord Khan said: "There's so many definitions out there, this is an opportunity to address the big problem in our communities. 'I would request and urge the government to adopt the definition which fits within the terms of reference on what we wanted to do when we embarked on the process. 'It's a strong message to our communities that the work that should be done isn't being done — these are lived experiences and I am one of those people who has suffered.' A former working definition of Islamophobia adopted by the Labour Party in 2021 said: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness." That previous definition raised concerns that a precedent could be set for providing more protection for certain groups, which could impact more broadly on people's free speech.—APP

Delivering a Breakthrough: BISP Reversing Child Stunting

QURAT-UL-AIN HAIDER

In a country where almost 40 percent of children under five face the silent crisis of stunting, Benazir Nashonuma Programme has emerged as a story of hope and evidence-based impact. Operating under the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan's largest social protection initiative, it represents a defining moment in the nation's fight against malnutrition — a model where science meets compassion and policy translates into human progress. A midterm independent evaluation by the Aga Khan University's Institute for Global Health and Development confirmed a national breakthrough: a 6.4 percent reduction in child stunting, a 5.6 percent decrease in low birth weight, and a 7-8 percent drop in babies born too small or too weak in target areas. Even more striking is the 20 percent reduction in stunting among six-month-old infants whose mothers joined the programme during early

pregnancy and stayed through breastfeeding. Behind these figures are real lives, women, children, and families whose futures have quietly transformed. Launched in 2020, Nashonuma is rooted in a simple but transformative idea: investing in mothers is investing in a nation's future. The programme focuses on the crucial first 1,000 days, from conception to a child's second birthday, a window that determines lifelong growth and cognitive potential. Through 542 facilitation centers in 156 districts, it has reached over 3.5 million women and children. These centers provide antenatal and postnatal care, growth monitoring, immunization, and awareness sessions on nutrition and hygiene. Mothers also receive locally produced nutritious food supplements and conditional cash stipends to sustain healthy practices at home. Step into a Nashonuma center in rural Sindh or Balochistan, and the transformation is visible. Mothers arrive not just for assistance but with a sense of owner-

ship. Health workers use digital systems to track growth and progress, while nutrition counselors educate families about breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and hygiene. The atmosphere feels less like a clinic and more like a community of care. International partners have played a central role in this effort. The World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and UNICEF have all contributed technical, operational, and advocacy support, helping transform the government's vision into measurable impact. "WHO is thankful to BISP and its partners for this collaboration to protect and save lives," said Dr. Dapeng Luo, WHO Representative in Pakistan. "The results are excellent, but even a single child lost to malnutrition is one too many. Each child has a story and a family with dreams for their future, and we must leave no one behind." UNICEF's Representative, Pernille Ironside, described the programme as a partnership rooted in human rights,

development, and resilience: "At the heart of our work with BISP is every child's right to grow up healthy and strong. By engaging communities, empowering mothers and adolescent girls with knowledge and better nutrition, we are breaking the cycle of malnutrition and helping families build brighter futures." For Coco Ushiyama, Country Director of WFP Pakistan, Nashonuma represents "a model of government leadership and partnership in action." She added, "A 20 percent reduction in stunting among infants at six months of age is an unprecedented achievement — for Pakistan and globally. When social protection and nutrition come together, the results are transformative. Investing in nutrition is one of the smartest investments a country can make for its future generations." Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta of Agha Khan University called the findings "among the strongest globally." He emphasized that investing in early nutrition "pays off for generations" and that Pakistan's progress represents "a

powerful return on investment for human capital." Yet beyond the data lies the human story the quiet, consistent transformation taking place in Pakistan's most remote corners. In a small fishing village in Ormara, Balochistan, Rozina, a mother of four, arrived weak and malnourished at her nearest Nashonuma center. After months of counseling, care, and nutritious supplements, her strength returned. Her youngest daughter, Misra, was born healthy. "When I see my children now, I don't see the shadows of sickness," she says. "I see a future filled with hope." In the mountains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Raham Bibi learned for the first time that the first 1,000 days determine a child's lifelong health. Her youngest, Habiba, now thrives. "They respected me and taught me that my care matters," she says softly. "That changed everything." Such stories of strength embody the essence of the Benazir Nashonuma Programme an initiative that restores dignity through empathy and delivers measurable results

through science. As Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson BISP, explained, "The findings provide clear evidence that social protection, when linked with nutrition interventions, delivers meaningful results for vulnerable women and children. Pakistan's success with Nashonuma proves that large-scale solutions to malnutrition are not only possible but effective. At BISP, we firmly believe that a healthy mother is the foundation of a healthy nation." The programme also aligns closely with Pakistan's broader development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): eradicating poverty, ending hunger, promoting health, and empowering women. It embodies the philosophy that social protection is not just about assistance; it is about opportunity, empowerment, and transformation. Backed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and grounded in rigorous research, the Benazir Nashonuma model is now drawing international attention as a pioneering example of how conditional cash transfers can be effective-

ly integrated with nutrition and health interventions. In a world struggling with rising food insecurity, climate pressures, and widening inequality, Pakistan's approach stands as proof that well-designed national programmes can deliver both scale and substance. The story is far from over. The final evaluation in 2026 will measure long-term outcomes, but the visible progress is already reshaping lives. For millions of mothers and children, Nashonuma has become more than a programme — it is a silent movement that is instilling care and confidence in mothers and families. As one mother in Sindh said, "This programme didn't just feed my child. It taught me how to care for my family." Her words embody a transformation that no statistic can measure — a movement of mothers nurturing a healthier, more resilient Pakistan. *The writer is Director Media Coordination and Outreach at BISP, a seasoned communication strategist and trainer.*

Briefs

EU seeks to shore up Ukraine as Trump wavers on peace push

BRUSSELS: EU leaders will look Thursday to greenlight a potential mammoth new loan for Ukraine using Russian frozen assets, in a bid to bolster Kyiv as US President Donald Trump vacillates on peace efforts with Moscow. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will join a summit of the EU's 27 leaders in Brussels – before heading to London on Friday – as Europe presses to shore up support after Trump put on ice a proposed meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin in Budapest. Zelensky and his key backers are seeking to seize on Trump's demand for Russia and Ukraine to stop fighting along the current front line and shift the onus from Kyiv to Moscow to make concessions. Hopes that Trump could take against Putin got a boost Wednesday when US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Washington would unveil "a substantial pickup" in sanctions against Russia, and accused the Russian leader of not being "honest and forthright" in talks. While the talks in the British capital look set to focus more on keeping the mercurial US leader on board, the summit in Brussels will centre on how to keep funding Ukraine and piling more pressure on Moscow. – APP

Trump slaps 'tremendous' sanctions on Russian oil

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump slapped sanctions on Russia's two largest oil companies on Wednesday, complaining that his talks with Vladimir Putin to end the Ukraine war "don't go anywhere." The European Union also unveiled a fresh wave of sanctions to pressure Russia to end its relentless, three-and-a-half-year invasion of its neighbour, which is allied with both Washington and Brussels. Trump has held off pulling the trigger on sanctions against Russia for months, but his patience snapped after plans for a fresh summit with Putin in Budapest collapsed. "Every time I speak with Vladimir, I have good conversations, and then they don't go anywhere," Trump said in response to a question from an AFP journalist in the Oval Office. But Trump added that he hoped the "tremendous sanctions" against Russian oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil would be short-lived. "We hope that the war will be settled," he said alongside NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte. – APP

Trump confirms demolishing White House's East Wing

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump confirmed Wednesday that the White House's iconic East Wing is being torn down in its entirety to make way for a huge \$300-million ballroom – a far more extensive demolition than previously announced. Trump told reporters at an Oval Office event that he had decided after consulting architects that "really knocking it down" was preferable to a partial demolition. The president was asked about the work at an event alongside NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, after a mechanical excavator was photographed ripping through the East Wing's facade, leaving a tangle of broken masonry, rubble and steel wires. The East Wing is where US first ladies have traditionally had their offices. The president works in the West Wing and the couple live in the Executive Mansion. Trump says the new 90,000-square-foot ballroom with a capacity of 1,000 people is needed to host large state dinners and other events that currently have to be held in a tent. – APP

Pakistan-US relations not a matter of choice: ambassador

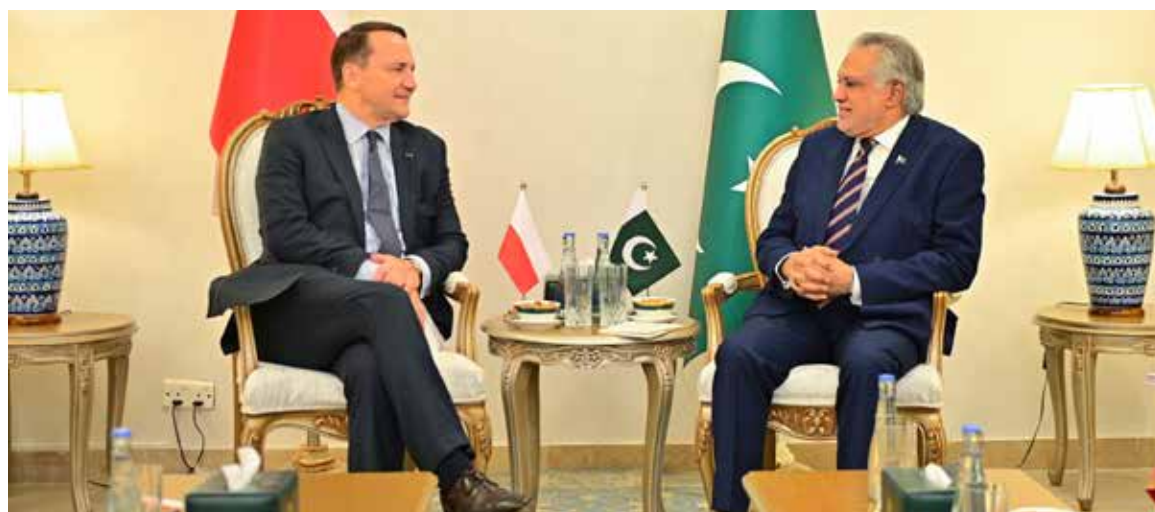
Addressing a wide range of issues, including climate change, India-Pakistan relations, the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), China-Pakistan relations, the Ukraine conflict, and regional tensions with Afghanistan, Ambassador Sheikh reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to diplomacy, stability, and pragmatic policymaking

DNA

WASHINGTON, DC: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, has reaffirmed Islamabad's commitment to diplomacy, stability, and pragmatic economic policies while stressing the significance of bilateral relations between Islamabad and Washington. "Between the two mega countries of today and tomorrow – from both a present and a futuristic perspective – good relations are not a matter of choice or preference; they are indispensable," Ambassador Sheikh stated during a panel discussion on "The Future of the US-Pakistan Relationship" at the Future Security Forum 2025 in Washington, DC. Highlighting the depth and continuity of the bilateral partnership, Ambassador Sheikh noted that Pakistan and the United States shared a longstanding and consequential relationship, marked by collaboration on critical global challenges, including counterterrorism and climate change. The 11th Annual Future Security Forum was organised by Arizona State University and New America in collaboration with Security & Defence PluS. The event brought together senior policymakers, defence experts, and thought leaders for discussions on emerging global security dynamics. He thanked the US leadership, particularly President Trump, for facilitating the ceasefire that ended the 88-hour standoff, calling it "a vital act that prevented escalation in a nuclear neighbourhood of 1.7 billion people."



Addressing a wide range of issues, including climate change, India-Pakistan relations, the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), China-Pakistan relations, the Ukraine conflict, and regional tensions with Afghanistan, Ambassador Sheikh reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to diplomacy, stability, and pragmatic policymaking. He spoke at length



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar received the Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister of Poland H.E. Radoslaw Sikorski at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two leaders held a tête-à-tête meeting and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest. – DNA

Pakistan calls for distinguishing terrorism from legitimate struggles

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan had called for making a distinction between terrorism and the exercise of the legitimate right of people to resist foreign occupation, saying international law upholds this stance. "This distinction is duly observed in International Law, International Humanitarian Law, and General Assembly resolution 46/51 which also endorses this position," Pakistani delegate Muhammad Jawad Ajmal told the UN General Assembly's Third Committee, which deals with social, humanitarian and cultural matters, on Wednesday. Participating in a debate on 'Promotion and Protection of Human Rights', Ajmal, a counsellor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN, emphasized that the definition of terrorism must be consistent with best practice international standards, including legality. In this context, the Pakistani delegate voiced concern that in situations of foreign occupation, such as in Indian occupied Kashmir and Palestine, "the occupying powers continue to use so-called administrative and counter-terrorism measures to violate human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations, including through forced relocations, demographic changes, arbitrary detentions, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment." Pakistan, he said, attached great importance to an international law based global order that ensured the protection of human rights while countering terrorism.

The Pakistani delegate also said that listings of terrorist individuals and entities must not directly or indirectly discriminate on prohibited grounds, including religion. "Yet we see that the UN's counter terrorism architecture has regrettably singled out one religion for affiliation with terrorism while ignoring neo-fascist, violent nationalist, right wing and Islamophobic groups that target Muslims worldwide," he said, adding, "This must change."

Pointing out that the UN Security Council sanctions regimes were not fully compliant with international human rights standards and due process guarantees, Counsellor Ajmal said these should be made more equitable and transparent. "We must also strengthen the (UN) Ombudsman's office to the 1267 sanctions committee and expand its mandate." In complete breach of international law under false pretenses of counter-terrorism, he said that in May India attacked urban civilian areas in Pakistani territory leading to the loss of 54 innocent Pakistani civilians, including 15 children and 13 women, some of them infants. "While Pakistan has demonstrated its will and capability to thwart such malicious acts of state terrorism, we must condemn such misadventures," he added. "Such countries are also involved in one of the gravest violations of human rights under the pretext of counter-terrorism with their extra-territorial assassination campaigns that contravene provisions of international law, raising serious concerns about such state sponsored terrorism."

Pakistan, Egypt explore defence relations

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) is currently on an official visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt. The visit is aimed at



enhancing military cooperation and defence collaboration between the two brotherly countries.

The Field Marshal called on Egyptian Minister of Defence and Defence Production, General Abdul Maged Saqar and Chief of Staff of Egyptian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Ahmed Khalifa Fatehi. During the meetings, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral defence cooperation were discussed.

Field Marshal affirmed that Egypt is a brotherly country and cooperation between both the two states will not only benefit the people of both the states but will also contribute towards achieving peace and stability in the region.

During the visit to the Ministry of Defence, Field Marshal was warmly welcomed and presented with the Guard of Honour. Field Marshal also laid floral wreath at Memorial of Unknown Soldier and Grave of Late President Mohamed Anwar Al Sadat. COAS also met His Eminence Sheikh Ahmed El Tayab, Grand Imam of Al Azhar at Mashaikh Al Azhar Al Sharif. The grand Imam shared his views on challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah. COAS highlighted the need to eradicate extremist ideologies and contorted interpretations of Islam.

about Pakistan's climate resilience and self-reliance. He said that climate change was not an abstract concept for Pakistan but an existential crisis.

The ambassador recounted the country's repeated cycles of devastating floods, describing new phenomena such as cloudbursts and compounding, sequential climate disasters that have destroyed infrastructure, reversed economic gains, and disrupted development programmes. Sheikh emphasised that Pakistan's diplomacy today was deeply intertwined with climate policy and economic security, noting that "what we build every few years is washed away by floods, but we still must pay back what we borrowed to rebuild." Reiterating Pakistan's principled stance on IIOJK, he called for international mediation to help the Kashmiri people realise their right to self-determination in line with UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, emphasising that peace in South Asia remains contingent upon the resolution of this longstanding dispute.

Rejecting "camp politics," he said Pakistan's foreign policy seeks balanced relations. He asserted that Pakistan's ties with Beijing were rooted in historical continuity and economic cooperation. "There is no binary choice for us. Our relationship with China didn't start yesterday, and it is not ending tomorrow," he remarked, adding that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) should be viewed through an economic lens, as a facilitator of regional connectivity and prosperity.

Govt to shift jailed Imran to Banigala if PTI applies

"We will definitely shift him; he may meet people, play ludo, or whatever he wants to do," says Tariq Fazal

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In a goodwill gesture, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Wednesday offered to shift PTI incarcerated leader Imran Khan from Adiala Jail to his residence in Banigala, provided an application is filed. Speaking on a private TV channel, the minister stated that the PTI founder currently meets with his entire family and lawyers in jail without any restrictions. "If there is any obstacle in meeting him, we will review it. We are ready to shift the PTI founder to Banigala; his party should apply," he remarked. "We will definitely shift him, and he may meet people, play ludo, or whatever he wants to do. We want the PTI founder to meet political people," he maintained. Chaudhry added that first-class exercise machines had been provided to the jailed former prime minister. However, former senator and vice-chairman of the Tehreek Tahafuz Aiyee-e-Pakistan, Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, on a TV show reacted to the minister's offer by stating that neither the federal nor the Punjab government has the authority to do so. He claimed that even if Ahmad Awais (a PTI lawyer also on the show) were to write an application on the party's behalf, the minister would simply fax it to Rawalpindi. To this, the minister quipped, "Where else should the application go, as Adiala Jail is in Rawalpindi?" When The News approached PTI Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram played it down and said when a prime minister phones Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CM to congratulate him and when he tells him about his desire to meet his leader in the jail, and in return he (PM) says, "men apko pooch k bataunga".

Border closure, failed policies

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Pakhtunkhwa National Awami Party (PNAP) chairman Khushal Khan Kakar has said that despite immense potential for employment and business opportunities in Pakhtunkhwa, failed state policies and the absence of friendly relations with neighbouring countries have pushed the Pakhtun homeland to the brink of economic collapse. Speaking at a ceremony organised by the Trade Union Dargai, Mr Kakar said that the tense situation along the Pak-Afghan border had badly affected the regional economy. He noted that the border's prolonged closure had disrupted the import of agricultural produce from Afghanistan and the export of raw materials from Pakistan, depriving millions on both sides of their livelihoods. He said the Pakhtun-Afghan belt had long served as a battleground for regional and international powers due to the "flawed policies" of successive governments. "As a result, hundreds of thousands of Pakhtuns and Afghans have lost their lives, many women have been widowed and countless children orphaned," he added.

Indian govt limits content takedown

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: The Indian government has reduced the number of officials who can order content to be taken down from the internet, a move that follows a bitter legal battle with Elon Musk's X that centered around a contentious policy. X, Musk's social media platform, had been in opposition to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2023 decision to police the internet by allowing thousands of officials to file takedown orders. In August, Reuters reported that police inspectors were issuing takedown orders on cartoons and satirical posts, sparking one of X's most high-profile legal challenges against a government's content-removal policy. X lost the lawsuit in Karnataka High Court in September, with a judge ruling that its challenge was without merit and X had to abide by local laws. But late on Wednesday.



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