



Islamabad POST

Monday, October 27, 2025

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PML-N, PPP bonhomie in peril

Winds of change begin to blow on political horizon

As November approaches, the nation braces for what could be a defining phase in Pakistan's political evolution one that may once again test the endurance of coalition politics and the maturity of the country's democratic institutions

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Political winds of change appear to be gathering momentum in Pakistan as key figures of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif, and Maryam Nawaz held an important huddle at Jati Umra on Sunday to deliberate over the emerging political situation, particularly the tense developments in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). According to reliable sources, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is preparing to move a no-confidence motion against the PML-N-led government in AJK a move that could mark the first visible crack in the coalition understanding between the two major parties at the federal level. The development, if it materializes, may have far-reaching implications for national politics. Political observers see this as a potential turning point in the uneasy alliance between the PML-N and PPP, which have jointly governed Pakistan since the 2024 general elections. The understanding between both parties was that after two and a half years, power at the federal level would be handed over to a PPP-nominated prime minister. However, with that time frame now approaching its end, signs of strain are increasingly visible as the PML-N appears reluctant to relinquish control. In Pakistan's political tradition, the average life span of a prime minister seldom exceeds two and a half years a pattern that now looms large over the incumbent government. The PPP leadership, sources say, has grown

frustrated over the lack of movement on the agreed power-sharing formula and is signaling its discontent through political maneuvering in AJK. Analysts believe that after November, Pakistan could witness significant political shifts, with the PML-N-PPP bonhomie fading rapidly. The anticipated realignment could reshape the parliamentary landscape, as both parties reassess their strategies ahead of future electoral battles. Governance, meanwhile, remains a major concern. Over the past two years, economic recovery has been sluggish, and the promised wave of foreign direct investment (FDI) has failed to materialize. In fact, foreign companies operating in Pakistan have scaled down or wound up operations, citing persistent security challenges and regulatory and judicial uncertainty. Political instability has further eroded investor confidence, while inflation, unemployment, and governance inefficiencies continue to weigh heavily on the public mood. Within this context, any major rupture between the PML-N and PPP could deepen political polarization and complicate governance even further. The Jati Umra meeting, insiders reveal, focused not only on damage control in AJK but also on maintaining coalition stability at the federal level. However, given the history of mistrust between the two parties, many believe the alliance is approaching a breaking point. As November approaches, the nation braces for what could be a defining phase in Pakistan's political evolution one that may once again test the endurance of coalition politics and the maturity of the country's democratic institutions.



DOHA: United States President Donald Trump co-signed a ceasefire agreement between Thailand and Cambodia in Malaysia during the first stop on his Asia tour, which is expected to culminate in talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. — DNA

Trump co-signs Thailand, Cambodia ceasefire agreement

DNA

DOHA: United States President Donald Trump co-signed a ceasefire agreement between Thailand and Cambodia in Malaysia during the first stop on his Asia tour, which is expected to culminate in talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. The ceasefire, following a bloody border dispute, was signed by Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, as well as Trump and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. The agreement will see the release of 18 Cambodian prisoners of war, a statement from Cambodia's foreign ministry said. Clashes between Thailand and Cambodia erupted in July, killing more than 40 people and forcing around 300,000 to flee their homes.

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Lahore again ranked most polluted city

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Punjab's capital Lahore has been ranked as the most polluted city globally on Sunday, as heavy smog continues to envelop the city and its surroundings. According to the air quality monitoring platform IQAir, Lahore recorded a US Air Quality Index (AQI) of 349 at 9:43 am, placing it in the "hazardous" category. The PM2.5 concentration was measured at 249.5 µg/m³ — nearly 50 times higher than the World Health Organisation's (WHO) annual air quality guideline. The toxic haze has left the city shrouded for days, reducing

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Attends ASEAN summit

Trump says he can 'quickly solve' Pakistan, Afghanistan conflict

US president praises PM Shebaz Sharif, Field Marshal Asim Munir as "great people"

NEWS DESK

DOHA: US President Donald Trump on Sunday said he would "quickly resolve" the Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict, praising Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir as "great people." Trump made the remarks while addressing the signing ceremony of a Thailand-Cambodia peace deal on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. Border crossings between the two countries have remained closed since October 11, following clashes earlier this month that killed dozens on both sides in the worst fighting since the Taliban's 2021 takeover of Kabul. The border clashes were triggered after Islamabad demanded that Kabul control militants who attack Pakistan across their shared border, saying they operated from havens in Afghanistan. A ceasefire was agreed in talks hosted by Qatar and Türkiye last weekend and is holding between the two sides. During the second round of talks in Istanbul, Pakistan has handed over a comprehensive counterterrorism plan to the Afghan Taliban, sources said.

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US seeks to expand strategic relationship with Pakistan: Rubio

Rubio says India must understand Washington's need for balanced diplomacy across South Asia

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that Washington sees "an opportunity to expand its strategic relationship with Pakistan," stressing that this engagement is not at the expense of America's friendship with India. During a press briefing, Secretary Rubio was asked whether India had expressed concerns over Washington's growing strategic engagement and stronger relations with Pakistan. "They really haven't — I mean, we know they're concerned for obvious reasons because of the tensions that have existed between Pakistan and India historically," he said, according to the transcript of the briefing on the State Department's website.

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Briefs

Pakistan draws red lines in Istanbul talks

DNA

ISTANBUL: In crucial talks held in Istanbul, Pakistan has presented its final position to the Afghan Taliban delegation, emphasizing that continued patronage of terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil is unacceptable, according to reliable security sources. During the meeting, the Pakistani delegation conveyed a firm message that concrete and verifiable measures must be taken by the Taliban regime to eliminate cross-border terrorism both from and inside Afghanistan. Officials stressed that Pakistan's patience is wearing thin amid a surge in militant attacks linked to sanctuaries across the border. Security sources revealed that Pakistan's stance was communicated "in clear and unambiguous terms," highlighting that the persistence of cross-border infiltration, attacks on security forces, and the use of Afghan territory by anti-Pakistan elements cannot continue. On the other hand, the Afghan Taliban delegation's arguments were described as "illogical and contrary to ground realities." Sources observed that the Taliban appeared to be "following someone else's or another agenda," one that "does not serve the interests of Afghanistan, Pakistan, or regional stability." The talks, viewed as a last major diplomatic attempt to curb escalating tensions, are said to have reached a decisive stage. "Further progress now hinges on the Taliban's willingness to adopt a positive and practical attitude," a senior security official noted. The Istanbul dialogue marks one of the most serious high-level engagements between two sides in recent months, as Pakistan pushes for concrete commitments rather than verbal assurances to ensure peace along its western border.

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz 'discuss AJK govt formation'

AJK premier begins consultations amid an expected in-house change

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari spoke by telephone with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), sources told Geo News on Sunday, as the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) moves to form a new government in the territory. According to sources, President Zardari took Prime Minister Shehbaz into confidence over the PPP's decision and the strategy for government formation in AJK. After the call, the prime minister tasked the PML-N committee on AJK affairs — chaired by Ahsan Iqbal and including Rana Sanaulah and Amir Muqam — with holding talks with the PPP. The committee has begun consultations with the PML-N's AJK chapter, the sources added. Separately, PML-N parliamentary leader and former AJK prime minister Raja Farooq Haider reiterated his party's stance that it will sit in opposition and will not be part of any government formation in AJK. He told the party's parliamentary meeting that the decision to

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PM Shehbaz Sharif to visit Saudi Arabia

Premier to engage with Saudi leadership to explore cooperation in trade, investment and energy sectors, says FO

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will visit Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman from October 27 to 29, 2025, to participate in the ninth edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII9), the Foreign Office said in a statement on Sunday. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, as well

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25 terrorists killed in cross-border infiltration

Five Pakistan Army soldiers martyred in intense exchange of fire with terrorists, says ISPR

DNA

RAWALPINDI: On 24-25 October 2025, movements of two large groups of khwarij, opposite general area Ghaki, Kurram District and Spinwam, North Waziristan District who were trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, were picked up by the security forces. Own troops effectively engaged these groups of khwarij. As a result of precise and skillful engagements, 25 khwarij including four Suicide Bombers belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij were sent to hell in Spinwam, North Waziristan District. Whereas, another ten infiltrating khwarij were killed in Ghaki, Kurram District. Large number of weapons, ammunition & explosives were also recovered from the killed infiltrating Khwarij. However, during the intense fire exchanges, five brave sons of soil, Havildar Manzoor Hussain (age: 35 years, resident of District Ghizar), Sepoy Nauman Ilyas Kiyani (age: 23 years, resident of District Poonch), Sepoy Muhammad Adil (age: 24 years, resident of District Kasur), Sepoy Shah Jehan (age: 25 years, resident of District Vehari) and Sepoy Ali Asghar (age: 25 years, resident of District Pak Pattan), having fought

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President, PM laud security forces

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has paid rich tribute to the security forces for their successful operations against Fitna-tul-Khawarij terrorists in North Waziristan and Kurram districts. The Prime Minister appreciated the security personnel for eliminating 25 terrorists during the operations and commended their professionalism and bravery. He also paid homage to the five soldiers of the security forces who embraced martyrdom while fighting courageously against the terrorists. The Prime Minister prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs and expressed heartfelt condolences to their bereaved families. He said the entire nation salutes the courage and sacrifices of the security forces. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's firm resolve to root out terrorism in all its forms and manifestations from the country. The President also lauded role of the security forces.

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Hazara varsity Syndicate approves key decisions

MANSEHRA: The 71st meeting of the Syndicate of Hazara University Mansehra, chaired by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan, approved several important academic and administrative decisions. The meeting endorsed the minutes of previous sessions of the Syndicate and the Advanced Studies and Research Board, while the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee were also approved with several additional suggestions. The Syndicate approved an increase in the remuneration of daily wage workers and visiting faculty members and granted an NOC for faculty positions, paving the way for new faculty recruitment after approval from other higher university forums. The appointment of chairpersons for various academic departments was also sanctioned. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan expressed gratitude to the Syndicate members for their participation, stating that the proceedings were successfully concluded due to the members' cooperation, guidance, and positive outlook. He added that the positive decisions made during the meeting would further enhance academic and administrative efficiency at Hazara University.—APP

Kashmiris never accepted Indian occupation: AJK PM

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq has said on Sunday that on October 27, 1947, India violated the principles of the partition of the subcontinent by deploying its forces in Kashmir against the will of its people and occupied a part of the region. In his special message on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day, the Prime Minister said that India's claim over Jammu and Kashmir, based on the so-called Instrument of Accession, was rejected by the United Nations. He added that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have never accepted India's illegal and oppressive occupation and have continued their struggle for freedom to this day.—APP



Lahore: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offering Fateha and extends condolences on the death of wife of Mian Marghoob Ahmad, Senior Leader of PML N on Sunday.

Muqam vows Pakistan's continued support for Kashmiris' struggle

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SA-FRON Engr. Amir Muqam has said that October 27 will once again be observed as "Black Day" across Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and among Kashmiri communities worldwide to condemn India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing a press conference along with leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) at Aiwan-e-Iqbal, here on Sunday, the minister said that the day marks India's forcible and unlawful occupation of Jammu and Kashmir on October 27, 1947, in blatant violation of the principles of partition, human rights, and United Nations resolutions. He said Pakistan and its people have always stood shoulder to shoulder with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will continue to do so until they are granted their inalienable right to self-determination. Engr. Amir Muqam paid rich tribute to the unmatched sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, saying that more than 8,316 people have been martyred in fake encounters and illegal

detentions, over 100,000 houses destroyed, 22,000 women widowed, 1,916 children orphaned, and 11,229 women subjected to assault under Indian occupation. He said thousands of Hurriyat leaders remain imprisoned, while India is trying to execute senior leader Yasin Malik. "More than 900,000 Indian troops have turned the occupied valley into a prison," he said, urging the international community to ensure implementation of UN resolutions for the freedom of Kashmiris. The minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has boldly presented the Kashmir cause at global forums, exposing Indian atrocities and highlighting the plight of oppressed Kashmiris. He said that Pakistan will continue its political, moral, and diplomatic support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir until their legitimate struggle reaches its destination. "The issue of Kashmir is not of one party, it is the issue of all Pakistanis," he added. Engr. Amir Muqam announced that a one-minute silence will be observed at 10 a.m. on Sunday across the country to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people,

while rallies and walks will also be held in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. He said that the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs is coordinating with all relevant departments to observe Kashmir Black Day in an organized and impactful manner, to send a strong and clear message to the international community that the Kashmir issue must be resolved in accordance with the will of the Kashmiri people and in line with the United Nations resolutions. To a question about Azad Kashmir's political situation, the minister said that although the AJK Prime Minister is an honest man, he has failed to control the situation and that a change in government has become inevitable. He said the PML-N in AJK has decided not to join any coalition government and will sit on the opposition benches. "The development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan is our foremost priority," he added. To another query, he said that every political party has the democratic right to form government, but urged the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to act responsibly and speak within constitutional limits.—APP

Railways modernization efforts gaining momentum: Hanif

LAHORE: Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi has said that the process of modernizing Pakistan Railways and providing better facilities to passengers is continuing successfully. Addressing a press conference at the Railway Headquarters on Sunday, he announced several major projects and development initiatives aimed at transforming the railway system on modern lines. The minister revealed that efforts are being made to restore the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul train service by December 31. He added that following an agreement with Uzbekistan, another accord is being finalized with Kazakhstan, under which freight will be brought up to Chaman. He said that since a railway line already exists from Chaman to Karachi, the agreement will help open new trade routes to Central Asia and Europe.—APP

Kundi calls for breast cancer awareness in rural areas

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that women are the strong pillars of society, and their health and well-being guarantee a progressive and enlightened nation. "When women are healthy, the whole society becomes healthy," he remarked. He expressed these views while addressing a breast cancer awareness seminar as chief guest at the Governor's House Peshawar. The event was attended by Professor Dr. Muqaddas Ali Khan, Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent (Merged Areas) Farzand Ali Wazir, medical experts, women health professionals, and social figures in large numbers. Dr. Muqaddas Ali Khan highlighted the importance of organizing such seminars and thanked the Governor for hosting the awareness session at the Governor's House. Medical experts including Dr. Iman Sohail, Dr. Mumtaz Ali Marwat, Dr. Rabika Bakhtiar, Dr. Faiza Rehman, Dr. Syed Muhammad Sultan, Dr. Syed Ghulam Ghous, Dr. Irfanul Islam Nasir, and Dr. Syed Asif Shah spoke about the causes, treatment, prevention, and awareness of

breast cancer. In his address, Governor Kundi said that the seminar was not merely an event but a "movement" aimed at promoting women's health, awareness, and empowerment. He emphasized that awareness efforts should not be limited to the month of October but continued throughout the year. He lauded the organizers for holding the seminar on such an important subject and said that Pakistan remains among the countries where breast cancer is a leading cause of death among women. Governor Kundi urged educated women to play their role in spreading awareness among women in rural areas about breast cancer and its early detection. He assured that the Governor's House would continue to fully support all positive initiatives related to women's health and awareness. The Governor also paid tribute to Asifa Bhutto Zardari, praising her as a leading figure in the national breast cancer awareness campaign. N"Under her leadership, this campaign is creating confidence and consciousness among women. I want all women of society to join Asifa Bhutto Zardari in this noble mission," he said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: The CEO Westminster School Ayesha Raheel conferred upon Riffat Ara Baig an Outstanding Teacher Award (Fine Arts) at the annual ceremony organised at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA).—DNA

NEPRA's revised MYT ruling for KE endangers privatization agenda

ISLAMABAD: NEPRA's revised Multi-Year Tariff (MYT) determination for K-Electric puts the government's privatization agenda at risk, while also adversely affecting Karachi's stability, stated energy experts and industrialists on Saturday during a webinar organized by the Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (PRIME) titled 'Karachi's Energy Security: Challenges and Opportunities'. K-Electric CEO Moonis Ali said the MYT should have reflected the company's continuous operational improvements and the realities of power supply in a complex urban setting, said a press release issued here. He said that since privatization, K-Electric has significantly reduced aggregate technical and commercial losses from around 45 percent to below 20 percent. He further noted that while the new tariff structure brings certain challenges, KE remains committed to serving Karachi. He explained that the changes in the fuel reference

mechanism may result in additional financial obligations for Karachi consumers, including retrospective adjustments. "We believe these issues can be addressed through constructive engagement with NEPRA and the government," he said while also clarifying the fact that in an apple-to-apple comparison with the national grid and XWDISCOS, KE's cost of generation was lower and the company was more efficient. Among the panelists was former FBR chairman Shabbar Zaidi who termed NEPRA's decision financially unviable, predicting that within two years KE could face bankruptcy. Zaidi added that NEPRA's approach of enforcing uniform tariffs across all cities ignores ground realities. He said a privatised DISCO cannot disconnect high-loss areas or adjust prices. Karachi's consumer composition is not comparable to other regions. Haroon Shamsi, an industrialist at Karachi and Member steering committee at Better Work Pakistan, said

the revised tariff is not feasible for industries that depend on reliable and affordable power. He added that accounts for FY2024 have already been filed and it was difficult to retrospectively adjust costs. Shamsi also questioned why Karachiites are paying the PHL surcharge, which stems from inefficiencies of the national grid. Zeeshan Ali, Member of the Advisory Committee on Energy, FPCCI, while representing Karachi's business community, warned that the decision will derail planned investments to upgrade infrastructure and improve reliability of power supply. "Even small power dips can damage industrial machinery," he cautioned. Rehan Javed, prominent industrialist and energy expert, pointed out that KE's actual contribution to national power stability is often misunderstood "KE draws 2,000 MW from the national grid but pays for 2,600 MW in capacity charges, effectively reducing the national grid's burden," he said.—APP

27 OCTOBER

یوم سیاہ

Kashmir belongs to Pakistan

Kashmir and Pakistan-One Heart, One Soul

کشمیر

#KashmirBlackDay

FIELD MARSHAL SYED ASIM MUNIR, NI (M), HJ, CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF

"Our stance the government's stance on Kashmir is absolutely clear. It was our jugular vein; it remains our jugular vein. We will not forget it, nor will we abandon our Kashmiri brethren in the just struggle they are waging against Indian occupation."

15, April 2025

PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF

"I wish to assure the Kashmiri people that I stand with them, the people of Pakistan stands with them and one day soon in Sha Allah, India's tyranny in Kashmir will come to a grinding halt."

26, September 2025

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Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Government of Pakistan

URAN PAKISTAN

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
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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
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Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PNCA, Nomad Gallery organize Sindhu Sur- Melody of Sindhu exhibition

The exhibition was inaugurated by Senator Rubina Rauf, who appreciated the initiative for its role in reviving regional art practices and promoting cultural dialogue through visual storytelling

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts(PNCA), in collaboration with Nomad Gallery, proudly presents Sindhu Sur – Melody of Sindhu, an exhibition conceptualized and curated by Nageen Hyat, Founder of Nomad Gallery. The exhibition celebrates the profound cultural, poetic, and artistic heritage of Sindh through a diverse collection of contemporary works that blend illumination, geometry, and traditional visual languages. The exhibition was inaugurated by Senator Rubina Rauf, who appreciated the initiative for its role in reviving regional art practices and promoting cultural dialogue through visual storytelling. The Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, Frederico Silva and Ms. Nicole Guihot, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Australian High Commission, Ms Nageen Hayat, Curator, and Mariam Ahmed, Director PNCA also accompanied them. Sindhu Sur brings together a vibrant group of artists from Sindh—including Shahzad Zar, Muzammil H. Chandio, Ayman Babar, Mehrin Haseeb, Mahnoor Fatima, Munazza Khan, Anika Fatima, Hina Muhammad, and Ambreen Shah—comprising recent graduates and faculty members of the VM Centre for Traditional Arts, Karachi, alongside Muzammil H. Chandio, a graduate of the National College of Arts, Lahore. Together, they explore the intersections of faith, craft, and aesthetics, reviving traditional Sindhi motifs while reinterpreting them through a contemporary lens. In these works, artists draw inspiration from the region’s artistic and spiritual legacy, incorporating Ajrak patterns, rally designs, Makli structures, and the sacred geometry of Thatta. Through layered forms, rhythmic compositions, and symbolic



motifs, the exhibition pays homage to Sindh’s unique visual identity—where geometry breathes, colour speaks, and tradition endures. Each artwork reflects the warmth of Sindhi hospitality and celebrates the enduring dialogue between craftsmanship and creative expression. Speaking about the exhibition, Nageen Hyat shared, “It gives me great pleasure to conceptualize and curate Sindhu Sur – Melody of Sindhu, highlighting the rich culture of Sindh through the visual medium of illumination and contemporary art. The participating artists seek to revive local and regional artistic skills, revitalizing the relevance

of traditional arts in Pakistan.” Adding to this, Mariam Ahmed, Director Visual Arts Division PNCA, remarked, “PNCA remains committed to providing platforms that celebrate Pakistan’s cultural diversity and empower creative voices across the country. Sindhu Sur is a remarkable example of how tradition and innovation can

coexist beautifully.” Through Sindhu Sur, PNCA and Nomad Gallery continue their shared vision of supporting artistic voices, empowering women and indigenous communities, and fostering appreciation for Pakistan’s diverse artistic heritage. The exhibition will continue till 30th October, daily timings, 10 am to 4 pm.

PIDE sparks national conversation through Talanoa dialogue

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with Islamic Relief Pakistan, hosted an insightful Talanoa Dialogue titled “Collaborative Climate Action for a Resilient Pakistan.” The event brought together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to foster inclusive discussions on climate resilience, adaptation, and sustainable development Moderated by Dr. Khurram Elahi, Assistant Professor at PIDE, the session introduced the Talanoa Dialogue framework – a participatory, story based approach emphasizing transparency, inclusivity, and trust in climate conversations. The dialogue revolved around three guiding questions: Where we are, where we want to be, and how we are going to get there. In his open-

ing remarks, Mr. Raza Narejo, Acting Country Director at Islamic Relief Pakistan, highlighted the organization’s ongoing initiatives in water and food security, gender inclusion, and climate adaptation. He emphasized that dialogues like Talanoa complement Pakistan’s national climate commitments and contribute to shaping discussions ahead of COP30. Mr. Narejo underscored that local perspectives are essential for effective climate policy, as on ground realities often differ from policy level assumptions. Participants shared firsthand experiences and local observations of Pakistan’s evolving climate landscape from unpredictable weather patterns and recurring floods to soil degradation, air pollution, and urban expansion. Concerns over declining crop yields and nutritional quality reflected the direct link between environmental degradation, food insecurity, and public health. Participants noted that limited

awareness among farmers about adaptive agricultural practices and weak enforcement of pollution controls continue to hinder resilience efforts. They emphasized that climate adaptation must be coupled with education, behavioral change, and stronger local participation in decision making processes. Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Associate Professor and Registrar PIDE, stressed that policy design itself influences climate outcomes and called for evidence based policymaking that integrates environmental and economic objectives. He also pointed to the absence of climate insurance mechanisms to protect vulnerable households from floods, droughts, and crop failures. Other contributors, including Dr. Zulfiqar, Dr. Usman, and Dr. Faisal, discussed the social and psychological dimensions of climate stress, such as forced migration, loss of community identity, and post disaster vulnerabilities.

Landmark PDP sewerage, water network upgrades unveiled

ISLAMABAD: Driving the vision of sustainable community development, Managing Director (MD) - Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company (PMDFC) Syed Zahid Aziz on Sunday called on citizens to maintain parks and sports grounds responsibly and reaffirmed his commitment to ongoing projects under the Chief Minister’s leadership, including the Punjab Development Program (PDP), slated for completion in the next two years to upgrade sewerage and water systems. While speaking exclusively to PTV News, MD-PMDFC Syed Zahid Aziz highlighted that the Punjab Development Program (PDP) is a unique and comprehensive initiative of the Maryam Nawaz government. He emphasized that the program addresses multiple aspects of urban infrastruc-

ture, including sewerage, rainwater drainage and street paving, ensuring a holistic approach to city development. Aziz specifically noted that a new rainwater management project will be launched in Lahore, focusing on building rainwater storage tanks to prevent flooding and improve water conservation. He added that this initiative will complement the ongoing efforts of WASA and PMDFC to strengthen the city’s water and sewerage infrastructure, ensuring a more efficient and sustainable urban environment. In addition to water and sewerage projects, the PDP will also focus on rehabilitating parks and sports grounds across the province, he said, adding, these efforts aim to enhance public spaces, promote civic responsibility and provide citizens with well-maintained

recreational areas, reflecting the government’s commitment to sustainable development and improved quality of life. He stated about this PDP project, with a budget of 400 billion PKR will be completed within two years and will significantly improve city infrastructure. The initiative includes rainwater management to prevent stagnant water, construction of ponds and a floating plant project, ensuring better waste management and reducing health risks caused by contaminated water. The project aims to strengthen the waste water system across both posh and remote areas, preventing unsafe vegetable cultivation and associated health issues, he said, adding, with improving sewerage and water management, the initiative will enhance public health and urban living standards across the province. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Musicians perform during a diplomatic reception held at the Islamabad Serena Hotel.

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**NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER
REGULATORY AUTHORITY (NEPRA)**



اب آپ "نہر آسان اپروچ" "موہاں" ملکیش کے دریے
کلی کے ضلع کوئی بھی عایت فوری درج کروا سکتے ہیں

NEPRA ASAAAN APPROACH
بروقت بروقت

NOTICE OF ADMISSION / HEARING
All stakeholders, interested/affected persons and the general public are notified that Quetta Electric Supply Company Limited (QESCO) has filed petition with the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) for the determination of its tariff for distribution of electric power for the FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30. The same has been admitted by the Authority.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PETITION

1. The petitioner has requested the following:						
Distribution of Power	Unit	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29	FY 2029-30
Marginal						
Pay and Allowances	Rs. Mln	7,682	8,451	9,296	10,225	11,248
Post-retirement benefits	Rs. Mln	2,351	2,586	2,845	3,129	3,442
Repair and Maintenance	Rs. Mln	1,466	1,613	1,774	1,952	2,147
Travelling expenses	Rs. Mln	388	427	469	516	568
Vehicle expenses	Rs. Mln	753	829	912	1,003	1,103
Other expense	Rs. Mln	938	1,032	1,135	1,249	1,374
Total O&M Costs	Rs. Mln	13,578	14,938	16,431	18,074	19,882
Depreciation	Rs. Mln	2,955	3,300	3,665	4,014	4,346
Return on Rate Base	Rs. Mln	15,681	17,342	18,660	20,147	20,755
Gross Distribution Margin	Rs. Mln	32,214	35,580	39,056	42,235	44,983
Less: Other Income	Rs. Mln	(1,824)	(1,843)	(1,857)	(1,862)	(1,871)
Net Distribution Margin	Rs. Mln	30,390	33,737	37,199	40,373	43,112
Projected Sales	GWh	2,624	2,773	2,931	3,098	3,275
Requested Tariff	Rs./kWh	11.58	12.17	12.69	13.03	13.16

2. In terms of rules 6 of NEPRA (Tariff Standards & Procedures) Rules, 1998, any interested person who desires to participate in the proceedings may file an intervention request within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Such intervention request shall state the name and address of the person filing the same, objections and the manner in which such person is or is likely to be substantially and specifically affected by any determination in the proceedings. The intervention request may also contain the contentions of the person making the same, the relief sought and the evidence, if any, in support of the case. In the intervention request, the intervener may specifically admit, deny or explain the facts stated in the petition and may also state additional facts which are relevant and necessary for reaching a just and informed decision in the proceedings. The intervention request shall be signed, verified and supported by means of an affidavit in the same manner as in the case of the petition. The intervener shall also serve a copy of the intervention request duly attested as true copy on the petitioner or his authorized representative and the petitioner may file a rejoinder to the intervention request which shall be filed within 7 days of receipts of copy of intervention request.

3. Any person may also file the comments in the matter within 7 days of the publication and the Authority, if deemed fit, may permit participation of such person into the proceedings and also may consider those comments in the final determination.

4. All stakeholders and interested / affected persons are also informed that in order to arrive at a just and informed decision, the Authority has also decided to hold a hearing in the subject matter according to the date, time and venue as mentioned below:

Date: November 05, 2025 (Wednesday)

Time: 11:00 am

Venue: NEPRA Tower/Online (Through Zoom)

5. Following link may be used for participation in the hearing through Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89871929292>

6. Copy of the petition and issues framed for hearing can be obtained from NEPRA office or from website: www.nepra.pk

All communications should be addressed to:

Registrar NEPRA

NEPRA Tower, G-5/1, Islamabad.

Phone: 051-2013200 Fax: 051-921 0215,

E.mail: office@nepra.org.pk

PID(I) No. 3389/25

27 October
Black Day
KASHMIR



KASHMIR
WILL BECOME PAKISTAN



Government of Pakistan

f @ X /GovtofPakistan

www.moib.gov.pk

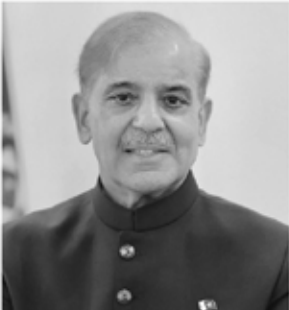
O KASHMIR! IN EVERY PAIN AND SORROW

WE STAND WITH YOU TODAY AND TOMORROW



ASIF ALI ZARDARI

President of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan



MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF

Prime Minister of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan



MUHAMMAD ISHAQ DAR

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister
for Foreign Affairs of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan



ATTAULLAH TARAR

Minister for Information
and Broadcasting



ENGR. AMIR MUQAM

Minister of Kashmir Affairs,
Gilgit-Baltistan and States and
Frontier Regions



RANA MUHAMMAD QASIM NOON

Chairman
Parliamentary Committee
on Kashmir

On this day in 1947, Indian forces entered Srinagar in blatant violation of international law, moral principles, and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Consequently, one of the darkest chapters in modern history began.

Since then, generations of innocent men, women, and children in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have endured unimaginable suffering under occupation, marked by violence, repression, and denial of their fundamental rights.

Every year, we observe this day as Kashmir Black Day to honour the valiant struggle and sacrifices of our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who continue to resist tyranny in their pursuit of the inalienable right to self-determination. Despite decades of Indian brutality, the spirit of resistance among the Kashmiri people remains unbroken.

After 5 August 2019, this brutal campaign has only intensified. India has unilaterally revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status, imposing a military siege, destructing properties of Kashmiris to inflict 'collective punishment' and enforcing draconian laws that strip the Kashmiri people of their fundamental freedoms. The occupied territory remains under severe restrictions on movement, communication, and assembly, while fake encounters, custodial torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, continue to terrorize civilians. Systematic attempts are being made by Indian authorities to turn the Kashmiris into a minority in their own homeland.

Given India's recent hostilities towards Pakistan, the occasion of Kashmir Black Day highlights that lasting peace and stability in South Asia is contingent upon a just and lasting resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

We take this opportunity today to call upon the international community, particularly the United Nations and global human rights organizations, to hold India accountable for its grave and systematic human rights violations in IIOJK, to bring an immediate end to the ongoing Indian atrocities in the occupied territory and to actively work towards the resolution of this long-festering dispute. The United Nations, in particular, owes it to the Kashmiri people.

On its part, Pakistan will continue its unwavering moral, diplomatic, and political support to the people of IIOJK who continue to endure oppression on daily basis. We stand united with our Kashmiri brethren in their struggle for justice, peace and self-determination.

Every year the 27th of October marks the darkest day in the history of Kashmir. It was on this day, seventy-eight years ago, that the Indian Occupation Forces landed in Srinagar and annexed it - a tragic chapter in human history that continues to this day. Ever since that fateful day, India continues to deny the Kashmiri people their inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in numerous resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

For nearly eight decades, the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have endured enormous hardships and oppression. We salute their indomitable spirit, courage, and resilience, in the face of fear and persecution. Their unwavering resolve to attain the just and inalienable right to self-determination, remains undiminished. Since August 5, 2019, India has further intensified its illegal and unilateral actions, aimed at altering the demography and political status of IIOJK. In addition to human rights abuses, massive curbs have been imposed on freedom of movement and expression. By imposing such draconian laws, India has unleashed a systematic campaign of violence and brutality to silence the legitimate political voices and crush the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The unlawful and unjustified incarceration of several prominent Kashmiri leaders and activists, as well as media personalities, is an ugly manifestation of this Indian extremist agenda. Their continued imprisonment, under fabricated charges, is in blatant violation of international human rights norms.

Pakistan has consistently condemned these unlawful measures, that defy international law and violate numerous relevant UN resolutions. We have steadfastly maintained our position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which remains clear, consistent, and principled. Lasting peace and stability in South Asia will remain elusive without the just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

As Prime Minister of Pakistan, I have always highlighted the plight of my Kashmiri brothers and sisters before the international community and echoed their calls for freedom from Indian occupation. I wish to assure the Kashmiri people, that they are not alone in their struggle, rather, the 240 million people of Pakistan stand resolutely beside them.

We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and will never relent in our commitment to the Kashmir cause, until justice is done and the promise of self-determination, pledged by the international community, is finally fulfilled. Inshallah, that day is not far.

On the solemn occasion of Kashmir Black Day, we recall the dark events of 27 October 1947, when Indian troops landed in Srinagar to enforce India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. In the last seventy-eight years, the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have suffered a systematic and relentless campaign of tyranny, oppression and subjugation at the hands of Indian occupation forces.

The UN Security Council, in a series of landmark resolutions, had unequivocally affirmed that the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir would be determined through a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. India has blatantly defied these binding resolutions, choosing instead to tighten its grip on the occupied territory through sheer force and repression. Pakistan, on its part, has always remained committed to the sanctity and centrality of UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir. We have consistently recognized as well as emphasized the critical role of the international community in securing a just and lasting solution to this long festering dispute in our region. The human tragedy in IIOJK has even worsened in the last six years following India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019. The revocation of the special status of IIOJK, followed by the imposition of draconian laws, demographic changes triggered by the issuance of a barrage of domiciles to non-residents, and the imprisonment of the legitimate Kashmiri leadership have become the defining features of the Indian occupation. These measures are yet again a manifestation of India's utter disregard of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council resolutions and the 4th Geneva Convention.

In the aftermath of the Pahalgam Attack, the Indian authorities launched another sweeping crackdown in IIOJK, subjecting thousands of Kashmiris to arbitrary detention and interrogation, while also carrying out demolition of homes of innocent residents in the occupied territory. These developments added to a long record of India's human rights violations and atrocities in IIOJK that have been well documented by the UN bodies and international human rights organizations. Yet, even in the face of such overwhelming adversity, the people of IIOJK have shown remarkable resilience, courage, dignity and perseverance. Their struggle remains unflinching, constantly reminding us of their unyielding quest to attain the right to self-determination.

The recent hostilities between Pakistan and India have once again demonstrated how the Indian intransigence on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and its defiance of international law pose a grave threat to peace and stability in South Asia. It is in the shared interest of all regional states and the international community that the dispute be peacefully and urgently resolved in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

On this Day, Pakistan calls upon the international community to play their due role in bringing an end to the suffering of the people in IIOJK. Their plight deserves not only attention but also meaningful action. Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering political, moral and diplomatic support to the just struggle of Kashmiri people. Pakistan will continue to raise its voice at every international forum until the realization of Kashmiris' legitimate right to self-determination.

Every year, 27th October is observed as Kashmir Black Day to mark the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India in 1947 — a day that stands as a dark chapter in history and a constant reminder of the unresolved plight of the Kashmiri people.

On this solemn day, we express our unwavering solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who continue to face brutal repression and systematic human rights violations under the illegal Indian occupation. Despite decades of hardships, the Kashmiri people have remained steadfast in their just struggle for the right to self-determination, as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Pakistan will continue to extend its full political, diplomatic, and moral support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) until they achieve their legitimate aspirations for freedom and justice.

The Government of Pakistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, remains firmly committed to highlighting the Kashmir cause at every international forum, exposing the grave violations of human rights, and advocating for a peaceful resolution in accordance with the will of the Kashmiri people.

Let us renew our collective pledge on this day to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and continue our efforts until justice prevails and the dawn of freedom rises over the valley.

27 OCTOBER
BLACK DAY
KASHMIR

THE CONSEQUENCES
OF INDIA'S AGGRESSION:

THE TOLL IS STAGGERING:
MORE THAN 500,000
KASHMIRIS MARTYRED
3.5 MILLION KASHMIRIS
FORCED TO MIGRATE
NEARLY 8,000 MARTYRED
IN CUSTODY
168,567 INNOCENT
CIVILIANS ARRESTED
22,963 WOMEN WIDOWED
107,914 CHILDREN ORPHANED
10 OVER 11,000 WOMEN SUBJECTED
TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE
1,300 KASHMIRIS LOST
THEIR EYESIGHT
OVER 13,000 CHILDREN
DETAINED

Today, as we commemorate the 78th Kashmir Black Day, our prayers are with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who have faced decades of injustice and oppression at the hands of Indian forces. On this day in 1947, the Indian forces entered Srinagar and illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Since then, the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have been denied their promised right to self determination.

For seventy-eight long years, the people of IIOJK have endured immense hardships at the hands of the Indian authorities. However, they have never allowed their resolve to be broken, and they remain steadfast in their demand for their right to self determination. Their decades long resilience is a powerful reminder to the world that no force can erase the legitimate aspirations of people.

The United Nations Security Council resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute clearly recognize the right of the Kashmiri people to decide their own future through a free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices. These resolutions remain binding and valid. It is the responsibility of the international community to ensure that these commitments are honoured and that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are allowed to exercise this right.

Since 5 August 2019, India has made new attempts to tighten its grasp over IIOJK. From attempting to alter the demographic composition to silencing the true Kashmiri leadership, Indian authorities have sought to undermine the very existence of Kashmiri identity. Moreover, the Indian authorities rely on draconian laws that give them unchecked powers to arrest, kill, and demolish property in IIOJK without accountability.

This repressive framework was brought to light once again after the Pahalgam Attack of 22 April 2025 when Indian forces launched a sweeping crackdown across IIOJK. Thousands of Kashmiris were arrested or interrogated, and entire homes were reduced to rubble. The crackdown was not limited to IIOJK as Kashmiri students studying in different parts of India became targets of intimidation and violence.

On this day, the Government of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan stand shoulder to shoulder with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters. Their pain is our pain, and their fight is our fight. We will continue to support them politically, morally, and diplomatically until their right to self-determination is fulfilled. Pakistan hopes that one day peace and justice will prevail for the people of Kashmir and that South Asia will move towards stability through a fair resolution of this long-standing dispute.

Every year, 27th October is observed as Kashmir Black Day to mark the beginning of India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947. On this dark day, Indian troops forcibly entered the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, betraying the will of the Kashmiri people.

This unlawful military intervention remains a crime against history, humanity, and the fundamental principles of justice and self-determination.

Over the decades, India has continued to tighten its occupation, strengthening its military grip on the valley through repression, coercion, and systemic state terrorism. The people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have faced extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, custodial torture, media censorship, rape as a weapon of war, and collective punishment under draconian laws. The voices of Kashmiri political leadership, activists, and journalists have been silenced, while millions remain trapped under one of the world's most militarized regimes.

Today, India is also attempting to alter the demographic composition of IIOJK through unilateral and illegal measures aimed at turning Kashmiris into a minority in their own homeland. These actions are a blatant violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions that recognize Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory and affirm the Kashmiri people's inalienable right to self-determination.

Pakistan rejects these illegal actions and stands shoulder to shoulder with the brave people of Kashmir. As Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, I reaffirm that the Parliament, Government, and people of Pakistan will continue to extend full political, diplomatic, and moral support to their Kashmiri brothers and sisters until their rightful and peaceful struggle reaches its ultimate destination. The Kashmiri people are not alone, their sacrifices will not be forgotten, and their just cause will continue to echo across every international forum.

On this solemn day, we also pay homage to the martyrs of Kashmir and renew our pledge to support their heroic resistance until justice prevails, the occupation ends, and the Kashmiri people are granted the right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite under UN supervision, as promised to them more than seven decades ago.

Kashmir will remain in our hearts, in our conscience, and in our collective resolve — until the dawn of freedom rises over the valley.



Sudan’s deadly conflict

HAFED AL-GHWELL

THE war in Sudan is not an anomaly; it is a prototype. A conflict that has directly killed at least 150,000 people, displaced over 11 million, and pushed half the population into acute food insecurity sets the pace for a terrifying global trend. Each new headline, woeful statistic or offensive showcases a form of warfare for which the global community possesses no effective response. This is no longer the clean, contained proxy warfare of the past half-century, but a messy, multi-layered struggle defined by the weaponization of everything from commercially available drones to global financial networks. It is playing out in a theater where state authority has collapsed, supplanted by rival military factions and a dense web of external actors, from regional middle powers to international arms networks whose competing interests fuel the fire without offering an exit. This is the shape of wars to come. First, the mechanics of violence have evolved. Armed drones, once limited to the periphery, now form the core of a callous strategy that blurs the lines between combat and collective punishment. Their function extends far beyond reconnaissance to the primary instruments of siege and terror we see today. For instance, a single drone strike on a displacement shelter at Dar Al-Arqam in El-Fasher killed 57 people, while another that struck the Saudi Maternal Teaching Hospital claimed over 70 lives. The systematic targeting of civilian infrastructure is very much a calculated escalation. Earlier this year, drone attacks on the Merowe Dam and key substations crippled Sudan’s electricity grid, collapsing essential services. In turn, the consequences were as catastrophic as they were multiplicative: hospitals lost refrigeration, medicines spoiled, and access to water became a tool of war. For the 1.2 million people once living in El-Fasher – a city turned into a ghost town by a 57 km siege wall and constant aerial bombardment – the persistent hum of drones overhead denies any concept of sanctuary. Here, families dig crude bunkers for shelter and survive on animal feed, while medical staff, lacking gauze, dress wounds with mosquito nets and carry out amputations due to festering injuries. All this suffering reveals a deliberate architecture of a man-made famine, where the battlefield is everywhere and everyone is a target. Beyond the record death toll and woeful records of persistent human suffering, the civil war has not just undergone a technological shift enabled by a diplomatic vacuum and unchecked external interference; the traditional center of gravity for peacemaking has also disintegrated. The US, whose influence once provided a forced, if flawed, coherence to regional diplomacy, now operates from a position of reduced leverage, channeling efforts through unwieldy constructs such as the Quad.

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The Breaking Point: Israel Challenges Trump’s Gaza Accord

Qamar Bashir



The tragedy is that Israel’s current trajectory mirrors the mistakes of history. Nations that have endured persecution and suffering should understand, more than any others, the moral necessity of restraint. Post-war Germany and Japan, once militaristic powers, rebuilt themselves into peaceful, prosperous democracies by renouncing aggression and embracing accountability. Their transformation stands as proof that security arises not from domination but from legitimacy and trust. Israel, endowed with immense scientific talent, economic vitality...

IN a stunning act of political defiance, Israel’s hard-line cabinet effectively nullified Trump’s Gaza Peace Plan by passing a resolution that authorized the expansion of settlements into the West Bank and renewed military operations even as the peace framework was being finalized. The move blindsided Washington’s diplomatic team, particularly Vice President J. D. Vance, who was in Tel Aviv precisely to secure Israel’s commitment to compliance. According to U.S. officials cited by Reuters and Haaretz, the vice president regarded the Israeli resolution as a deliberate breach of trust and a personal affront, describing it privately as an insult delivered “at the highest level.” Initially, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government appeared cautiously supportive. Yet within weeks, domestic political pressures and far-right factions within his coalition began to dismantle that fragile understanding. For regional observers, the timing was no accident. Analysts from Al Jazeera and Le Monde noted that Netanyahu’s right-wing bloc viewed the Gaza Peace Plan as a strategic threat – a framework that could limit Israel’s military freedom and restore international legitimacy to the idea of Palestinian statehood. By reigniting combat operations and approving annexation in the West Bank, Israel’s leadership seemed intent on pre-empting any diplomatic arrangement that might constrain its territorial ambitions. Trump’s administration had offered Israel extensive security guarantees, economic incentives, and enhanced defense cooperation in exchange for compliance. The vice president’s visit was meant to formalize these commitments. Instead, it concluded in frustration, leaving Washington’s credibility as an honest peace broker hanging in the balance. The rupture was more than symbolic; it revealed the widening gap between an American administration seeking stability and an Israeli government increasingly driven by nationalist ideology. This humanitarian devastation is not an unintended consequence but a calculated strategy. Israeli hardliners argue that prolonged economic collapse will weaken militant networks and deter future uprisings. History, however, teaches the opposite: despair breeds resistance. A society stripped of dignity and survival cannot be pacified through

starvation. No peace plan can take root amid hunger, displacement, and grief. For the United States, this crisis poses an excruciating dilemma. For decades, the U.S.–Israel partnership has rested on three pillars – security cooperation, political alignment, and shared democratic ideals. But when an ally openly defies a sitting American vice president and undermines a peace framework painstakingly negotiated by Washington, those foundations begin to crumble. According to Defense News, the United States currently provides Israel with roughly \$3.8 billion in annual military aid, most of it unconditional. That policy is now facing bipartisan scrutiny in Congress. Several senators have proposed conditioning aid on measurable improvements in civilian protection, echoing growing public sentiment that America must not bankroll violations of humanitarian law. A Pew Research poll conducted in September 2025 found that sixty-one percent of Americans favor temporarily suspending arms transfers to compel a cease-fire. Across the Middle East, the shockwaves have been immediate. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt – all early supporters of Trump’s peace initiative – condemned Israel’s annexation vote as an act of deliberate sabotage. Turkey and Iran warned that continued aggression could trigger regional retaliation, language that has raised fears of a broader conflagration. Analysts point out that these countries, along with Pakistan, now possess credible deterrent and precision-strike capabilities that could drastically alter Israel’s strategic calculus if the United States withdraws its protective shield. Even without direct confrontation, the diplomatic cost for Israel is mounting. The European Union has suspended preferential trade talks, and the U.N. General Assembly has called an emergency session to debate sanctions related to settlement expansion. For the first time in decades, Israel finds itself not only at odds with its adversaries but estranged from its oldest allies. The tragedy is that Israel’s current trajectory mirrors the mistakes of history. Nations that have endured persecution and suffering should understand, more than any others, the moral necessity of restraint. Post-war Germany and Japan, once militaristic powers, rebuilt themselves into peaceful,

prosperous democracies by renouncing aggression and embracing accountability. Their transformation stands as proof that security arises not from domination but from legitimacy and trust. Israel, endowed with immense scientific talent, economic vitality, and a globally connected diaspora, could follow a similar path – if its leadership chose co-existence over conquest. Instead, its current defiance threatens to turn strength into isolation. The illusion of invincibility can blind a nation to its own vulnerabilities. True power lies not in the ability to destroy but in the capacity to reconcile. A country surrounded by hostility cannot ensure its safety through endless wars; it must seek durable peace through justice and empathy. The immediate task now is to restore U.S.–Israeli trust and revive the 21-point peace roadmap before the window for diplomacy closes completely. That will require a verifiable halt to annexation, unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza, a phased prisoner exchange, and credible international guarantees for demilitarization and reconstruction. Regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey must act as guarantors, while the United States and European Union provide financial and institutional support for rebuilding. Without such coordinated engagement, the Middle East risks descending into yet another prolonged and destabilizing conflict. Israel’s defiance may appear, to some, as a show of resolve. In truth, it reveals fragility – a dependence on foreign backing, on perpetual mobilization, and on the dangerous illusion that peace can be achieved through dominance. If Washington rediscovers its moral compass and conditions its support on accountability and restraint, it can still salvage both its peace plan and its reputation as a global arbiter of justice. But if this spiral continues, the United States may one day realize that by shielding an ally from responsibility, it has imperiled not only Israel’s survival but also America’s credibility as the world’s champion of 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

The Illusion of Peace in Gaza

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Despite widespread recognition that the geopolitical landscape has shifted dramatically with Gaza in ruins, Israeli politics moving further right, and Palestinian governance fractured Western diplomats continue to revive the two-state rhetoric after each crisis. While the idea may retain symbolic resonance, its practical viability has vanished

AFTER two years of devastating conflict in Gaza, Donald Trump as a “historic moment of peace” in the Middle East has heralded the declaration of a cease-fire. Yet, beneath the rhetoric of triumph lies a far more complex reality. The cease-fire remains fragile and the fundamental issues that have long plagued the Israeli-Palestinian conflict persist unresolved. The American narrative of progress in the region rests upon deeply flawed assumptions chief among them, the enduring faith in the two-state solution. For decades, Washington’s Middle East policy has revolved around this concept as the ultimate framework for peace. The two state formula has become not only obsolete but also counterproductive. The argument challenges the very foundation of American diplomatic orthodoxy by asserting that neither Israelis nor Palestinians genuinely believe in or desire the two-state outcome as traditionally envisioned. Instead, both societies have evolved politically, psychologically, and territorially in ways that render the idea of two independent, viable states nearly impossible. The two-state solution has long served as the rhetorical cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. From the Oslo Accords in the 1990s to the more recent Trump and Biden administrations, successive American presidents have invoked it as both a moral and strategic imperative. However, as Marc Lynch and Shibley Telhami argue in “The Two-State Mirage,” the persistence of this idea has transformed it from a policy goal into a diplomatic myth. The repeated invocation of two states provides the illusion of progress while masking the steady entrenchment of occupation, settlement expansion, and Palestinian fragmentation. Scholars critique suggesting that Washington’s attachment to the two-state model has more to do with its own self-image than with regional realities. The U.S., he argues, has long defined its role in the Middle East as that of an honest broker a belief that allows it to claim moral authority even as its policies perpetuate

imbalance. This self-deception, according to Malley and Agha, has led to “serial disasters” where American initiatives produce neither peace nor stability but cycles of renewed violence and disillusionment. Despite widespread recognition that the geopolitical landscape has shifted dramatically with Gaza in ruins, Israeli politics moving further right, and Palestinian governance fractured Western diplomats continue to revive the two-state rhetoric after each crisis. While the idea may retain symbolic resonance, its practical viability has vanished. The political geography of the conflict marked by settlements, separation walls, and demographic intermixing has rendered partition increasingly unfeasible. The two-year Gaza war has exposed the bankruptcy of traditional frameworks. Far from bringing peace, American-supported cease-fires and aid initiatives have done little to address the underlying asymmetry of power. Washington’s focus on counterterrorism and Israel’s security, they contend, has consistently overshadowed the humanitarian catastrophe faced by Palestinians. America’s inability to adapt its policy to the realities on the ground. Rather than recalibrating its approach, Washington continues to view the conflict through outdated Cold War-era lenses seeking to “manage” rather than resolve it, and privileging stability over justice. The result is a peace process that exists in name only a process more concerned with appearances than outcomes. The United States’ post-Cold War dominance allowed it to shape international norms, but that same dominance has now eroded. In the Middle East, the limits of American power are increasingly visible. Regional actors from Iran and Turkey to non-state groups like Hamas and Hezbollah now operate with greater autonomy, while global powers like China and Russia have deepened their involvement. This shifting balance means that U.S. proclamations of “peace” carry diminishing weight.

For many Israelis, the idea of coexistence has given way to security maximalism, driven by decades of fear and conflict. For Palestinians, the collapse of peace talks, ongoing displacement, and internal division have eroded faith in diplomacy. The two-state framework, once a symbol of hope, now represents an unfulfilled promise a reminder of international hypocrisy. This disillusionment is not merely emotional; it is structural. The Palestinian Authority’s legitimacy has withered, while Hamas, despite its militant posture, commands enduring support as a symbol of resistance. On the Israeli side, successive governments have normalized the occupation and integrated it into the national identity. Under these conditions, any peace process built on the premise of mutual compromise is destined to fail because the political constituencies that could sustain such compromise no longer exist. If the two-state model is indeed obsolete, what alternatives exist? Scholars like Michael Oren, Nathan J. Brown, and Dahlia Scheindlin, present a spectrum of possibilities from confederation models to rights-based approaches that focus on equality rather than sovereignty. While these ideas remain largely theoretical, they signal a growing recognition that peace requires reimagining not merely repeating past formulas. The path forward lies in acknowledging the failure of old paradigms and embracing political pluralism. Rather than imposing a Western-designed solution, they call for an approach rooted in regional agency one that reflects the aspirations and grievances of both peoples. This would mean shifting the focus from territorial partition to issues of dignity, justice, and coexistence within a shared political space. The meaningful peace cannot be engineered through diplomatic performance. It must emerge from changes in local power dynamics and social consciousness. In their view, international efforts should prioritize human security, rights and governance over symbolic statehood.

Briefs

25 terrorists killed in cross-border infiltration

FROM PAGE 01
gallantly, paid the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat. It is significant to point out that these infiltration attempts by Fitna al Khawarij are being carried out at a time when delegations of Pakistan and Afghanistan are engaged in talks in Türkiye; casting doubts on intentions of Interim Afghan Government with regards to addressing the issue of terrorism emanating from its soil. Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border and is expected to fulfil its obligations of Doha Agreement and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarrij against Pakistan. The Security Forces of Pakistan remain resolute and unwavering in their commitment to defend the nation's frontiers and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored Kharij found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country.

Trump says he can 'quickly...'

FROM PAGE 01
Referring to recent border tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Trump said he was confident of helping the two sides reach peace. "... we're averaging one a month. There is only one left, although I heard that Pakistan and Afghanistan have started up. But I'll get that solved very quickly. I know them both. And the Field Marshal, and the Prime Minister are great people, and I have no doubt we're going to get that done quickly." The US president further said he viewed peacebuilding as a priority. "If I can take time and save millions of lives, that's really a great thing," he remarked, adding that, unlike other presidents, he focused on ending wars rather than starting them. "I can't think of any president who ever solved one war. They start wars. They don't solve them," he added. Meanwhile, the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia signed an enhanced ceasefire deal on Sunday in the presence of Trump, whose intervention in their fierce border conflict earned him a Nobel Peace Prize nomination. The agreement builds on a truce signed three months ago after Trump called the then-leaders of the two countries, urging them to end hostilities, or risk their respective trade talks with Washington being put on hold.

US seeks to expand strategic...

FROM PAGE 01
He noted that India has to understand that the United States must maintain relations with multiple partners. "We see an opportunity to expand our strategic relationship with Pakistan," Rubio said, adding that this was part of Washington's broader policy to work with nations where common interests align. He reiterated that America's evolving ties with Pakistan would not undermine its relationship with India, which he described as "deep, historic, and important." When asked whether the relations stemmed from Islamabad's appreciation of Washington's role in helping avert a potential war between India and Pakistan, Rubio said the renewed engagement with Pakistan had begun even before the conflict, as the US had expressed interest in rebuilding a "strategic partnership" with Islamabad. He noted that both sides had a long history of cooperation, particularly in counterterrorism, and that Washington was keen to expand the relationship beyond security matters.

Diplomats to enjoy Padel tennis in diplomatic enclave

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Senator Faisal Saleem, and US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Diplomats residing in Islamabad's Diplomatic Enclave can now enjoy padel tennis, as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated a newly built Padel Tennis Court and Fitness Arena. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Senator Faisal Saleem, and U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker. Following the inauguration, Minister Mohsin Naqvi, along with Natalie Baker, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, and CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa, also played a friendly padel tennis match. Speaking on the occasion, the Interior Minister said that the new Padel Tennis Court will provide diplomats with modern sports



and recreational facilities, promoting a healthier and more engaging environment in the enclave. He emphasized that promoting sports and healthy activities is among the government's top priorities. Naqvi further shared that the beautification and renovation work of the Diplomatic Enclave has already commenced and will be completed soon. "We are committed to providing every possible facility to the diplomatic community and making their stay in Islamabad pleasant and secure," he added. "Islamabad will be developed as a world-class capital city," the minister stated, noting that sports and culture serve as strong bridges between people, while hospitality and courtesy are hallmarks of the Pakistani nation. Chairman CDA and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad were also present at the event.

Wasim Khan removed as head coach of Pakistan women's cricket team

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has removed Wasim Khan from his position as head coach of the Pakistan women's cricket team following the team's dismal performance at the recent ICC Women's World Cup, where Pakistan failed to win even a single match. Sources within the PCB confirmed that the decision was taken after a comprehensive review of the team's performance. Despite being granted full authority over team selection and preparations, Wasim Khan was unable to form a competitive squad or deliver positive results on the field. Pakistan's campaign in



the World Cup proved disappointing from the start, with the team struggling in all departments – batting collapses, inconsistent bowling, and weak fielding costing them crucial games. The poor showing has sparked criticism from fans and analysts, many of whom questioned team

selection and tactical decisions made under Wasim's leadership. A PCB official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "Wasim Khan was given a free hand to make decisions and select the best possible combination, but unfortunately, the results did not meet expectations. The Board believes that new leadership is necessary to revive women's cricket in Pakistan." The PCB is now considering several candidates, both local and international, to fill the vacant coaching position. The new head coach is expected to focus on rebuilding the team's confidence and performance ahead of the upcoming bilateral series and qualifying tournaments. This marks yet another reshuffle in Pakistan's women's cricket setup, as the Board looks to inject fresh energy and accountability into the side following one of its most disappointing international campaigns in recent years.

Yamamoto dazzles as Dodgers beat Blue Jays 5-1 to level World Series

TORONTO: Yoshinobu Yamamoto's complete-game masterclass on the mound and home runs from Will Smith and Max Muncy propelled the Los Angeles Dodgers to a 5-1 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays that knotted the World Series at one game apiece on Saturday. Japan's Yamamoto, who pitched the first postseason complete game in eight years in game two of the Dodgers' National League Championship Series triumph over Milwaukee, again went the distance in scintillating style as the Dodgers bounced back from an 11-4 game one thrashing. He retired the last 20 batters he faced, settling in after giving up one run and four hits in a nervy start to out-duel Toronto starting pitcher Kevin Gausman in a nail-biting contest. "To be honest, I was not thinking I can complete the game because my pitch count racked up kind of quickly," Yamamoto said. "But I'm very happy I completed the game. I just adjusted as the game moved on after the whole first inning because it was two runners on bases." Aiming for a quick bounce-back after their lopsided game-one loss, the defending champion Dodgers put up one run in the first inning. Gausman retired Shohei Ohtani and Mookie Betts in short order to open the game, but Freddie Freeman belted a two-out, two-strike double and scored on Smith's single. The Blue Jays then put runners on first and third with no outs in the bottom of the first. Yamamoto escaped the danger but needed 23 pitches to do so and Toronto pulled level in the bottom of the third when Yamamoto hit George Springer with a pitch to open the frame. Springer advanced on a hard-hit single from Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and scored on a sacrifice fly to deep centerfield by Alejandro Kirk. From there, Yamamoto was simply impenetrable. He struck out the side in the bottom of the eighth then returned to retire Guerrero, Kirk and Daulton Varsho in the ninth. Yamamoto pitched the first World Series complete game in 10 years and became the first pitcher since Madison Bumgarner in 2014 with two complete games in a single postseason. He's the first Dodgers pitcher since Orel Hershiser in 1988 to win back-to-back complete playoff games. Gausman had retired 17 Dodgers hitters in a row when Los Angeles catcher Smith crushed a go-ahead home run with one out in the bottom of the seventh, sending a 94-mph fastball 404 feet to left field. After Teoscar Hernandez struck out swinging, Muncy pushed the Dodgers' lead to 3-1, depositing another fastball over the left field wall. The Dodgers tacked on two more runs in the eighth. Andy Pages and Shohei Ohtani hit back-to-back one-out singles and, after Mookie Betts walked, Pages scored on a wild pitch before Smith hit into a fielder's choice that plated Ohtani. – Agencies

Two Australian women cricketers 'touched inappropriately' in India

Indian police arrest suspect after Australian authorities reported incident, says Cricket Australia

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian police have arrested a man accused of stalking and inappropriately touching two Australian cricketers participating in the ICC Women's World Cup, officials said on Saturday. The incident happened in the central Indian city of Indore on Thursday morning when the two players left their hotel to go to a cafe, police of-

ficer Rajesh Dandotiya told AFP. "We received a complaint from the Australian team security and immediately acted, registered a case and identified the accused within six hours," Dandotiya said. Violence against women remains a chronic issue in the world's most populous country, where an average of nearly 90 rapes a day were reported in 2022. Dandotiya said the 30-year-old man who was arrested has a criminal record. The man followed the players and approached them "for a bad touch" about 800 metres from their hotel. The two players were not identified by Indian police or Cricket Australia, which confirmed the incident. "The matter was reported by team security to police, who are handling the matter," Cricket Australia said in a statement. The Times of India newspaper reported that the team's security manager received a distress message from one of the cricketers that said "... there is a guy following us trying to grab us." Team officials were informed and went to their location to assist the players, the paper said. A police patrol then escorted the players safely back to the team's hotel.

Samar Bilour stresses unity

ISLAMABAD: PML-N prominent leader Samar Haroon Bilour called on PTI to adopt a unified national stance and a long-term strategy to combat terrorism, highlighting the need for full equipment and federal support for FC and police in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. While speaking to state-news-run channel, PML-N leader Samar Haroon emphasized the urgent need to strengthen Frontier Corps (FC) and other security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the latest equipment. She highlighted that India is actively backing terrorism in the region and providing militants with arms, escalating the threat to the province's stability. Bilour stressed that in the face of such challenges, Pakistan must adopt a collective and unified approach to counter the enemies targeting its security personnel. She underlined that coordination between federal and provincial authorities is crucial to ensure effective operations against militants. The leader also paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of the security forces in KP, calling on all political and civil stakeholders to support them fully. She reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to providing resources and backing to help maintain law and order in the region. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Players of Pakistan hockey team attend the practice session at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium prior to their departure of Bangladesh. – DNA

Baloch scholar from Gwadar advancing in chemical research in China

"These experiences have allowed me to build connections with scholars from diverse backgrounds while gaining new perspectives," she remarked

DNA

BEIJING: A brilliant mind from Pakistan's coastal city of Gwadar is advancing in chemical research at Chongqing University, China embodying the strengthening educational ties between China and Pakistan while proudly preserving her cultural roots. Maria Baloch, currently in her third year of PhD studies in Chemistry, specializes in the design and synthesis of fused heterocyclic cations – a class of advanced organic materials with significant potential for energy, healthcare, and environmental applications, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro. "These materials exhibit remarkable optical and

electronic properties," explained Maria. "In Balochistan, they could enable low-cost solar cells, sensors for water quality monitoring, or even biomedical tools for disease diagnosis – all critical for sustainable development." The young researcher attributes much of her academic progress to the outstanding research environment at Chongqing University. "The university's comprehensive facilities, from the well-equipped laboratories to the nine-story library, have created ideal conditions for scientific innovation," she noted. Maria particularly highlighted the invaluable guidance of her Chinese supervisor, who supported her professional development and personal growth. Beyond her lab work, Maria has also engaged in academic exchange seminars and

cultural programs that have enriched her understanding of cutting-edge research and Chinese traditions. "These experiences have allowed me to build connections with scholars from diverse backgrounds while gaining new perspectives," she remarked. Maria has naturally assumed the role of cultural ambassador, often wearing her traditional Balochi dress as a conversation starter about her heritage. "My traditional attire often sparks discussions about Balochistan's natural beauty and cultural richness, including the developmental progress brought by projects like Gwadar Port," she explained. While acknowledging the challenges faced by women in STEM fields, she has found Chinese academia increasingly supportive

of female researchers. "There's always pressure to prove oneself, but I've discovered ample opportunity here to develop both as a scientist and as a woman proud of her Balochi identity," she stated. Looking ahead, the Gwadar native maintains a clear objective: to return to Pakistan and contribute to the progress of her hometown. She aims to apply her expertise in enhancing mining techniques, developing sustainable energy solutions that utilize local resources, and advancing environmentally responsible agricultural practices. Her advice to young people in Balochistan carries particular resonance: "Never doubt the power of your dreams. Education has transformed my life and it can do the same for our communities. Never let anyone diminish your potential."

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz...

FROM PAGE 01
remain in opposition stands and there is no room for change. In Islamabad, PPP leaders held separate meetings chaired by President Zardari and by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari as the party moved to finalise its course of action, sources said on Saturday. The session at the President's House – attended by Bilawal, Faryal Talpur, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Qamar Zaman Kaira – approved moving a no-confidence motion against the incumbent AJK premier, sources said. The president is expected to finalise the party's nominee for the AJK premiership after further consultations. Party sources confirmed that Bilawal would formally announce the government formation plan on Monday. PPP insiders said the party is considering Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin and Chaudhry Latif Akbar among the names for the AJK premiership. Chaudhry Yasin told reporters the party had taken a "final decision" to form the government and that leadership would determine the nominee.

PM Shehbaz Sharif to visit Saudi...

FROM PAGE 01
as senior cabinet ministers and officials, will accompany the premier. The high-profile delegation will represent Pakistan at the global forum, which gathers world leaders, investors, policymakers, and innovators under the theme: "The Key to Prosperity: Unlocking New Frontiers of Growth." The FII9 will convene global leaders, investors, policymakers, and innovators to explore the theme "The Key to Prosperity: Unlocking New Frontiers of Growth," the foreign office press release stated. It added that thematic discussions will address global challenges and opportunities, focusing on key topics such as innovation, sustainability, economic inclusion, and geopolitical shifts. During his stay, the FO said that PM Shehbaz will engage with the Saudi leadership to explore avenues for enhanced cooperation in the trade, investment, energy, and human resource sectors.

Trump co-signs Thailand...

FROM PAGE 01
While the neighbours agreed an initial ceasefire in late July, they have since traded accusations of violations. In their joint declaration witnessed by Trump, Anutin and Hun Manet reiterated their "firm commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force". "We reaffirm the unwavering commitment to peace and security between our two countries," reads the deal, signed by both, who shared a strong handshake. Trump congratulated the premiers. "This is a momentous day for all of the people of Southeast Asia, as we sign a historic agreement to end the military conflict between Cambodia and Thailand," he said.

Lahore again ranked most polluted city

FROM PAGE 01
visibility and causing widespread health complaints, including throat irritation, breathing difficulties and itchy eyes. Public health experts have advised residents to limit outdoor activity and wear protective masks when necessary. The severe air quality coincides with the onset of winter, when cooler temperatures, stagnant winds, and emissions from vehicles, factories and crop burning trap pollutants close to the ground across Punjab. In contrast, Karachi recorded a US AQI of 165 classified as unhealthy for sensitive groups, with PM2.5 levels reaching 74.8 µg/m³, which is 15 times above the WHO's recommended limit. The port city is ranked fifth in list most polluted cities in the world. Meanwhile, India's capital New Delhi is also grappling with significant air pollution levels, ranking second among the most polluted cities with an AQI of 327, categorised as very unhealthy.

Briefs

Gaza risks 'lost generation' due to ruined schools

JERUSALEM: With Gaza's education system shattered by two years of grueling war, UNICEF's regional director says he fears for a "lost generation" of children wandering ruined streets with nothing to do. "This is the third year that there has been no school," Edouard Beigbeder, the UN agency's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, said in Jerusalem. "If we don't start a real transition for all children in February, we will enter a fourth year. And then we can talk about a lost generation." The destruction "is almost omnipresent wherever you go," Beigbeder said. "It is impossible to imagine 80 percent of a territory that is completely flattened out or destroyed," he added. The ceasefire has allowed UNICEF and other education partners to get about one-sixth of children who should be in school into temporary "learning centers," said Beigbeder. "They have three days of learning in reading, mathematics, and writing, but this is far from a formal education as we know it," he added Beigbeder said that such learning centers consisted of metal structures covered with plastic sheeting or of tents. —APP

Appeal date set for French sportswriter jailed in Algeria

ALGIERS: The appeal trial of a French sports journalist jailed in Algeria on accusations of "glorifying terrorism" has been scheduled for December 3, his lawyer said Friday. A contributor to the magazines So Foot and Society, Christophe Gleizes, 36, was sentenced in late June to seven years in prison. "The case of French journalist Christophe Gleizes is scheduled for December 3, 2025, at the criminal appeal court in Tizi Ouzou," 110 kilometers (70 miles) east of Algiers, his lawyer, Amirouche Bakouri, said on Facebook. Gleizes had traveled to Tizi Ouzou to write about the local football club Jeunesse Sportive de Kabylie, named after Algeria's Kabylia region, home to the Amazigh Kabyle people. He is accused by the judiciary of having been in contact with a local football figure prominent in the Movement for the Self-Determination of Kabylie (MAK), designated a terrorist organization by the authorities in 2021. The press freedom NGO Reporters Without Borders called on the appeal court to free Gleizes. "Christophe is guilty only of practicing his profession as a sports journalist and loving Algerian football," declared RSF Director-General Thierry Bruttin, according to an NGO statement.

Nepal interim PM adds popular youth figures to cabinet

KATMANDU: Nepal's Prime Minister Sushila Karki expanded on Sunday her interim cabinet which was formed in the wake of youth-led uprising last month, inducting two ministers seen as popular among young people. The unrest on September 8-9 was triggered by a brief ban on social media but fueled by long-standing frustration over economic hardship and corruption. Violence during the protests, which led to the collapse of the previous government, killed at least 73 people and left parliament, courts and government buildings in flames. On Sunday, officials said President Ram Chandra Paudel administered the oath of office to the new members of Karki's government: Youth and Sports Minister Bablu Gupta, and Sudha Sharma, who was made minister of health and population. Gupta, 28, is known for his work with a volunteer organization called 100's Group which supports underprivileged communities through food drives and education programs. —APP

Jeddah Property Expo opens new investment avenues for Pakistanis

Sardar Tahir Mahmood congratulated organizer Imran Khattak for hosting a successful event and said that Pakistan's real estate sector offers safe and profitable investment opportunities

DNA

JEDDAH: A two-day Pakistan International Property Expo was held in Jeddah to promote investment in Pakistan and strengthen the country's economy through overseas participation. More than 50 housing and commercial projects from Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and other major cities were showcased. A large number of overseas Pakistanis, businessmen, and community leaders attended the event. The expo was inaugurated by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Sardar Tahir Mahmood, along with Pakistan Business Forum Saudi Arabia President Aqeel Arain and Dr Sameera Aziz well know Saudi businesswomen other dignitaries. Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mahmood congratulated organizer Imran Khattak for hosting a successful event and said that Pakistan's real estate sector offers safe and profitable investment opportunities. "Pakistan is moving fast toward a digital era, which will make business and investment even easier," he added. He said overseas Pakistanis can now easily invest in housing projects in cities like Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad and fulfill their dream of owning a home in their homeland. Meanwhile, international photographer Jehangir Khan, who lives in Jeddah, told



APP in an online conversation from Jeddah that the expo has brought "a new hope" for overseas Pakistanis. He said such events not

only boost economic confidence but also strengthen emotional and financial ties between overseas Pakistanis and their country.

Pakistan Business Forum Saudi Arabia President Aqeel Arain told about the event strong participation of the Pakistani community

shows their deep commitment to supporting Pakistan's progress through responsible and secure investment.

NPO organized Int'l workshops to strengthen innovation

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) Pakistan, in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Japan, successfully organized a series of two-day international workshops for strengthening innovations and productivity. The workshops were organized across Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi on "Building Innovation Capability in Organizations with ISO 56000 Innovation Management System." These workshops were conducted under the APO's In-Country Technical Expert Service (TES) Program, aligned with the APO Vision 2025, which emphasizes strengthening innovation, productivity and competitiveness across its member economies. This initiative reflects NPO Pakistan's unwavering commitment to promoting innovation-driven productivity enhancement and institutional excellence across both public and private sector organizations in Pakistan. The workshops were organized in partnership with the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in Islamabad and the Pakistan Institute of Quality Control (PIQC) in Lahore and Karachi. The sessions were facilitated by two international experts from Germany, Dr. Eva Diedrichs and Mr. Claus Diedrichs, who shared their extensive experience in institutionalizing innovation management systems, fostering innovation culture, and aligning organizational strategies with the ISO 56000 Innovation Management Standards. The workshops witnessed active participation from a wide range of public and private sector organizations, including representatives from relevant federal ministries and their attached departments and organizations. Notably, officials from the Ministry of Industries and Production, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special initiatives, and other key national institutions including PSQCA, PHA and SMDEA participated in the sessions. Throughout the two-day engagements, participants were introduced to the core principles and applications of the ISO 56000 Innovation Management System, emphasizing tools, best practices, cultural enablers, and strategic approaches necessary for embedding innovation management within organizational structures. NPO Pakistan welcomed the participants and highlighted the organization's continued collaboration with APO Japan to strengthen Pakistan's capacity for innovation management and productivity-led competitiveness in alignment with national development priorities. Upon successful completion of the workshops, participants were awarded certificates of participation in recognition of their commitment to advancing innovation and productivity within their respective organizations. These nationwide workshops represent a significant step toward institutionalizing innovation management practices in Pakistan and advancing the nation's transition toward knowledge-based productivity, digital transformation, and sustainable economic growth. —DNA

Hundreds protest in Tunisia's capital over worsening pollution crisis

TUNIS: Hundreds of Tunisians marched through the capital Tunis on Saturday to protest a severe environmental crisis caused by pollution from a state chemical plant in Gabes, as protests that began there widen outside the southern city. The protest is the latest in a series of demonstrations that have underscored growing public frustration over the government's handling of pollution and worsening state of public services, marking the biggest challenge to President Kais Saied since he seized all power in 2021. Residents of Gabes have reported rising rates of respiratory illnesses, osteoporosis and cancer, which they blame on toxic gases from the state chemical group's phosphate plants, which dump thousands of tons of waste into the sea daily. The latest wave of protests in Gabes was triggered this month after dozens of schoolchildren suffered breathing difficulties caused by toxic fumes from a plant that converts phosphates into phosphoric acid and fertilizers. Protesters in Tunis carried banners and chanted slogans in solidarity with residents of Gabes, calling the response of authorities "repression." The government said it arrested people for violence. "It's that simple, the people of Gabes want to breathe," Hani Faraj, a protester from the "Stop Pollution" campaign, told Reuters. "Gabes is dying slowly ... We will not remain silent. We will escalate our peaceful protests." Saied's administration fears protests in the capital could spark unrest elsewhere in Tunisia, deepening pressure as it struggles with a prolonged economic downturn and political instability. Saied has described the situation in Gabes as an "environmental assassination," blaming criminal policy choices by a previous government. In an effort to quell the protests, he has called for repairs to the industrial units to stop leaks as an immediate step. Health Minister Mustapha Ferjani said this week the government would build a cancer hospital in Gabes to deal with rising cases. However, protesters have rejected the fixes as temporary, and are demanding the polluting facilities be permanently shut and relocated. Environmental groups warn that tons of industrial waste are discharged daily into the sea at Chatt Essalam, severely damaging marine life. Local fishermen have reported a sharp decline in fish stocks over the past decade, threatening a vital source of income for many in the region. —APP

Opticians Association hosts successful national eyewear exhibition

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Opticians Association of Pakistan (OAP) successfully organized the third National Eyewear Exhibition and Educational Conference, "OptiPak 2025," at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi. The event brought together leading figures from across Pakistan's optical industry, including traders, manufacturers, technicians, and professionals. The exhibition aimed to promote the growth of the eyewear sector in Pakistan, encourage the use of modern technology, and explore opportunities for international business expansion. Zafar Iqbal Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG) and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry emphasized in his address that Pakistan earns nearly \$31 billion annually through its workforce abroad. However, he urged that it is now time to shift focus from labor-based income to trade and entrepreneurship. He called on the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and the Ministry of Commerce to support Pakistani opticians in establishing global market linkages and setting up international business branches to enhance Pakistan's global image and increase foreign remittances. Bakhtawari further highlighted the immense potential for Pakistani opticians in African and Far East countries, where skilled professionals can find lucrative opportunities while contributing to the country's foreign exchange earnings. Advisor to the Prime Minister on Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, lauded the role of Pakistan's business community and said that strengthening the services sector would not only boost the national economy but also improve the country's international standing. He reaffirmed the government's full support for such initiatives, emphasizing that regular expos like OptiPak are vital for enhancing exports and advancing industry standards. OAP Chairman Khalid Sohail Gulzari, in his remarks, shed light on the concept of the "Three O's" and stated that the purpose of the association's establishment is

to align Pakistan's optical professionals with modern global standards. He praised Zafar Bakhtawari for his leadership and contribution in obtaining the association's license, noting that under his guidance, OAP has achieved remarkable progress within just three years — a momentum that will continue in the future. Prominent figures including Ahsan Bakhtawari (former President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce), Waqar Bakhtawari, Haris Bakhtawari, and Salman Bakhtawari also at-

tended the event. They were warmly welcomed by Chairman Khalid Sohail Gulzari, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui (former Senior Vice President, ICCI), and Rizwan Siddiqui. The ceremony concluded with the distinguished guests visiting various stalls at the exhibition, showcasing advanced eyewear technologies, modern frames, lenses, and optical solutions. Attendees highly appreciated the innovation, quality, and professionalism demonstrated by Pakistani companies.



Balakot Hydropower Project enters main construction phase

BALAKOT: The Balakot Hydropower Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province has reached a key milestone as its dam successfully achieved river diversion and closure. The project, jointly undertaken by Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) and China Gezhouba Group Company Limited (CGGC), marked a major step toward the main phase of dam construction.

Located on the Kunhar River, the 300 MW Balakot Hydropower Station is the largest hydropower project currently under development by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's department PEDO and it is expected to be completed by 2030 at a cost of over US\$ 750 million.

Once completed, it is expected to generate 1,144 billion kWh of electricity annually, enough to power around 1.8 million people. The dam stands 49 meters high and features an underground powerhouse equipped with three 100 MW Francis turbine generator units and a 9.1-kilometer headrace tunnel. —APP

Memon for enhancing collaboration between PMYP professionals

ISLAMABAD :Shaheryar Memon, Focal Person for Overseas Affairs and Business and Trade Linkages at the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) has stressed to enhance collaboration between the PMYP and the Consulate for the empowerment of overseas Pakistani youth, entrepreneurs, and professionals in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Shaheryar Memon, Focal Person for Overseas Affairs and Business and Trade Linkages at the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) has met with the Consul General of Pakistan to UAE, H.E., Hussain Muhammad in Dubai to discuss enhanced collaboration between the PMYP and the Consulate for the empowerment of overseas Pakistani youth, entrepreneurs, and professionals in the UAE, said a release issued here. During the meeting, both sides deliberated on establishing structured linkages to support Pakistani youth in Pakistan and abroad — including initiatives focused on business facilitation, startup initiatives, professional networking, and diaspora investment channels. Mr. Memon briefed the Consul General on PMYP's vision to create global youth partnerships, linking skilled Pakistanis overseas with development and innovation opportunities in Pakistan. —APP

Jordan will not assume military role in post-war Gaza

DUBAI: Jordan will not take part in any military deployment in the Gaza Strip or the occupied West Bank following the current conflict, Jordanian Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani said, according to remarks published by the Jordan Times. Speaking on Jordan TV's "60 Minutes," Momani said the Kingdom's focus will remain on humanitarian assistance aimed at easing what he described as large-scale suffering among Palestinians in Gaza. He emphasized Jordan's support for efforts that help Palestinians secure their "legitimate right" to an independent state. "We will not have any military roles in Gaza and the West Bank," Momani said, reiterating that Amman's involvement will be limited to relief and diplomatic support. His comments follow the announcement of a US-brokered Gaza peace agreement, which includes provisions for an international force to oversee security and enforce the ceasefire in the territory. In recent days US President Donald Trump has said multiple regional countries have expressed interest in being part of an international transitional force in the territory. —APP

‘Pakistan can turn strategic connectivity into eco strength’

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for successfully hosting the two-day Regional Transport Ministers Conference in Islamabad, which focused on transport cooperation frameworks and investment partnerships among participating countries. In a statement issued here, Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan must transform its strategic geographic connectivity into tangible economic opportunities by linking the region with the global economy through an integrated network of road, rail, air, maritime, energy, and digital corridors. He added that Pakistan's vision should aim to convert this natural advantage into a driver of sustainable growth, regional cooperation, and shared prosperity.

He said Pakistan should continue to strengthen its road and rail links with Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asian Republics to promote regional integration and unlock new markets. The transformation of geographic connectivity into economic strength, he added, would not only benefit Pakistan but also advance collective regional progress, positioning the country as a central gateway for trade, transit, and investment in the 21st century. Highlighting Pakistan's unique geo-economic position, Iftikhar Ali Malik said the country, situated at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and China, has immense potential to serve as a trade and energy hub for regional and global markets. He added that Pakistan's expanding transport infrastructure has improved the movement of goods, reduced travel time, and lowered trade costs, thereby strengthening its role as a regional transit route. Terming the Islamabad conference a major success, he said it brought together transport ministers from Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, Belarus, Turkmenistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, along with representatives of the Asian Development Bank, Economic Cooperation Organization, International Road Transport Union, and UN agencies. He said it was a positive sign that Pakistan is ready to play a leading role in developing integrated transport systems to promote trade and regional cooperation, adding that the region shares a common goal of building efficient transport networks to support economic growth and sustainable development. —DNA

Briefs

Ambassador attends
Kazakh-Pak
military drills

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Closing ceremony of Pakistan-Kazakhstan Joint Exercise Dostarym-V in Counter Terrorism domain was conducted between the Armies of Pakistan and Kazakhstan at Cherat, Pakistan. Two weeks long Exercise commenced on 14 October 2025. Combat Teams from Special Services Group, Pakistan Army and Kazakhstan Special Forces participated in the Exercise. Commandant Special Operations School Cherat attended the Closing Ceremony as Chief Guest. Ambassador and Defence Attaché Kazakhstan also witnessed the Closing Ceremony. The troops displayed highest standards of professional excellence during the conduct. The Exercise was aimed at refining the drills, procedures and techniques involved in Counter Terrorism operations through joint training, besides harnessing the historic military to military relations among the friendly countries.

Sindh records
439 dengue
cases

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The Sindh Health Department has released its latest report on confirmed dengue cases across the province, revealing that 439 new cases have been reported so far in October, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in 2025 to 1,083. Dengue, a mosquito-borne viral infection transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, remains a recurring health concern in Sindh – particularly during the monsoon season when stagnant water and poor sanitation accelerate its spread. The illness causes high fever and, in severe cases, can lead to life-threatening complications. While the provincial health department puts the total number of dengue cases in Sindh this year at 1,083, figures from Oct 1 to 16 obtained from three major Karachi hospitals and a public sector laboratory with branches in Hyderabad suggested an outbreak-like situation, with the actual number exceeding 12,000 in just six weeks.

A statement issued by the Health Department, quoting Sindh Minister for Health and Population Welfare Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, said, "Karachi Division remains the most affected, with 188 cases reported this month, followed by Hyderabad Division with 154, Mirpurkhas with 83, Sukkur with 10, Shaheed Benazirabad with three, and Larkana Division with one case."

Martyred SP
Zubair had no
bulletproof
vehicle

PESHAWAR: Reports collected regarding the Hangu attack that claimed the life of SP Asad Zubair revealed that the officer did not have a bulletproof vehicle during his visit to the sensitive area. Report revealed that after the initial explosion at the check post, SP Asad Zubair arrived at the scene to assess the situation when his vehicle was hit by an IED. The powerful blast killed him on the spot. Reports indicate that the area of the attack has been targeted by terrorists multiple times in the past. A few years ago, an SHO was martyred in the same region and a previous attempt on the life of the Hangu DPO was also foiled. Officials further disclosed that despite Hangu's sensitive security situation, the district has only one bulletproof vehicle, which is currently assigned to the DPO. There is a growing need to provide bulletproof vehicles to police officers up to the DSP rank across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is worth noting that on October 24, two blasts in Hangu resulted in the martyrdom of SP Asad Zubair and his two security guards. – APP

Government resumes new gas
connections after four-year ban*Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formally launches process to provide (RLNG) connections to domestic consumers*

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday formally launched the process to provide Regasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) connections to domestic consumers across the country, marking the resumption of new household gas supplies after a four-year suspension. Speaking at the launch ceremony in Islamabad, the prime minister said the initiative fulfilled a long-standing public demand and reaffirmed the government's commitment to easing citizens' daily challenges. The government had imposed a ban on new gas connections in 2021 due to rapidly depleting natural gas reserves, forcing many households to shift to more expensive alternatives such as Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for cooking and heating. Addressing the ceremony, the prime minister said that restoration of gas connections for the domestic consumers had been a long-standing demand of the people. "During the PDM government tenure in 2022, we faced immense pressure over the public demand for the provision of gas connections," he added. The prime minister went on to say that at that time, gas supply was a big challenge, but afterwards, funds were released and the infrastructure was laid down, and now the RLNG supply would be supplied throughout the country to a large number of applicants. He also congratulated the coalition government parties, including PPP, MQM, BAP and others, over the restoration of gas connections to the domestic consumers. On the occasion, the prime minister also prayed for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan and stressed upon hard work and dedication. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, ministers, secretaries, officials of SNGPL and parliamentarians. Earlier, in a video message, Minister for Energy Ali Pervaiz Malik apprised that the SNGPL had brought down its line losses to 4.93% while earning a profit of Rs29 billion in the previous year.

Netanyahu faces vote with
coalition weakened by truce

DNA

TEL AVIV: With no majority in parliament and surrounded by allies outraged by his acceptance of a US-brokered Gaza ceasefire, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seems to have set his sights on Israel's next elections. A political phoenix, Netanyahu is the country's longest-serving prime minister, has been its dominant political figure for decades and heads one of the most right-wing coalitions in Israel's history. But he does not hold an absolute parliamentary majority after an ultra-Orthodox party quit in July, protesting against the government's failure to pass a law to exempt its community from military service. The summer parliamentary recess came at just the right time to shield the government, which now holds just 60 of 120 seats, from motions of no confidence. But the resumption of the Knesset's work on October 20 heralded the return of transactional politics and potential threats for the government. Under pressure from US President Donald Trump, Netanyahu agreed to a ceasefire with Hamas that came into effect on October 10 after more than two years of Israeli assault on Gaza. His far-right allies vehemently denounced the agreement, arguing that the military should retain control of the entire Gaza Strip and crush the Palestinian movement for good. And while they are not abandoning the ship of government, they are raising the price to keep them on board. June 2026 election? "The coalition has been weakened by the ceasefire agreement," said independent analyst Michael Horowitz. "For Netanyahu, the issue is no longer so

much about preserving his coalition until the end as it is about positioning himself to win the next elections – even if they are brought forward," he told AFP. In a televised interview on October 18, Netanyahu said that he would run for office in the next elections and that he expected to win. Those polls are required to take place by late October 2026, but Netanyahu, who has just turned 76, may call early elections or be forced into a fresh vote if another of his allied parties abandons the ruling coalition. Far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir has already threatened to stop voting with the coalition if his bill calling for "the death penalty for terrorists" is not put to a parliamentary vote by November 9. Netanyahu must grapple with ideological differences from his far-right partners, who favour resuming the war on Gaza with a view to taking over the territory, from which Israel unilaterally withdrew in 2005. He must also contend with pressure from his allies in the ultra-Orthodox Sephardic Shas party, which has 11 lawmakers and has distanced itself from the government. Without formally leaving the coalition, Shas ministers resigned from the cabinet in July over the issue of military service exemptions for ultra-Orthodox Jews. The coalition's other ultra-Orthodox party, United Torah Judaism, quit both the government and the coalition. Several Israeli journalists, including the high-profile Amit Segal, who is known to be close to Netanyahu, have suggested the premier would opt for June 2026 for early elections. For now, Netanyahu must overcome several obstacles to remain in power, most notably the issue of conscription for ultra-Orthodox Jews.

Pakistan-Iran border
trade needs reforms

DNA

LAHORE: The Businessmen Panel (BMP) of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has cautioned that Pakistan and Iran's latest commitment to enhance border infrastructure and expand bilateral trade will remain largely symbolic unless both governments act decisively to remove deep-rooted trade barriers, complete the long-delayed Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, and introduce genuine structural reforms to enable real economic integration between the two neighboring states. In a statement issued on Sunday, BMP Chairman and former FPCCI president Mian Anjum Nisar said the business community has heard similar assurances many times over the years, but the outcomes have remained negligible. He said that despite repeated announcements and numerous memorandums of understanding, the trade potential between Pakistan and Iran contin-

ues to be restricted by bureaucratic delays, banking limitations, policy confusion, and lack of political will. The statement came in the wake of Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan's visit to Tehran for the 22nd session of the Pakistan-Iran Joint Economic Commission (JEC), where both sides reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen border markets, improve customs coordination, and promote trade and transport linkages. While appreciating the renewed diplomatic engagement, Anjum Nisar noted that mere pledges will not bring meaningful results unless they are accompanied by immediate, on-ground action. He observed that bilateral trade between the two countries currently stands at around \$3 billion—a figure far below its real potential, given their geographical proximity and shared energy and agricultural interests. "Pakistan and Iran have been making the same promises for more than two decades," Nisar said. "Every meeting, every joint statement speaks of cooperation, yet the numbers remain stagnant.

65 countries sign UN treaty

The UN Cybercrime Convention is a powerful, legally binding instrument to strengthen our collective defences against cybercrime," said the UN chief at the signing ceremony

UNITED NATIONS: Sixty-five nations have signed a landmark United Nations treaty in Hanoi, Vietnam, aimed at tackling cybercrime – a move Secretary-General Antonio Guterres hailed as a historic step toward a safer digital world, according to the UN. Adopted by the General Assembly in December 2024 after five years of negotiation, the Convention against Cybercrime establishes the first universal framework for investigating and prosecuting offences committed online – from ransomware and financial fraud to the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. "The UN Cybercrime Convention is a powerful, legally binding instrument to strengthen our collective defences against cybercrime," said the UN chief at the signing ceremony. "It is a testament to the continued power of multilateralism to deliver solutions, and a vow that no country, regardless of development level, will be left defenceless against cybercrime." The signing ceremony was hosted by Vietnam in collaboration with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), bringing together senior officials, diplomats, and experts from across regions. The new treaty criminalizes a range of cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled offences, facilitates the sharing of electronic evidence across borders, and establishes a 24/7 cooperation network among States.

It also marks the first international treaty to recognize the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images as an offence – a significant victory for victims of online abuse. The treaty will enter into force 90 days after the 40th State deposits its ratification. Guterres warned that while technology has brought "extraordinary progress," it has also created new vulnerabilities. "Every day, sophisticated scams defraud families, steal livelihoods, and drain billions from our economies," he said. "In cyberspace, nobody is safe until everybody is safe. One vulnerability anywhere can expose people and institutions everywhere." The Secretary-General emphasized that the Convention represents "a victory for victims of online abuse" and "a clear pathway for investigators and prosecutors" to overcome barriers when crimes and evidence cross multiple borders. By providing a global standard for electronic evidence, the treaty aims to enhance cooperation between law enforcement agencies while safeguarding privacy, dignity, and fundamental human rights. The signing ceremony was part of Guterres' official visit to Viet Nam, where he met President Luong Cu'ng, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, and other senior officials. At a joint press conference, Guterres highlighted Viet Nam's vital role in the global digital supply chain. – Agencies

East Timor
becomes
ASEAN
member

DNA

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Asia's youngest nation East Timor on Sunday became the 11th member of the South-east Asian bloc ASEAN, fulfilling a vision set out by its current president nearly a half-century ago while under Portuguese rule. Also known as Timor-Leste, the country of 1.4 million people is among Asia's poorest and hopes to see gains from integrating its fledgling economy, which at about \$2 billion represents only a tiny fraction of ASEAN's collective \$3.8 trillion gross domestic product. East Timor's accession to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations follows a 14-year wait and though its membership is not expected to be transformative, it represents a symbolic victory for its President Jose Ramos Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, the heroes of its struggle for independence. Its joining was formalized by ASEAN leaders at the opening of their annual summit in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday, where applause rang out as East Timor's flag was placed on the stage. An emotional Gusmao said it was a historic moment for his country, with a new beginning that would bring "immense opportunities" for trade and investment. "For the people of Timor-Leste, this is not only a dream realized, but a powerful affirmation of our journey," Gusmao said in a speech.

IHC to hear
Imran plea
regarding
X ban

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to the cause list issued by the IHC registrar's office, the petition will be taken up on November 4 by Justice Arbab Mohammad Tahir. The court has already issued notices to the PTI founder, the National Cyber Crime Agency, the superintendent of prisons and other relevant officials seeking written responses. The petition filed by a citizen, Ghulam Murtaza, through Barrister Zafarullah contended that the PTI founder was allegedly broadcasting illegal and provocative messages from his X account while in prison. The petitioner maintained that such an online activity could incite public unrest and undermine law and order.

Mother of slain
journalists Arshad
Sharif passes away

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Riffat Alvi, the mother of slain journalist Arshad Sharif, passed away on Sunday, according to her family. Arshad, a prominent journalist who was awarded the Pride of Performance in 2023 by then-President Arif Alvi, was shot dead in Kenya on October 24, 2022. Politicians and media bodies demanded a probe into his death, but the lack of progress in the investigation has been decried by the Supreme Court and media. "Arshad Sharif's mother, who was demanding justice for her son, has passed away," the deceased journalist's wife, Javeria Siddique, posted on X today. Siddique, herself a journalist, in 2023 published a piece for Dawn.com on her husband's death in which she called for an "independent, impartial, and immediate investigation" to ensure justice for Sharif. "Everyone is watching, and yet, justice only seems to become more and more elusive," she said in the article. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed for hearing a petition seeking the closure of former prime minister Imran Khan's X (formerly Twitter) account.



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