



Islamabad POST

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**Seven fighter jets
sere shot down
in Pak-India war**

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**French embassy
hosts event on
archaeology**

Detailed News On Page-01



**Pakistan values
relations with
Azerbaijan**

Detailed News On Page-07



Brotherly bonds cemented

Riyadh, Islamabad unveil strategic plan to boost ties

This framework represents an extension of both countries' efforts to strengthen their fraternal relations and reaffirms their shared vision toward building a sustainable partnership across various economic, trade, and investment fields

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Based on the depth of the historic partnership between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which has spanned nearly eight decades, and based on the strong bonds of brotherhood and Islamic solidarity that unite the leadership of both nations, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and His Excellency Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, agreed during their meeting held in Riyadh on Monday 5 JamadaAl-Awwal 1447H, corresponding to October 27, 2025 to launch an Economic Cooperation Framework between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This framework is based on the two countries' shared economic interests and reaffirms their mutual desire to strengthen trade and investment relations to serve their common interests. Renewable energy products As part of the framework several strategic and high-impact projects will be discussed in the economic, trade, investment, and development fields that will contribute to strengthening cooperation between the two governments, enhancing the pivotal role of the private sector, and increasing trade exchange between the two countries. Priority sectors include energy, industry, mining, information technology, tourism, agriculture, and food security. Both sides are currently studying several joint economic projects, including signing a Memorandum of Understanding for the electricity interconnection project between the Kingdom and Pakistan, in addition to assigning of a Memorandum of

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**Pakistan suffered
economic losses
worth \$130bn: PM**

Pakistan remained among world's most climate-affected nations "through no fault of its own," says premier

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said Pakistan had sustained economic losses worth \$130 billion due to climate-induced disasters, despite contributing less than a fraction of 1% to global carbon emissions. Speaking during a panel discussion at the ninth edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII9) conference in Riyadh, the prime minister said Pakistan remained among the world's most climate-affected nations "through no fault of its own." "Our emission is less than a fraction of 1% and yet in 2022 we faced devastating [cloudbursts], floods and storms," he said. He recalled that the 2022 floods had submerged vast areas of land and destroyed crops, forcing the country to rely on external borrowing for reconstruction. "It is like going up the ladder and then coming back down," he said, lamenting that the gains made by the nation were reversed by repeated

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**Dar, Saudi
FM discuss
bilateral
ties, regional
developments**

DNA

RIYADH: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday held a meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan in Riyadh, where the two leaders discussed a wide range of issues concerning bilateral relations, regional developments, and cooperation at multilateral fora. According to a statement, both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to further deepening the long-standing Pak-Saudi partnership and strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and friendship between the two countries. They expressed satisfaction over the ongoing cooperation in diverse fields and agreed to enhance collaboration in political, economic, investment, and security domains. The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on important regional and international issues, including the situation in Gaza, emphasizing the need for concerted diplomatic efforts to address humanitarian challenges and ensure lasting peace in the Middle East.

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**Parties
hopeful of
breakthrough
in Istanbul
talks**

NEWS DESK

ISTANBUL: The Pakistani delegation and mediator Türkiye are making a last-ditch effort to settle the issue of terrorism emanating from Afghan soil through dialogue and logic during the talks with the interim Taliban rulers in Istanbul, sources said on Tuesday. Both sides held a series of hours-long dialogues in the Turkish capital, with the Afghan delegation changing its stance due to instructions received from Kabul each time. "Pakistan and Afghanistan held 18-hour talks on Monday, and now the dialogues are moving towards the final round," the sources privy to the development said. They said that the Afghan Taliban delegation has acknowledged Pakistan's demand for action against militants and terrorists operating from their soil, but they kept changing their stance on instructions from Kabul. Both agreed to a ceasefire brokered in Doha on October 19,

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RIYADH: Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar meets his Saudi counterpart. – DNA

Gaza peace deal

Pakistan rejects Indian media report of troop deployment

Pakistan never recognised Israel; neither agreed nor discussed military mission in Gaza, says info ministry

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has categorically rejected the fake and misleading news of the Indian media outlets, claiming the deployment of 20,000 Pakistani troops for the Gaza peace force under an agreement between the US and Israeli intelligence agencies. Indian publication, Firstpost, reported that a deal was signed by Pakistan to send thousands of soldiers as part of the international stabilisation force in the Palestinian enclave – a plan floated by US President Donald Trump. However, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting termed the report "completely fabricated", saying that no such meetings, understandings, or "deals" ever took place between the Pakistani military,

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**Israeli PM
orders intense
strikes on Gaza**

NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday ordered the military to carry out intense strikes on the Gaza Strip, after accusing Hamas of violating the US-brokered ceasefire. "Following security consultations, Prime Minister Netanyahu instructed the military to immediately carry out powerful strikes in the Gaza Strip," a statement from his office said.

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CM Afridi again denied meeting with Imran

KP chief executive says he intends to file contempt petition against jail authorities

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi was denied permission to meet jailed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Tuesday, as the formation of the provincial cabinet continues to face delays. The KP chief minister arrived outside the Adala jail in Rawalpindi alongside PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and Secretary General Salman Akram Raja. However, CM Afridi returned without a meeting with the PTI founder, while Khan's sister, Uzma Khan, was allowed to meet the former premier. Speaking to journalists outside the jail, Af-

ridi said that he should be allowed to meet the PTI founder to receive "policy guidelines", emphasising that questions should be raised about why such a meeting is being obstructed. He noted that he was the PTI founder's "nominated and appointed chief minister" and therefore needed to consult him on provincial matters. Afridi criticised the federal government for "governing through force rather than upholding the Constitution and rule of law," adding that the obstruction of his meeting with the PTI founder could lead to a contempt of court case. The chief minister said that while he received congratulatory

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Briefs

**Trump says
7 brand new
planes shot
down in war**

NEWS DESK

TOKYO: United States President Donald Trump on Tuesday again stated that seven aircraft were shot down during the brief military escalation between Pakistan and India in May. Addressing a dinner with business leaders during his trip to Japan, Trump claimed that a lot of the wars he stopped were because of his tariffs imposed on multiple countries, stating that he did "a great service to the world". "If you look at India and Pakistan, they were going at it," he said. "Seven brand-new, beautiful planes were shot down. I said to [Indian] Prime Minister Modi and I said to the Prime Minister [Shehbaz Sharif], very nice man, a very good man and the Field Marshal [Asim Munir] over in Pakistan ... I said, 'look we're not going to do any trade if you're going to be fighting,'" Trump said.

**At least six
suspects
killed in
Lahore**

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: At least six suspects were killed in four separate encounters with CCD in different locations of Lahore late on Monday, the CCD said on Tuesday. Earlier this year, the Punjab government launched the CCD with a mandate to tackle organised crime, terrorism, and high-profile criminal gangs. Recently, the body has carried out a range of encounters. Officials have publicly praised the department for its successes, claiming it has "significantly reduced street crime and targeted major criminal figures." As per a statement issued by the department's spokesperson today.

Issue its report

WB urges sustained reforms for Pakistan's inclusive growth

"Pakistan's recent floods have imposed significant human costs and economic losses, dampening growth prospects, and adding pressure on macroeconomic stability"

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank on Tuesday released its October-2025 report titled "Pakistan Development Update: Staying the Course for Growth and Jobs," acknowledging that the country's economy expanded by 3.0 percent in the fiscal year ending June 2025, up from 2.6 percent in the previous year, reflecting a rebound in industrial activity and an expansion in the services sector. However, it projected that the growth to remain at 3 percent for the fiscal year ending in June 2026, due to the impacts of recent floods on the agriculture sector, before picking up in the medium term as ongoing stability and continued reforms enhance growth prospects. The international leader said the fiscal tightening and appropriate monetary policy helped anchor inflation and support current account and primary fiscal surpluses

amidst a challenging global and domestic environment. It said the improved confidence supported industry and service sector growth, even as agriculture growth underperformed, in part due to adverse weather and pest infestations. While favorable, the economic outlook has been tempered by recent floods, which have resulted in significant impact on people and damage to urban areas and agricultural land. "Pakistan's recent floods have imposed significant human costs and economic losses, dampening growth prospects, and adding pressure on macroeconomic stability," World Bank Country Director for Pakistan during a media briefing at the report launch. She said staying the course on reforms and accelerating job creation was critical to maintaining growth along with strengthening social safety nets and infrastructure that protects the most vulnerable citizens,

Continued on Page 06

France, Pak celebrate a decade of archaeological cooperation

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The French Ambassador to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey, has hailed the enduring partnership between France and Pakistan in the field of archaeology, describing it as a "remarkable milestone in the history of scientific and cultural cooperation" between the two nations. He was speaking at a ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of the French-Pakistani archaeological excavations at Chanhü Daro, Sindh, led by the French Archaeological Mission in the Indus Basin (MAFBI). Dr. Amanullah Director DOAM, Dr. Aurore Didier, Dr. Marjan Mashkour and others also spoke on the occasion. Ms. Sabine Vermillard moderated the event. Ambassador Galey paid tribute to the dedication of archaeologists, researchers, and institutions on both sides, noting that the collaboration has deepened mutual understanding of one of humanity's earliest urban civilizations the Indus Valley Civilization. "Together, French and Pakistani archaeologists have explored, excavated, and shared the story of one of humanity's earliest urban civilizations," he said, adding that

the mission has also helped train a new generation of archaeologists and heritage professionals. Highlighting France's global commitment to archaeological research, Ambassador Galey said this year also marks the 80th anniversary of France's Commission for Archaeological Missions

Abroad, which supports more than 190 missions across five continents. "These missions form a living network – uniting researchers, students, and institutions driven by scientific excellence and respect for cultural heritage," he noted. The envoy lauded the mission's contributions to emerging research fields in

Pakistan, such as archaeozoology the study of animal remains at archaeological sites which has provided valuable insights into the diet, environment, and social practices of ancient communities. He emphasized that such interdisciplinary studies not only enhance historical understanding but also enrich modern

perspectives on human society. Ambassador Galey underlined the importance of education and capacity-building in sustaining this partnership. "Over the years, the French Embassy has supported more than 20 Pakistani doctoral students and young professionals trained in France by the extended MAFBI team," he said. "Chanhü Daro today stands as a laboratory for interdisciplinary study and a symbol of what long-term cooperation can achieve." He also recalled that Pakistan had recognized this collaboration at the highest level when, in 2024, the Sitara-e-Pakistan, one of the country's most prestigious civil awards, was conferred upon French archaeologist Dr. Aurore Didier, in acknowledgment of her outstanding contribution to bilateral cultural and scientific ties. Concluding his remarks, the French Ambassador expressed gratitude to the federal and provincial departments of archaeology and museums, the Taxila Institute of Archaeology and Civilizations, and all researchers, students, and professionals who have sustained this partnership. "The results of our joint work – from scientific publications to heritage preservation – speak of a long-standing friendship built on trust and shared pursuit of knowledge," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Participants of the event posing for a group photo. – DNA

Kundi calls for modernization of Gemstone Industry

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has said that the province is rich in valuable mineral resources, and if the mining and gemstone industry is developed on modern lines, it can play a vital role in strengthening both the provincial and national economy. He said that the gemstone industry is the identity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that efforts are underway to make the province the strongest in Pakistan in terms of skills, resources, and opportunities. He expressed these views while addressing the Pakistan Gems, Minerals and Manufacturers Exporters Association's awards ceremony as chief guest here at the Governor House, on Tuesday. During the event, the Governor distributed awards among 34 individuals for their outstanding contributions to the mineral and gemstone sector. The ceremony

was attended by Association President Noor-ul-Hassan, former MPA Khalid Waqar Chamkani, Honorary Consul General of Romania Masood Ahmad, representatives from the Afghan and Iranian consulates, Association Vice Chairman Asif Khan, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Junaid Altaf, Peshawar Chamber of Commerce President Shakeel Ahmad, and leading figures and experts from the gemstone industry. Speakers including Association President Noor-ul-Hassan, Honorary Consul General of Romania Masood Ahmad, and Naushad Ahmad also addressed the gathering and highlighted the challenges faced by the gemstone business community. Governor Kundi congratulated the award recipients and appreciated the Association's efforts in promoting the industry. He said that

with the hard work of professionals, the passion of entrepreneurs, and the government's support, the industry would achieve new heights. He emphasized that peace is essential for investment, and all segments of society must work together for sustained development. "The day is not far when Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will become a prosperous and developed province," he added. The Governor said that the province's mountains are blessed with precious gemstones and talented artisans. By introducing modern technology and polishing skills to international standards, these resources can capture global markets, he said. Governor Kundi further said that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the national economy, and serious efforts are being made to promote them.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain discuss enhancement of bilateral agricultural cooperation and sustainable agri-trade with Canadian High Commissioner Tariq Ali Khan.

Olive Festival to promote sustainable farming

RAWALPINDI: The 10th National Olive Festival 2025 will begin on November 2 at Allama Iqbal Park, Murree Road, to highlight Pakistan's progress in olive cultivation and sustainable agriculture. Organised by the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi in collaboration with the Olive Foundation, the two-day event will mark a decade of the festival's contribution to promoting olive farming, value addition and agro-business development in the country. The festival will feature a range of activities, including an exhibition of olives and other agricultural products, awareness sessions and technical demonstrations for farmers, stalls of growers, processors and agro-entrepreneurs, a food court and family entertainment, olive oil tasting competitions, and cultural programmes. A large number of farmers, students, agricultural experts and representatives of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and provincial departments are expected to attend the festival. PHA Rawalpindi Director General Ahmed Hassan Ranjha said the National Olive Festival had become a symbol of the country's sustainable agricultural growth, adding that such initiatives encourage rural development, women empowerment and youth participation in agribusiness. The PHA has invited the public, students and agriculture enthusiasts to attend the festival and support Pakistan's emerging olive sector.—APP

Dr.Pechuho briefs on 3,995 HIV-positive cases

KARACHI: A high-level meeting on the alarming rise of HIV cases across Sindh was chaired by Provincial Minister for Health and Population Welfare, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, in which all Deputy Commissioners and SSPs from across the province attended virtually, while CEO Sindh Healthcare Commission Dr Ahsan Qavi, Secretary Sindh Blood Transfusion Authority Dr Dure-Naz, and Additional Director CDC participated physically. The Minister was briefed that more than 600,000 quack doctors are operating in Sindh, 40 percent of them in Karachi alone. There are currently 3,995 registered HIV-positive children in the province, including 1,144 in

Larkana, 509 in Shikarpur, 256 in Shaheed Benazirabad, 228 in Mirpurkhas, while dozens of cases exist in every district. Officials further informed that the spread of HIV in Sindh has reached an extremely alarming situation. Major causes include unregulated and unethical medical practices, unsafe blood transfusions, illegal clinics, unregistered blood banks, re-use and repackaging of syringes, contaminated injections, cannula centres, re-use of razors by barbers, sale of hospital waste, unscreened blood, and unsafe dental tools. Dr Pechuho issued strict directives to all SSPs and DCs to immediately shut down illegal health facilities and take decisive action against quackery

and unsafe medical practices, stating, "There will be zero tolerance; no recommendation or political pressure will be entertained. If an MNA or MPA tries to intervene, inform me I will handle them myself." She ordered mandatory screening of pregnant women to prevent any virus mother-to-child transmission, and instructed Sindh Healthcare Commission and police to ensure that sealed healthcare units are not allowed to re-open. Those violating sealing orders must be arrested. The minister also directed that sale of hospital waste must be stopped immediately, and a complete list of licensed blood banks be issued.—DNA

E-Pakistan to transform country into digitally connected economy

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal said on Tuesday that the development of any civilization depends on mastery in space technology, emphasizing that high-speed internet and commercial satellite initiative will serve as a fundamental pillar of Pakistan's digital transformation. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of high-speed internet and commercial satellite, he said that the Holy Quran has ordained the conquest of the universe, adding that space technology is included as a fundamental pillar of "Uraan-e-Pakistan." The minister said that four satellites have been sent into space during the last two years, and Pakistan has now acquired the capability of internet service through its own satellite. He said that the government was laying the foundation of a connected Pakistan through a combination of fiber, 5G, and commercial satellites. He said the target of e-Pakistan is to connect the youth from every corner of the country to the world, and connecting every school and health facility to broadband was a priority. He added that millions of new job opportunities would be created for youth in the digital economy. Ahsan Iqbal said e-Pakistan was the backbone of a modern digital economy, and the internet is no longer just communication but the fundamental infrastructure for productivity. Ensuring access to high-speed internet to every citizen is being prioritized, he added. He said satellite internet will play an important role in connecting remote areas. He further said Pakistan's first astronaut will go into space in 2026, adding that e-Pakistan is not just a slogan but the foundation of a modern, APP

National Cotton Plan 2025 on the cards

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Food Security and Research is all set to finalize the National Cotton Plan 2025 to enhance crop yield, improve quality, and reduce the cost of production. According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the National Cotton Plan 2025 aims to boost cotton production and promote import substitution through initiatives such as adopting the latest seed varieties and good agricultural practices. The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Commerce has already endorsed a set of recommendations in this regard, which are aligned with the Ministry of Commerce's core objectives of driving export-led growth, bolstering competitiveness, and integrating Pakistan more effectively into global value chains. The document reveals that in the Fiscal Year 2025, value-added finished textile products, including apparel and home textiles, generated \$14.29 billion, accounting for 80 percent of textile exports, while raw materials and intermediates contributed \$3.65 billion, or 20 percent. To consolidate these gains, the Ministry of Commerce is preparing a new

Textiles and Apparel Policy (2025-30). The policy seeks to maximize the use of locally produced raw materials, expand exports of value-added textile products, and diversify into new markets. It identifies priority sub-sectors and potential destinations while proposing actionable steps to achieve \$30 billion in textile exports by 2030, as approved by the National Export Development Board, the document said. One of the challenges highlighted in the draft policy is the limited scale of Pakistan's downstream industries compared to regional competitors, which has restricted growth in the global market share. The new framework focuses on attracting fresh investment to scale up production capacities and diversify into high-value product lines. Despite increasing exports of value-added goods, Pakistan's textile and apparel exports remain heavily reliant on cotton, even as the global fiber mix has shifted toward man-made fibers (MMF). Globally, MMF now represents 74 percent of total fiber use, including 57 percent polyester, 6.7 percent polyamide, 6.1 percent other synthetics, and 6.3 percent viscose,

the document stated. Under the recently approved National Tariff Policy 2025, the Tariff Policy Board has been tasked with rationalizing customs duties on non-cotton yarns and fabrics to enable Pakistan's transition toward MMF-based apparel, women's and children's wear, sportswear, and other high-value finished products. The government also aims to attract both foreign and domestic investment for the production of synthetic and artificial materials, such as polyamide, polyolefin, polyethylene, and polyurethane. Driven by innovations in advanced and functional materials, the global technical textile market is expanding rapidly and is projected to surpass \$300 billion by 2030. To capture a share of this emerging market, the Ministry of Commerce has established a National Technical Textile Council to develop a roadmap for shifting Pakistan's textile and apparel industry from conventional products to high-value technical textiles used across diverse sectors, including protection, agriculture, construction, sports, medical, packaging, and automotive industries.—APP

ICCI calls for treating cold storage sector as an industry

ISLAMABAD: Acting President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Tahir Ayub has expressed serious concern over the commercial electricity tariff being applied to the cold storage sector, emphasizing that food storage is an integral component of the industrial value chain and should be treated as part of the agro-industrial infrastructure rather than a commercial service. While talking to a delegation from the fruit, vegetable, and cold storage business community, he said that cold storage plays a critical role in value addition, food preservation, and price stabilization across the agricultural supply chain. Many fruits and perishable commodities such as apples, citrus, mangoes, and potatoes are highly dependent on temperature-controlled storage facilities. Applying high commercial electricity tariffs on such essential infrastructure, he warned, would undermine the entire farm-to-market ecosystem, hurting both producers and consumers. Tahir Ayub cautioned that the differential cost of electricity would substantially increase operational expenses, forcing cold storage operators to pass on the burden to traders and retailers. This would further inflate the prices of fruits and vegetables, which are already slipping beyond the reach of ordinary citizens. He urged the government to reclassify the cold storage sector as an industry, thereby allowing it to benefit from industrial tariffs, tax reliefs, and incentives available to manufacturing and processing units.—DNA

CDA chief inspects progress on Shaheen Chowk underpass project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, visited the Shaheen Chowk Underpass project on Tuesday. He was accompanied by CDA Member Engineering, Syed Nafasat Raza and relevant officers. Chairman CDA Mu-

hammad Ali Randhawa inspected the ongoing construction activities at the project. On this occasion, the relevant officers briefed Chairman CDA on the progress of the construction work for the Shaheen Chowk Underpass project. They apprised that the excavation work for the underpass included in the project is progressing rapidly. Furthermore, construction activities

are ongoing 24/7 to ensure the timely completion of the project. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed that the project must be completed according to its stipulated timelines. He instructed that high-quality standards for the construction work must be ensured under all circumstances. Chairman CDA said that this project will prove to be a significant milestone in eliminating

traffic congestion in Islamabad. He said that upon completion, the Shaheen Chowk project will provide signal-free travel facilities to the general public, including students of educational institutions in the surrounding areas. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed the Project Director and Resident Engineers to personally supervise all ongoing construction activities on the project.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

OCTOBER

Oct 01/China National Day

Oct 01/Cyprus National Day

Oct 01/Republic of Korea Armed Forces Day

Oct 01/Nigeria Armed Forces Day

Oct 02/Guinea National Day

Oct 03/Germany Unification Day

Oct 03/Republic of Korea National Foundation Day

Oct 05/Indonesia Armed Forces Day

Oct 06/Egypt Armed Forces Day

Oct 09/Uganda Independence Day

Oct 12/Spain National Day

Oct 23/Hungary National Day

October 24/United Nations United Nations Day

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ISLAMABAD: Minister of State(SAPM) Huzaifa Rehman,Turkish ambassador to Pakistan is Dr. Irfan Neziroglu, Uzbekistan Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev and others witnessing exhibition titled Faces of Sacrifice, held at the PNCA.

China’s help revolutionize Pakistan’s agri sector

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan-China Friendship Group in Parliament held its first meeting on Tuesday at the Parliament House under the convnership of Senator Sherry Rehman, reaffirming the “All-weather, time-tested iron-clad friendship between Pakistan and the People’s Republic of China.” The meeting brought together senior parliamentarians from across Pakistan and a high-level delegation from China led by His Excellency Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Pakistan, said a press release. Opening the session, Senator Sherry Rehman warmly welcomed the Chinese delegation and emphasized that the formation of the Friendship Group represents “a high-level parliamentary platform dedicated in enhancing our historic and strategic relations with our most trusted friend, China.” Speaking on behalf of all parliamentary parties and the people of Pakistan, she appreciated China’s consistent and unwavering support to Pakistan across all fields of national life, extending gratitude to President Xi Jinping for his visionary global

and bilateral leadership. “His leadership has been transformative, translating into CPEC Phase 1.0 and 2.0, bringing over \$56 billion in investment over the last decade.” Senator Rehman underscored that Pakistan’s friendship with China, rooted in history since 1951, has stood firm through regional and global shifts. “China’s remarkable success in lifting over 800 million people out of poverty offers powerful lessons for Pakistan, especially as we focus on poverty alleviation and agricultural resilience amid the growing challenge of climate change,” she said. Senator Rehman commended the strategic leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari—who has paid two recent visits to China—and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, for their dedicated efforts in deepening bilateral cooperation and strengthening the enduring partnership with our Chinese brothers. She highlighted the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a cornerstone of Pakistan’s economic transformation, bringing billions of dollars in infrastructure and energy investment.

She termed China Pakistan’s “largest and most vital trading partner,” while calling for enhanced people-to-people exchanges, business forums, and academic collaborations to further deepen mutual understanding. She also appreciated China’s continuous support in the Karakoram Highway expansion, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism efforts, and support for Pakistan’s stance on the Kashmir issue. She also noted the importance of joint cooperation on water challenges with India, emphasizing that shared learning and sustainable water management are crucial for regional stability. Senator Rehman further emphasized “We share joint concerns in addressing borderless challenges such as climate change, poverty, terrorism, and artificial intelligence. We also value China’s firm support in safeguarding Pakistan’s sovereignty against external challenges. We look forward to expanding trade, with competitive terms similar to those offered to ASEAN countries. Our friendship is enduring – for our iron brothers, today and always” Focus-

ing on Pakistan’s agricultural future, Senator Rehman emphasized that China’s agricultural support could be “revolutionary and transformative” for Pakistan’s rural economy. “China’s agricultural cooperation with Pakistan is not merely an exchange of technology – it is a new chapter in rural empowerment,” She underscored that agriculture remains the backbone of Pakistan’s economy, and through strategic collaboration with China, “Pakistan can move from subsistence to sustainability, and from vulnerability to vitality.” Senator Rehman visions enhanced cooperation in agro-innovation, seed technology, water-efficient farming, and farmer training programs, calling it “a new frontier of Pakistan-China cooperation that can redefine food security and rural progress in South Asia.” In his remarks, Ambassador Jiang Zaidong appreciated the participation of senators from all regions of Pakistan and reaffirmed that the strategic leadership and partnership between China and Pakistan will continue to grow stronger.—APP

Pakistan’s Chilgoza project wins prestigious UN restoration award

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan received major international recognition as its flagship initiative “Reversing Deforestation and Degradation in High Conservation Value Chiloza Pine Forests” was honored as one of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration World Restoration Flagships at FAO headquarters in Rome, during FAO’s 80th Anniversary and the World Food Forum. Implemented between 2018 and 2025 under The Restoration Initiative, the project represents a strong collaboration between the Government of Pakistan – Ministry of Climate Change, Provincial Forest Departments, and the

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said in a FAO press release issued here. The work focuses on conserving and restoring Pakistan’s unique Chilgoza pine forests across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Syed Tauqir Hussain Shah, Advisor to the Prime Minister, highlighted that the initiative restored 3,800 hectares of degraded forest land, developed sustainable forest management plans for 69,000 hectares, and planted over one million Chilgoza pine seedlings. More than 30,000 households directly benefited through

training, tools, and innovative technologies. He underscored that these achievements were delivered in some of the most remote and ecologically sensitive mountain regions, where access challenges and harsh environments demand strong collaboration with local communities. The success fully reflects the power of community-led restoration to protect biodiversity while enabling dignified livelihood opportunities. Dr. Shah noted that the Government of Pakistan has already begun scaling up this integrated restoration approach in other fragile ecosystems through domestic public financing.—APP

Minister, German envoy discuss Railways, future cooperation



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Ina Lepel, German Ambassador to Pakistan, along with Mr. Arno Kirchof, Dy. Head of Mission and Ms. Janine Rohwer, Economic Counselor called on Minister of State for Finance and Railways, Bilal Azhar Kayani, at the Ministry of Finance

to discuss further strengthening bilateral ties and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Germany. Minister of State Bilal Kayani said that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is committed to transforming the macroeconomic stability that has been achieved into sustainable, inclusive and export-led economic growth. Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani

further added that progress has been made on the upgradation of the ML-1 and ML-3 railway tracks at Pakistan Railways. Ms. Lapel welcomed the growing bilateral cooperation. The Minister of State and the German Ambassador reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining close contact to further enhance ties between the Germany and Pakistan.

AI Wrapper Competitionaims to promote AI-driven ideas

ISLAMABAD: AI Wrapper Competition 2025, organised by the Ignite National Technology Fund under the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), aims to identify and promote AI-driven ideas tailored to Pakistan’s socio-economic needs. The initiative is part of the National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and focuses on fostering a skilled workforce, promoting ethical and explainable AI, and driving civic innovation across key sectors including education, health, governance, finance, and climate. According to data available on the Ignite website till Tuesday, a total of 1,712 teams have registered for the competition – comprising 67 percent male and 33 percent female participants. Punjab leads with 636 teams, followed by Sindh (514), Islamabad (287), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (144), Balochistan (118), Gilgit-Baltistan (4), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (5), and four international participants. —APP

Precise Development (HK) sign deal to boost Pak-China trade

ISLAMABAD: Precise Development (HK) Limited of China signed an agreement with the Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) in marking a significant step toward enhancing bilateral trade, investment, and economic collaboration between the two countries. Under the agreement, the Chinese enterprise, will represent PCJCCI in China and at the International Trade Center located in Shenzhen, China, to enhance bilateral collaboration in trade, technology, investment, and industrial partnerships, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. Key components of the agreement include Precise Development (HK) Limited serving as the official authorized representative of PCJCCI in China, and facilitating coordination with government bodies, enterprises, and business associations.—APP

UAF, Jiangxi college sign CPTICE cooperation Pact

ISLAMABAD: The University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and Jiangxi Agricultural Engineering Vocational College, China signed an Inter-Institutional Friendly Educational Exchange and Cooperation Agreement under the framework of the China-Pakistan TVET-Industrial Center of Excellence (CPTICE) to strengthen collaboration in vocational and technical education. The agreement was signed online by Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali and President Liu Ping, reflecting the digitalized cooperation model promoted under the China-Pakistan TVET framework. It aims to jointly cultivate skilled talents for Pakistan’s growing Chinese medicinal-herb industry, enhance digital and industrial cooperation, and promote the internationalization of academic programs between both institutions under the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic partnership, according to an official statement. The cooperation falls within the broader mission of CPTICE, officially established in December 2024 with the support of the Chinese and Pakistani embassies and formal approval from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Cabinet of Pakistan. The Center was created following a memorandum of understanding between Pakistan’s National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) and TANG International Education Group. As a government-backed institution, CPTICE is designed to deepen China-Pakistan cooperation in vocational education, meet skilled-talent needs for Chinese enterprises operating in Pakistan, and build youth capacity to make Pakistan a regional hub for technical expertise. Under the framework of the China-Pakistan TVET Cooperation “210 Project” and the China-Pakistan International Industrial-Academic Integration Alliance (CPIA), the partnership between UAF and Jiangxi College will focus on enhancing digitalized and informatized cooperation in vocational education, develop specialized programs in agricultural sciences and the cultivation of Chinese medicinal herbs, and advance teacher training and joint research initiatives.—DNA

NCC, PECTAA organizes workshop on refinement of curriculum

ISLAMABAD: The National Curriculum Council (NCC), Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, in collaboration with the Punjab Education, Curriculum, Training and Assessment Authority (PECTAA), Lahore, held a provincial consultation workshop on Tuesday, on refinement of National Curriculum of Pakistan. The one-day consultation formed a vital part of the NCC’s ongoing efforts to ensure that curriculum refinement is shaped through broad-based participation and provincial ownership. It followed the successful consultations held in Islamabad (October 13-14, 2025), Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (October 21, 2025), and Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (October 23, 2025), said a press release here. The consultation focused on gathering expert feedback and recommendations around four core thematic areas; National Curriculum Framework (Revision, Implementation & Governance), Minimum Standards for Curriculum, Textbooks, and Assessment, Scheme of Studies & Languages in Education and Rationalization and Optimization of the National Curriculum of Pakistan, it added. Along with the NCC team, the workshop brought together a diverse group of participants, including experts from the curriculum department, assessment bodies, textbook board, teacher education and training institutions, Early Childhood Education (ECE) specialists, subject specialists and representatives from leading private sector institutions such as Lahore Grammar School (LGS), Aitchison College and All Pakistan Private Schools Association, it focused. In her opening presentation, Dr Tabassum Naz, Director, NCC, outlined the objectives of the provincial consultation and highlighted the critical role of provinces in ensuring that the curriculum reflects Pakistan’s educational aspirations and contextual needs. Zubda Zia ur Rehman, Managing Director, PECTAA, commended the consultative process and underscored the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure that the curriculum remains responsive to emerging trends particularly the integration of artificial intelligence (AI), promotion of diversity and inclusivity, and continuous teacher development. Muzammil Mehmood, Chairman, Chief Minister’s Task Force, Punjab, also graced the occasion with his presence. In her closing remarks, Dr Tabassum Naz expressed sincere appreciation to PECTAA for hosting the workshop and for its continued collaboration with NCC in curriculum reform initiatives. The next provincial consultation will be held in Multan on October 30, 2025, continuing the nationwide engagement process.—DNA

Briefs

Hanif, ACFIC chief discuss investment, cooperation, connectivity

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC), Mr. Jiang Yi, called on Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi in Islamabad along with a high-level delegation comprising representatives of leading Chinese logistics, transport, and aviation companies. The meeting focused on investment opportunities, technical collaboration, freight operations, and strengthening the logistics network between Pakistan and China. The Minister briefed the delegation on ongoing development projects and highlighted the potential for foreign and private sector investment in Pakistan Railways. He informed that an agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the Karachi-Rohri section has already been finalized, while cooperation with China is being explored for Rohri-Peshawar, Nokundi-Gwadar, and ML-2 (Attock-Rohri) segments. Minister Abbasi emphasized that the Karachi-to-Peshawar rail corridor is fully operational, providing a vital trade link to Central Asian states, while the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) railway project serves as a strategic initiative for enhancing regional connectivity and trade mobility. The Chinese delegation appreciated Pakistan Railways' reform agenda, modernization efforts, and private sector engagement model. They expressed interest in investing under the BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) framework in railway and freight corridor projects.—APP

Ahsan calls for reinventing democracy to meet digital age challenges

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday stressed the need to reinvent democracy in line with the technological, informational, and demographic revolutions shaping the 21st century. Addressing a seminar titled "Shaping Social Democracy – Since 1925," held to mark the centenary celebrations of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and 35 years of its partnership with Pakistan, the minister congratulated FES for its global service in promoting social justice, democracy, and solidarity. He said the foundation had long stood at the heart of social democracy, advancing dignity, fairness, opportunity and representation. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan valued its friendship with Germany, rooted in mutual respect and cooperation, adding that the partnership was expanding in areas such as climate resilience.—APP

Rwanda, Pak to strengthen coop in tech development

The visit underscored the shared vision of Rwanda and Pakistan to promote education-driven economic growth and foster stronger people-to-people linkages between the two nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a move aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation in skills development and technology, Rwanda's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Fatou Harerimana, visited the Hazza Institute of Technology (HIT) in Islamabad on Monday. The visit focused on exploring new avenues of collaboration in technical, vocational, and digital education (TVET) to empower youth and address unemployment through practical and market-relevant skills training. High Commissioner Harerimana was received by Mr. Azhar Ikbal Sindhu, Managing Director of HIT, who briefed her on the institute's internationally recognized Microdegree and TVET programs. These initiatives, he said, are designed to equip students with the expertise needed to excel in both local and global markets. During their discussions, both sides emphasized the importance of knowledge exchange, institutional partnerships, and capacity building as key pillars of future cooperation. The High Commissioner reaffirmed Rwanda's commitment to deepening its educational and economic partnership with Pakistan, particularly in the fields of skills development, innovation, and technology transfer, as part of efforts to build a skilled and



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ture-ready workforce. The visit underscored the shared vision of Rwanda and Pakistan to promote education-driven

economic growth and foster stronger people-to-people linkages between the two nations.

Naqvi pays surprise visit to NADRA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi paid a surprise visit to the NADRA Center in Gujranwala on Monday to review the process of issuing national identity cards and other official documents. During the visit, the Interior Minister met with citizens visiting the center and inquired about their experiences and any difficulties faced during the document processing. Citizens expressed satisfaction over the overall performance of the NADRA Center noting congestion at a few counters, Minister Naqvi directed the staff to expedite the processing of applications and ensure citizens' issues are resolved promptly. He also interacted with NADRA staff across various counters, encouraging them to continue working diligently. "I am pleased to see that people are generally satisfied with the NADRA Center's services," said Mohsin Naqvi. "The staff's commitment, even amid rush hours, is commendable. Every citizen visiting NADRA is a VIP and deserves timely, hassle-free service." He instructed the Center's in-charge to take immediate steps to address public complaints and ensure that applications are processed the same day and documents are delivered within the stipulated time. Citizens thanked the Interior Minister for his on-the-spot orders, saying that the visit would help improve service delivery and further reduce waiting times.—DNA

Govt committed to preparing youth for global challenges: Magsi

In his concluding remarks, the Rector expressed profound gratitude for the trust reposed in him by the Chancellor of CUI, the President of Pakistan, and the CUI Senate, and issued a call for collective effort and institutional harmony to achieve the university's vision

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi Tuesday said that the government is determined to prepare the youth in line with global market demands, providing them with modern skills and education to meet the challenges of the contemporary world. He emphasized that the Ministry of Science and Technology would extend full support to universities in enhancing academic standards, promoting innovation, and strengthening research capacity across the country. The minister expressed these views during a meeting with the newly appointed Rector of COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Professor Dr. Raheel Qamar, who called on him today. The two discussed matters related to administrative affairs, academic quality, and institutional development. Khalid Magsi underscored the importance of linkages between academia and industry to ensure that graduates are equipped with the skills needed in modern workplaces. He also assured full cooperation of the Ministry in supporting COMSATS University's initiatives for educational excellence and research advancement. It is pertinent to mention here that Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, a veteran molecular geneticist and science policy leader, has recently taken charge as Rector of COMSATS University Islamabad. Dr. Qamar is a highly respected academic and distinguished administrator with extensive international experience, formally assuming charge to mark the commencement of a new strategic tenure for the multi-campus institution under the Ministry of Science and Technology. A recipient of Pakistan's Tamgha-e-Imtiaz (Medal of Excellence) and a Fellow of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, his groundbreaking research in molecular genetics, population genomics, and health sciences has significantly contributed to understanding genetic diversity and inherited diseases. During the meeting, Dr. Raheel Qamar also completed the formalities to commence his five-year tenure as Rector and sought the active support of the Minister in his capacity as Pro-Chancellor for addressing institutional challenges in line with the national science and technology agenda. Upon his arrival at the CUI Principal Seat, the Rector was warmly received by the senior management. Following the official handover, he convened a meeting with the staff and faculty, urging all stakeholders to work in coherence to make CUI the institution of choice for students in Pakistan and the Islamic world. Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar's return holds particular significance as he played a key role in transforming COMSATS Institute of Information Technology into a full-fledged university. In his concluding remarks, the Rector expressed profound gratitude for the trust reposed in him by the Chancellor of CUI, the President of Pakistan, and the CUI Senate, and issued a call for collective effort and institutional harmony to achieve the university's vision.—DNA

Seminar on "aesthetic medicine" at Health Asia 2025 organised

This year's participation marked AAPP's first official appearance at Health Asia, reflecting its growing role in promoting regenerative aesthetics, advanced dermatological analysis, and technology-driven medical solutions in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan (AAPP) proudly marked its significant participation in Health Asia International Exhibition and Conference 2025, Pakistan's largest international event focused on medical innovations. The three-day exhibition was held from October 23 to 25, 2025, at the Karachi Expo Centre, attracting medical experts, researchers, and industry professionals from across the world, including Russia, China, Turkey, and the Middle East. International participants praised the event as Pakistan's leading and most influential global platform in the healthcare sector and expressed keen interest in investment opportunities within the country's health industry. During the exhibition, AAPP organized a special seminar on "Aesthetic Medicine." The session was coordinated by Dr. Shumaila Khan and Dr. Samina Mohsin, and featured research presentations and expert discussions on emerging trends in aesthetic medicine. The Chief



Guest, Advocate Mahjabeen Abbasi, MNA, Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice and Member of the Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, highlighted the vast investment opportunities available in Pakistan's healthcare and industrial sectors. She emphasized that such exhibitions play a vital role in attracting both local and international investors, contributing significantly to Pakistan's economic growth. Participants of

the seminar commended AAPP's efforts to elevate the standards of aesthetic medicine in Pakistan to meet international benchmarks. The association reaffirmed its commitment to bridge the gap between aesthetic and traditional medical practices, aiming to position Pakistan as an emerging global leader in healthcare innovation and medical tourism. The Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan is the first organization in South Asia dedicated to rep-

resenting the field of aesthetic medicine. Through this platform, AAPP aspires to shape the future of aesthetic healthcare by combining advanced medical technology, scientific research, and artistic excellence. This year's participation marked AAPP's first official appearance at Health Asia, reflecting its growing role in promoting regenerative aesthetics, advanced dermatological analysis, and technology-driven medical solutions in Pakistan.

Haroon calls for comprehensive plan to uplift 'Pakistan's Marble Industry'

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan, chaired a meeting with the Pakistan Stone Development Company (PAS-DEC) in Islamabad Tuesday. The meeting focused on discussions regarding the quality and export potential of marble produced in Pakistan, with comparisons drawn to international standards, including those of Italy, said a release issued here. Haroon Akhtar Khan highlighted that Pakistan's marble industry possesses immense untapped potential and can play a vital role in strengthening the national economy through enhanced exports. He emphasized that the government is committed to upgrading the quality of Pakistani marble to meet international benchmarks, which would not only boost exports but also increase foreign exchange earnings. The SAPM further stated that the development of the marble industry would create thousands of employment opportunities across the country, supporting both industrial growth and local livelihoods. He underlined the importance of adopting modern technology and innovative techniques to improve the quality and efficiency of marble production.—APP

Police nab key member of notorious theft gang

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Shahzad Town police team arrested a key member of an active and organized theft gang during a successful operation, recovering stolen property worth hundreds of thousands of rupees. An official told APP on Tuesday that the arrested suspect, Osama Liaquat, was wanted in multiple house-theft and snatching incidents in Shahzad Town and adjoining areas. During the operation, police recovered five expensive laptops and valuable mobile phones from his possession. A case has been registered against the accused, while further arrests are expected as part of the ongoing investigation into the gang's activities. DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq directed police teams to ensure completion of all legal requirements so that the accused receives due punishment through solid prosecution. He said that Islamabad Police are aggressively pursuing organized and active criminal gangs involved in theft, burglary and other street crimes across the capital.—APP

CDA to host 'Islamabad Sheher Mela'

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is set to organise the "Islamabad Sheher Mela" to celebrate the 65th anniversary of Islamabad's Master Plan, coinciding with World Cities Day. The festival will commence on October 30 at the Gandhara Citizen Club, F-9 Park (Gate No. 4), from 2pm to 9pm. According to a CDA spokesperson, the event aims to highlight Islamabad's evolution as a planned, sustainable, and citizen-friendly capital. The "Sheher Mela" will feature smart innovation solutions, electric vehicle (EV) displays and rides, musical performances, a drum circle, children's entertainment zones, and food courts showcasing local cuisine. Talking to APP on Tuesday, he said the festival will celebrate Islamabad's progress and community spirit.

"Islamabad Sheher Mela is not only about honouring the city's 65-year planning legacy but also about engaging citizens in shaping its future. We want to showcase how innovation and sustainability can enhance urban living," the spokesperson stated. The CDA, established in 1960, has overseen the capital's development since its inception under the original Master Plan designed by Greek architect Constantinos A. Doxiadis. Over the decades, Islamabad has become recognised for its greenery, urban design, and balance between modern infrastructure and natural landscapes. The upcoming mela, officials say, will offer an opportunity for residents to reconnect with their city's identity while exploring future-forward technologies that could redefine mobility and sustainability in the capital. "This event symbolises our collective pride – Islamabad is not just a city, it's our shared home," a senior CDA official remarked. Residents and visitors are invited to join the festivities at F-9 Park to celebrate "Our City, Our Pride, Our Home." World Cities Day, observed annually on October 31, promotes global awareness about sustainable urban development.—DNA

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How Greece and Saudi Arabia are redrawing the map of power

DR. JOHN SFAKIANAKIS

WITH the Saudi-Greek Business Council meeting in Riyadh this week, it is timely to revisit the foundations – and the future – of one of the Eastern Mediterranean's most dynamic partnerships. The relationship between Greece and Saudi Arabia, long anchored in commerce and maritime exchange, is rapidly evolving into a strategic alliance that spans energy, investment, technology and defense. Across centuries, Greek ships have carried not only goods but ideas, grain, oil and influence. Today, the most consequential of these routes runs between Athens and Riyadh. What began as merchant pragmatism has matured into a strategic compact built on energy, technology and security. If the 20th century linked Greece to the Gulf through tankers, shipyards and engineering contracts, the 2020s are adding new layers. The old currents of energy and trade are now joined by high-voltage cables, digital corridors and investment partnerships. A relationship once defined by maritime commerce is becoming a diversified alliance – with institutions, capital and strategic intent to match. That evolution took shape this year with the launch of the Supreme Strategic Cooperation Council, co-chaired by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. It is Greece's first such mechanism with a Middle Eastern state – a sign that the partnership has moved from cordial diplomacy to structured strategy. The council now anchors cooperation in energy, investment, defense and education.

Energy remains the backbone, though its meaning has shifted. The Saudi-Greek Interconnection, a planned 3-gigawatt electricity link, will carry competitively priced power – gas-generated at first, renewable later – from the Arabian Peninsula to Europe. It could become the first direct energy bridge between the Gulf and the EU. For Greece, it strengthens its role as Europe's southeastern energy gateway; for Saudi Arabia, it channels Vision 2030 into Europe's clean energy markets. If the 20th century linked Greece to the Gulf through tankers, shipyards and engineering contracts, the 2020s are adding new layers. Digital infrastructure is emerging as the new trade route. The East to Med Data Corridor – a joint venture between Greece's telecom operators and Saudi Arabia's STC – will connect Gulf data hubs to European markets through undersea cables. Due for completion in 2026, it complements Saudi investments in cloud infrastructure and Greece's ambition to serve as the EU's digital bridge. When operational, it will transform geography into bandwidth, reviving the ancient logic of the Aegean and the Red Sea as conduits of exchange. Security cooperation has deepened alongside it. Since 2021, Greek air defense units have been stationed in Saudi Arabia to help protect critical energy facilities from aerial

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threats – an unprecedented deployment that underscores mutual trust. Athens now views Gulf stability as part of Europe's own security; Riyadh sees Greece as a dependable partner with NATO experience and Mediterranean reach. Diplomacy has kept pace. Athens was among the first European capitals to back Riyadh's successful Expo 2030 bid and has championed Saudi Arabia's closer integration into Europe's energy and logistics networks. Economic ties have expanded well beyond episodic deals into a deliberate exchange of capital and expertise. Bilateral trade now nears \$1.5 billion, while Saudi investment in Greece is accelerating across the infrastructure, energy and digital sectors. Greek finance is reinforcing this momentum. Eurobank, the National Bank of Greece and Piraeus Bank have expanded trade finance and advisory services for Greek and Saudi firms in energy, transport and technology. Their involvement adds institutional depth, translating political goodwill into bankable projects. Saudi capital is also flowing the other way. Under the Strategic Cooperation Council, the Public Investment Fund and major Saudi groups are pursuing opportunities in Greek infrastructure, tourism, logistics and renewables. The Saudi-Greek Business Forum, launched in Athens in 2023, produced a pipeline of projects from port development to hospitality and energy storage, followed by talks in Riyadh earlier this year. Companies such as STC and ACWA Power have already established a presence, signaling Riyadh's intent to treat Greece as a stable, EU-based platform for expansion. Skeptics may call this a convenient alignment – Europe seeking energy security, Saudi Arabia diversification and Greece investment. Yet its roots run far deeper. Greek entrepreneurs were active in the Kingdom as early as the 1950s, when Aristotle Onassis, Stavros Niarchos and John Latsis signed landmark tanker deals with Aramco and its affiliates, tying the fortunes of the Greek merchant fleet to Saudi oil and reshaping global energy trade. The Olayan Group – founded in 1947 and renowned for its global partnerships – established links in Greece during the 1970s, reflecting the private sector ties that complemented state diplomacy. By the oil boom of the 1970s, Greek firms such as Consolidated Contractors Company and Archirodon were among the first foreign contractors to build Saudi ports, desalination plants and highways from Jeddah to Dammam and Yanbu. Greek engineers and shipbuilders became part of the Kingdom's modernization drive and thousands of professionals from Greece settled in Saudi Arabia, forming a diaspora that connected Piraeus to the Gulf long before globalization made such exchanges routine. Shipping has remained the backbone of that continuity. Greek shipowners – still commanding the world's largest commercial fleet, carrying nearly a fifth of global seaborne oil trade – have transported Saudi crude for decades. Greek port operators, including the Piraeus Port Authority, have hosted Saudi delegations exploring logistics and free-zone partnerships, mirroring Riyadh's ambition to turn Neom and the Red Sea Project into world-class maritime hubs. What began as private initiative has evolved into structured cooperation – proof that the foundations laid by merchants and engineers generations ago are now being institutionalized through modern partnerships and shared strategic vision. Economic ties have expanded well beyond episodic deals into a deliberate exchange of capital and expertise. The region's emerging geometry gives this partnership new weight. Greece's expanding network of energy and data links – to Egypt, Israel and Cyprus – is turning it into the switchboard of the Eastern Mediterranean. A Saudi connection extends that network eastward, creating a corridor of energy, information and trade between Asia and Europe.

Can Pakistan regulate truth in the age of hyper-information?

Imran Ghaznavi



In Pakistan's sprawling media landscape, the old boundaries are gone. A talk show clip posted on YouTube reaches more viewers than its live broadcast. Anonymous Twitter accounts can move markets, topple reputations, or spin conspiracies within hours. And yet, amid all this chaos, viewers still expect PEMRA to act. To draw the line between fair debate and fabrication. Between criticism and incitement. Between expression and exploitation

IT began quietly, with a few lines slipped into an amendment bill in 2023. But those few lines may come to define the next decade of Pakistan's media story. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) was given sharper teeth, a wider reach, and a new vocabulary for an old problem: misinformation. Inside Parliament, the discussion was brief. Outside, the noise was loud. Media owners feared censorship. Lawmakers called for "responsible journalism." Civil society worried about "information control." Yet behind the debate, a deeper shift was taking shape, one that mirrors the world's uneasy struggle to regulate truth in a digital age.

The Law That Rewired the Regulator

For two decades, PEMRA was a gatekeeper. It licensed channels, issued warnings, imposed fines. Its founding law from 2002 was written for a simpler time satellite dishes, not smartphones; broadcasters, not bloggers. Then came the 2023 amendments.

For the first time, Pakistani law defined misinformation and disinformation. It raised penalties for broadcasting false or harmful content. It promised protection for journalists' salaries and working conditions. And it created stricter checks before any channel could be taken off air. Inside PEMRA headquarters, the message was clear: this was not business as usual. The regulator was being asked to do something regulators everywhere are struggling with, manage a borderless, algorithm-driven information space without crushing free speech.

In theory, this was reform. In practice, it was the start of a new battle i.e. one between authority and autonomy, regulation and trust.

The New Reality

In Pakistan's sprawling media landscape, the old boundaries are gone. A talk show clip posted on YouTube reaches more viewers than its live broadcast. Anonymous Twitter accounts can move markets, topple reputations, or spin conspiracies within hours.

And yet, amid all this chaos, viewers still expect PEMRA to act. To draw the line between fair debate and fabrication. Between criticism and incitement. Between expression and exploitation.

A senior regulatory expert put it this way: "They can't regulate speed with a law written for paper." He wasn't being poetic. He was being honest. That's where the 2023 amendments tried to help expanding PEMRA's legal reach into digital territory, aligning it with global practices seen in the UK's Ofcom or Singapore's Infocomm Media Development Authority.

But the challenge runs deeper than new powers. It's about how those powers are used and how much trust the industry, the journalists, and the public have in the regulator's fairness.

The Tightrope: Freedom vs Responsibility

International experience tells us that credibility, not control, makes a regulator effective. The UK, Australia, Malaysia, and Indonesia have moved toward co-regulation, a balance between government oversight and industry self-discipline. PEMRA now faces the same crossroads.

To make the law work, it must shift from being seen as a watchdog with a stick to a referee trusted by all sides. That means publishing clear guidance on what constitutes "disinformation." It means adopting a ladder of proportional sanctions, correction, warning, fine, suspension, only then cancellation.

It also means creating space for self-regulation. A National Media Ethics Council, jointly led by PEMRA and industry representatives, could turn compliance from compulsion into culture.

That's how successful regulators survive not by silencing dissent, but by setting rules that everyone understands and can live with.

What Changed and Why It Matters

One of the quiet but meaningful shifts in the 2023 amendment was about people, not power. For years, journalists complained about unpaid salaries and arbitrary terminations. The new law mandates timely payments and gives PEMRA limited oversight on labor rights in licensed organizations.

It was a signal, regulation isn't only about punishing broadcasters; it's about professionalizing them.

Then came another reform: transparency. The new law demands that enforcement decisions, especially those involving penalties, follow multi-member processes. No more single signatures that could be seen as politically motivated. For a regulator often accused of selective action, this procedural safeguard could rebuild some of the trust that was lost in the noise of past controversies.

The Challenges No Law Can Solve

Even with a modern law, PEMRA faces a storm. First, the jurisdictional dilemma: most harmful content today originates online, often from foreign-based platforms beyond Pakistan's legal reach. Regulation without cooperation will not work.

Second, the speed dilemma: misinformation moves faster than any regulator can react. By the time PEMRA investigates, the rumor has already become a belief. The only answer is technology i.e. AI-based media monitoring, partnerships with fact-checkers, and faster verification pipelines.

Third, the perception dilemma: every enforcement action risks being called censorship. The solution isn't silence; it's transparency. Every decision must be explained, published, and appealable.

And finally, the capacity dilemma: regulating a hyper-con-

ected media ecosystem requires not just laws but people who understand algorithms, audience behavior, and digital economics. That's a tall order for a bureaucracy built around analog broadcasting.

The Opportunity Hidden in Chaos

Yet within these challenges lie opportunities, for PEMRA and for Pakistan.

If it can implement these reforms wisely, PEMRA could become a regional model in South Asia for balanced digital governance. It could set benchmarks for ethical journalism and digital responsibility that neighboring regulators might follow.

Imagine a PEMRA that partners with universities to integrate media literacy in curricula. A PEMRA that publishes quarterly transparency dashboards showing fines, violations, and resolutions. A PEMRA that celebrates ethical journalism, not just punishes violations. Such a regulator would be feared less and respected more.

The Road Ahead

Lawmakers and industry leaders now hold the pen. The question is not whether PEMRA should regulate, but how it should regulate in an era where every citizen with a smartphone is a broadcaster.

A few steps could make all the difference: Requiring PEMRA to issue plain-language guidance within 90 days of any new regulation. Establishing an independent review panel for appeals. Funding a Digital Monitoring Unit equipped with AI tools and trained analysts. Formalizing a co-regulation charter signed by broadcasters and digital platforms. These are not bureaucratic luxuries. They are democratic necessities.

The Final Test

In the end, the test for PEMRA's 2023 law won't be in the text of the statute. It will be in how it's used, whether it protects truth without punishing opinion, whether it enables journalism without empowering propaganda, whether it builds trust without breeding fear.

Bob Woodward once said, "The truth is too important to be left to chance." In Pakistan's noisy information battlefield, truth now needs both courage and regulation, but regulation that understands freedom is not its enemy, it's its foundation.

PEMRA's challenge in 2025 is exactly that: to regulate without suffocating, to lead without dominating, and to rebuild trust in an age where every voice can be amplified, and every fact can be doubted.

"That is not just a test for PEMRA. It is a test for Pakistan's democracy itself".

PEMRA's challenge is clear: to regulate without suffocating, to lead without dominating, and to restore public trust in a time when every voice can echo, and every fact can be doubted.

Water Wars on the Horizon!

F. Z. Khan

Security cannot be divorced from resource disputes. During the Turkey rounds Islamabad has repeatedly linked water concerns with the core demand that Afghanistan must stop permitting militant groups, especially TTP elements, to use Afghan soil and launch attacks into Pakistan. Talks that address one problem while ignoring the other will be incomplete. If Afghanistan genuinely seeks normal relations and international legitimacy, it must understand that permitting cross-border terrorism and colluding directly or indirectly in a plan to weaponize...

THE recent round of Pakistan-Afghanistan talks in Turkey offers a fragile but vital opportunity to solve not only the acute security problems on our western border, but also an equally existential resource threat: the reported move to turn shared rivers into instruments of coercion. Reports that dam projects on the Kunar-Kabul-Chitral systems are being advanced with outside assistance, and could be used to throttle downstream flows into Pakistan, must be confronted with steadiness, law and unambiguous deterrence. Millions of Pakistanis depend on those waters for food, income and life itself; this is not an academic dispute to be shelved for later. Hydrology and geopolitics are now intersecting in dangerous ways. The Kabul basin contributes roughly 16.5 million acre-feet of water annually into the Indus system. It is the water that irrigates wheat, maize and sugarcane across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and supports industry and households downstream. Reports of planned or ongoing projects – Naghlu, Darunta, Shahtoot, Shah Waros, Gamberi, Baghdara and others – raise real fears that unilateral upstream storage or manipulation could reduce flows at critical times, amplifying droughts, food insecurity and social unrest in Pakistan. Any deliberate withholding of transboundary water is not just an economic assault; in practical terms it is an attack on livelihoods and human security.

We must be frank: water coercion is a form of strategic pressure already seen in the region. Past Indian pressure on western rivers have tested trust under the Indus Waters Treaty; Pakistan's experience makes clear why vigilance is necessary. If Afghanistan, whether by intent or under external influence, builds and operates storage without transparent data-sharing, joint studies and treaty-based mechanisms, it would effectively convert natural resources into a diplomatic cudgel. This is a scenario Pakistan cannot accept.

But rhetoric alone will not safeguard our rivers. The talks with the Afghan Taliban must produce practical, provable commitments from Kabul on three basics: immediate and verifiable cessation of any unilateral works that can materially alter downstream flows; the sharing of hydrological data and engineering designs; and acceptance of joint or neutral technical studies (with recognized international experts where required) to assess impacts. These are modest, technical, and reasonable prerequisites to avoid escalation, and not demands that impinge on Afghanistan's development per se. Transparency and cooperation will separate legitimate development from coercive intent.

At the same time, diplomacy must be backed by credible technical and legal preparedness. Pakistan's investment in projects such as the proposed Chitral River Diversion, aimed at securing flows and augmenting storage and generation capacity, is a legitimate sovereign response to protect downstream areas and habitat. Equally, Islamabad must continue to build domestic resilience through improved storage, water-use efficiency, and modern irrigation practices. These defensive steps reduce vulnerability while keeping the door open for negotiated, binding solutions.

Security cannot be divorced from resource disputes. During the Turkey rounds Islamabad has repeatedly linked water concerns with the core demand that Afghanistan must stop permitting militant groups, especially TTP elements, to use Afghan soil and launch attacks into Pakistan. Talks that address one problem while ignoring the other will be incomplete. If Afghanistan genuinely seeks normal relations and international legitimacy, it must understand that permitting cross-border terrorism and colluding directly or indirectly in a plan to weaponize water are mutually reinforcing behaviours that will harden Pakistan's response. The talks in Turkey must therefore extract concrete counterterrorism commitments alongside water transparency measures.

Question is how should Pakistan calibrate its approach? First, it must pursue technical transparency: insist on joint hydrological monitoring and independent impact assessments. Second, we must pursue legal avenues: documenting any unilateral construction and being ready to present the facts in international fora if cooperation is refused. Third, keep diplomatic pressures high: engage mediators and regional partners to clearly underline that weaponizing water will destabilise the entire region. Finally, keep calibrated defensive options on the table, not as a first resort but as a deterrent to miscalculation.

Above all, this moment calls for sober pragmatism, not overheated nationalism. Pakistan's argument is straightforward and morally persuasive: that shared rivers are shared responsibilities; that development is legitimate; coercion is not. Afghanistan must therefore be made to see that preserving downstream flows and halting cross-border militancy are preconditions for durable regional stability, and for Afghanistan's own prosperity. India, too, must recognize that attempts to instrumentalize India against Pakistan will only invite countermeasures and prolonged instability.

The talks in Turkey are therefore consequential. These can either produce a clear roadmap for transparency, joint management and counterterrorism cooperation or else these can deepen mistrust and push the region towards dangerous escalations over both guns and water. Pakistan continues to negotiate in good faith, but with evidence-based firmness: water security is national security, and the lives of millions depend on how responsibly our neighbours, Afghanistan and India, manage transboundary rivers. The message must be simple and unambiguous: cooperation or accountability; development or deprivation; dialogue or consequences. The future of millions of Pakistanis should not be left to hydrological chance or geopolitical gambits.

– The writer is a freelance columnist. He can be reached at fzkhan@yahoo.com

Briefs

Riyadh, Islamabad unveil strategic...

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Understanding for cooperation in the field of energy between the two nations. This framework represents an extension of both countries' efforts to strengthen their fraternal relations and reaffirms their shared vision toward building a sustainable partnership across various economic, trade, and investment fields – in a manner that fulfills the aspirations of their leaderships and the brotherly peoples of both nations, and serves their mutual interests. The leaders of the two countries also look forward to convening the meeting of the Saudi-Pakistani Supreme Coordination Council.

Pakistan suffered economic...

FROM PAGE 01
natural calamities. The premier noted that Pakistan's only option to rebuild flood-hit areas was through loans, underscoring the country's economic vulnerability to climate shocks. However, he said that borrowings for rebuilding were not the solution, saying that the country was making efforts to "stand up on our own feet". PM Shehbaz also called on the global community to share the burden and come to the rescue of humanity. Acknowledging that Pakistan had made mistakes in the past, PM Shehbaz said the government was now implementing "robust and deep-rooted reforms" aimed at transforming governance. He highlighted that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had been completely digitalised and reaffirmed his government's resolve to combat corruption "with full might." The prime minister further pointed out that Pakistan's youthful population – which makes up around 60% of the total – was both a challenge and an opportunity. He urged the global community to support developing nations like Pakistan that bear the brunt of climate disasters despite contributing minimally to the crisis.

WB urges sustained reforms...

FROM PAGE 01
and that would help ensure sustainable development and economic resilience for all. Immediate and lingering impacts of the recent floods are expected to weigh on growth, with real GDP growth projected to remain at 3.0 percent in FY26. Predicated on continued macroeconomic stability and commitment to key economic reforms, growth is projected to pick up to 3.4 percent in FY27 but will likely remain constrained amid tight fiscal policies aimed at rebuilding buffers amid continuing global policy uncertainty and vulnerability to natural disasters and climate shocks. "Sustaining progress will require a balanced mix of revenue and expenditure measures to manage flood impacts while maintaining progress towards fiscal consolidation," lead author of the report Mukhtar Ul Hasan said.

Dar, Saudi FM discuss bilateral...

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Senator Ishaq Dar congratulated Prince Faisal bin Farhan and the leadership of the Kingdom on the successful hosting of the Future Investment Initiative Forum, praising Saudi Arabia's dynamic role in shaping global economic and investment trends. He also thanked the Saudi government for its warm hospitality. Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to continue working closely for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region, while maintaining strong coordination at platforms such as the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Two decades in, Messi hopes to lead Argentina at 2026 World Cup

Says he will take time next year to assess his physical condition before deciding whether to play in tournament

BUENOS: Lionel Messi, still chasing international glory nearly two decades into his career, says he hopes to play at the 2026 World Cup in North America, acknowledging his age and fitness will dictate his role in defending Argentina's 2022 title.

The Argentine great recently extended his contract with Major League Soccer side Inter Miami through 2028, signalling he is not yet considering retirement despite turning 39 next June.

Speaking to NBC News, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner said he will take time next year to assess his physical condition before deciding whether to play in the tournament across the United States, Mexico, and Canada. "It's something extraordinary to be able to be in a World Cup, and I would love to," the Argentine captain said in the interview released on Monday.

"I would like to be there, to be well and be an important part of helping my team, if I am there. I'm going to assess that on a day-to-day basis when I start preseason next year



with Inter (and see if I can really be 100%, if I can be useful and then make a decision. "I'm really eager because it's a World Cup. We're coming off winning the last one, and being able to defend it on the field again is

spectacular because it's always a dream to play with the national team." Messi has enjoyed a professional career spanning more than 20 years, debuting for Barcelona at just 17 in 2004 before playing

for Paris St Germain and joining Inter Miami in 2023. He sparked fresh interest in the American league in a critical moment for the sport in North America ahead of hosting next year's World Cup.

While Messi has amassed countless club and individual accolades, international success had eluded him until claiming the 2021 Copa America before beating France 4-2 on penalties to win the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. "It was the dream of my life," Messi said of the victory.

"It was also true that it was the only thing missing at a professional level because I had been lucky enough to have achieved everything at an individual level, at a team level with Barcelona, and I think that's every player's dream. When you ask a player what their dream is, it's to be a world champion." Messi has played in 195 matches and scored a record 114 goals for his country. A return for the 2026 World Cup would mark his sixth appearance in the tournament.

'Climate change shrinking window for record-breaking marathon performances'

86% of marathons projected to experience decline in odds of ideal running temperatures by 2045

KARACHI: A new scientific analysis has warned that climate change is rapidly shrinking the window of "cool days" that allow marathon runners to achieve their best performances, posing an increasing challenge for athletes and organisers of the world's premier long-distance races. The report, titled "Running out of cool days: How climate change is decreasing the odds of optimal marathon conditions", was released by Climate Central ahead of the New York City Marathon. It examines how rising global temperatures are affecting marathon performance conditions across 221 global races, including all seven Abbott World Marathon Majors. According to the study, 86%

of marathons analysed (190 out of 221) are projected to experience a decline in the odds of ideal running temperatures by 2045. This includes all major races in Tokyo, Boston, Berlin, Chicago, London, New York, and Sydney. Among the elite male runners, Tokyo currently offers the best odds of ideal race-day conditions, with a 69% chance of hitting the performance "sweet spot". But that advantage won't last: the probability is expected to fall by 12 percentage points to 57% by 2045 if emissions continue at current rates.

Elite women, who perform better in warmer temperatures than men, are somewhat more resilient to climate shifts. They currently have a 78% chance of opti-

mal race-day temperatures at Tokyo, rising slightly to 85% by 2045. Still, researchers emphasise that even small changes in average conditions can have significant impacts on elite performance and race safety. The analysis also found that London offers the most favourable conditions for elite women at present, with an 87% likelihood of optimal temperatures, while Berlin presents one of the least favourable outlooks. By 2045, the odds of ideal conditions for elite female runners in Berlin are expected to drop from 40% to 29%.

The report found that the exceptional heat at the 2025 Tokyo and Berlin Marathons pushed conditions far beyond the optimal range for both recreational and

elite runners and that human-caused climate change made those temperatures significantly more likely. On March 2, 2025, the day of the Tokyo Marathon, the average temperature was 15.2°C (59.4°F), about 8.2°C warmer than normal, reaching a Climate Shift Index (CSI) level of 3, meaning the unusually warm conditions were three times more likely due to climate change. Similarly, Berlin's race on September 21, 2025, saw an average temperature of 20.7°C, about 6.7°C warmer than normal, with a CSI level of 2, indicating the heat was twice as likely because of global warming. "Heat waves are already rewriting race history," said Climate Central in its release. – Agencies

Pak volleyball team moves in Asian Youth Games final

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan volleyball team has made history by qualifying for the final of the 3rd Asian Youth Games 2025, at Bahrain. In an electrifying encounter, Pakistan defeated Indonesia by 3-1 with set scores of 22-25, 25-12, 25-19, 26-24 in the semifinal, securing a well-deserved victory. After losing the opening set, Pakistan bounced back with tremendous energy, discipline, and precision, showcasing high-quality volleyball that left the spectators and opponents equally impressed, said a press release.

The team's performance was powered by an exceptional collective effort. Muhammad Yahya, Muhammad Anas, Ajmal Junaid, and Muhammad Irfan were the standout players of the match, demonstrating exceptional skill, teamwork, and composure under pressure.

With this victory, Pakistan has qualified for the final, where they will face Iran on 29 October 2025 at 9pm (Pakistan Time) at the Isa Bin Rashid Sports City Hall, Bahrain. Ch. Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation, congratulated the players and management on their brilliant performance, said, "Congratulations to Team Pakistan! The way our young players have performed in this tournament is a matter of great pride for the entire nation. The boys have shown their true potential, discipline, and fighting spirit. Reaching the final of the Asian Youth Games is a historic achievement. I am confident they will continue this momentum and bring the Gold Medal home." Sohail Khawar Mir, President of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation, also praised the team's historic journey and the consistent progress of youth volleyball in Pakistan. He said, "This young team has been built through years of hard work and planning by the Pakistan Volleyball Federation. From the U16 Asian Championship to the U18 and U19 World Championships, these players have developed together and proven their worth at every level. – APP

Saudi hosts world's business elite with eyes on gigaprojects, AI

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia welcomes heads of state and the global business elite at a major investment conference this week as it seeks support for its sprawling "gigaprojects" and sky-high AI ambitions. Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, joined by several ministers and more than 150 business leaders, and Syria's interim president are among the guests at the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh. Donald Trump Jr and the heads of US investment giants Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan and BlackRock will also gather at the capital's opulent King Abdulaziz International Conference Center, the former royal palace. The conference kicked off on Monday with closed-door talks, with the main public events starting on Tuesday. FII, dubbed "Davos in the desert", will once again try to lure investment dollars to Saudi Arabia as the world's biggest oil exporter attempts to diversify its economy. The ninth edition, featuring some 20 heads of state, is being held against the backdrop of a ceasefire in Gaza and strong economic growth in the Gulf. At the same time, questions are swirling over Saudi Arabia's gigaprojects – the major developments meant to herald its economic transformation – including NEOM, a futuristic new city priced at \$500 billion. Delays, personnel changes and major design rethinks have reportedly affected NEOM, at a time when declining oil revenues are swelling the Saudi budget deficit. – Agencies

Atletico win at Betis to bounce back from Arsenal drubbing

Real Betis' Spanish midfielder #21 Marc Roca (L) challenges Atletico Madrid's Spanish midfielder #08 Pablo Barrios during the Spanish league football match between Real Betis and Club Atletico de Madrid at the Cartuja Stadium in Seville

SEVILLE, Spain: Atletico Madrid earned a solid 2-0 win at Real Betis on Monday to move fourth in La Liga and bounce back from their Champions League thrashing by Arsenal. Diego Simeone's side lost 4-0 last week in north London but put that defeat behind them with a strong display at La Cartuja stadium, where Betis are playing on a temporary basis. They were able to record only their second clean sheet in their last nine games across all competitions and their first away win of the season.

The coach's son Giuliano Simeone opened the scoring with Alex Baena netting the second before half-time. "This is an important win, hard-fought, and I'm happy," Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak told Movistar.

"I hope we continue like this, away from home, not just at home... it was a great game from the whole team and a big effort." Giuliano Simeone fired the visitors ahead in the opening stages with a neat volley from the edge of the box. Star summer signing Baena curled home his first goal for the club before half-time to double the Rojiblancos' lead. Real Betis were the better team in the second half and hit the crossbar from Abde Ezzalzouli's free-kick, but Atletico's defense held firm. Atletico trail La Liga leaders Real Madrid by eight points, although they are the only team to inflict defeat on their city rivals.

"Our first win on the road and we're very happy for the

great work the team did," said Giuliano Simeone, who dedicated the goal to his recently-born nephew Faustino in his celebration, making the letter F with his fingers. Faustino's birth made Atletico coach Diego Simeone a grandfather. "Nothing changes for me," said the Rojiblancos boss, smiling, while also congratulating his son on his good performance. Manuel Pellegrini's Real Betis, sixth, are now three points behind Atletico. – Agencies



Parties hopeful of break-through...

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but could not find common ground in a second round of talks mediated by Türkiye and Qatar in Istanbul, Afghan and Pakistani sources briefed on the issue said, according to Reuters. A Pakistani security source said the Taliban had been unwilling to commit to rein in the TTP, which operates with impunity inside Afghanistan. The sources added that the third day of the Istanbul talks held on Monday was marred by disagreements, with Pakistan insisting on its proposals while the Afghan Taliban delegation remained constrained by instructions from Kabul. Mediators also recognised Pakistan's demands as reasonable and legitimate, the sources said, adding that the Afghan negotiators themselves, interestingly, believed it was right to accept Islamabad's counterterrorism demands. Security sources said the Afghan Taliban kept taking directions from Kabul and repeatedly consulted the Afghan administration during the talks.

Pakistan rejects Indian media...

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American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and Israel's Mossad. Pakistan has never recognised Israel and always maintained a clear, principled stance in support of Palestinian self-determination, said the ministry. It also clarified that neither the Foreign Office nor the military's media wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), ever supported or announced any Pakistani mission in Gaza. Responding to the Indian media's false claims, the state broadcaster reported that Firstpost quoted references from CNN-News 18, a media outlet that has published unverified information in the past. The deployment of an international peace force in Gaza was part of the US president's plan to help secure a fragile ceasefire, which began this month, halting two years of war between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas.

Israeli PM orders intense strikes...

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This development came after the Israeli military accused Hamas of staging its search for the remains of a Gaza captive's body, one of 28 the group had agreed to hand over under a ceasefire deal. "Yesterday (Monday) Hamas operatives were documented removing body remains from a structure that had been prepared in advance and burying them nearby," the military said in a statement, attaching drone footage which it said showed the act. The aerial footage shows three individuals exiting a damaged Gaza building holding what could be a body wrapped in a white sheet. The individuals then bury the body moments before a bulldozer parked nearby uncovers it again. "The Hamas terrorist organisation summoned representatives of the Red Cross and staged a false display of discovering a deceased hostage's body," the military statement said.

CM Afridi again denied...

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calls from the Sindh chief minister and governor, as well as the Balochistan chief minister, Punjab's leadership had yet to do so. "Instead of congratulations, Punjab has cut off our wheat supply, creating a flour crisis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," he claimed. Afridi said that he had also been congratulated by several political figures and that the corps commander had personally visited him to convey congratulations. Responding to a question about a mega corruption scandal, the KP chief minister said he would comment on it once his cabinet was formed.

Hope, Powell and bowlers guide WI to 16-run win

West Indies Defeat Bangladesh by 16 Runs in T20I Opener as Shai Hope, Rovman Powell Shine with Unbeaten Fifties; Seales, Holder Key in Restricting Hosts' Chase

DHAKA: West Indies made a winning start to the three-match T20I series against Bangladesh with a convincing 16-run win. Unbeaten forties from captain Shai Hope (46) and Rovman Powell (44) ensured that the visitors posted a competitive 165/3 before successfully defending the total by bowling Bangladesh out in 19.4 overs for 149.

Opting to bat first, the Windies batters made a cautious start, managing just six runs from the first two overs. Alick Athanaze enjoyed a couple of reprieves - first after Bangladesh missed a chance to run him out with a direct-hit and then when a misued shot landed safely just beyond the circle. Taskin Ahmed proved wayward in his second over as he bowled three wides and conceded three boundaries that helped the West Indies get cracking. The openers put on a 59-run stand before

Athanaze was out bowled attempting a reverse-sweep off Rishad Hossain in the ninth over. The West Indies struck a six in each of the two following overs before Mustafizur Rahman bowled a tight over. The visitors then suffered a double blow as Taskin returned to dismiss both Brandon King and Sherfane Rutherford off successive deliveries in the 13th over. Skipper Hope kept his side's fight going with back-to-back sixes off Rishad in the following over and it marked the beginning of a crucial partnership for the West Indies. Bangladesh managed to contain the boundaries and accumulate pressure that culminated in Rovman Powell offering a chance to Tanzim Sakib at short third man only for it to be put down. It would prove terribly costly for Bangladesh as Powell cut loose by striking four sixes including a hat-trick of them in the final over.

In pursuit, Bangladesh started positively with Tanzid Hasan striking a six and a four off Akeal Hosen in the first over. His stay was brief, however, as he was dismissed by Jayden Seales in the following over. There was a brief flow of runs before Bangladesh faltered. They lost three further wickets in the powerplay - that of Litton Das, Saif Hassan and Shammim Hossain - derailing their chase early and leaving them 42/4 after the first six overs. The West Indies maintained their grip on the contest as Bangladesh tottered along before losing another wicket in the form of Nurul Hasan in the ninth over. There was a brief delay due to a floodlight outage following which the visitors maintained their dominance. Seales removed Towhid Hridoy, the only batter to offer resistance up until that stage, in the 12th over. There was a fleeting fightback from

Bangladesh whilst Sakib and Nasum Ahmed were at the crease. The former struck a six and two fours off Romario Shepherd in the 14th over before Nasum struck a four and six in the following over off Pierre. The 40-run stand that offered Bangladesh a glimmer of hope was put to an end by Jason Holder who dismissed Sakib in the 16th.

While Bangladesh continued to find boundaries at odd intervals, wickets also continued to tumble before their innings ended in comical fashion with Taskin getting out hit-wicket having smacked a ball for six. Brief Scores: West Indies 165/3 in 20 overs (Shai Hope 46*, Rovman Powell 44*); Taskin Ahmed 2-36 (beat Bangladesh 149 all-out in 19.4 overs (Tanzim Hasan Sakib 33, Towhid Hridoy 20; Jason Holder 3-31, Jayden Seales 3-32) by 16 runs.

Briefs

UN, France slam Israel after attack on UN peacekeepers

DUJARRIC: 'It's not the first time that we feel we've been targeted in different ways by the IDF (including) pointing lasers or warning shots JE-RUSALEM: The United Nations and France on Monday condemned Israeli fire near UN peacekeeping troops in southern Lebanon, after an incident during which peacekeepers neutralized an Israeli reconnaissance drone. "We are very concerned about the incident that occurred on Sunday in which an Israeli drone dropped a grenade in the vicinity of a UNIFIL patrol, and subsequently an Israeli tank fired a shot at the peacekeepers in Kfar Kila in the UNIFIL area of operations," said UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric, referring to the incident in southern Lebanon. "Our colleagues at UNIFIL are in touch with the IDF to protest vehemently what has happened. It's not the first time that we feel we've been targeted in different ways by the IDF (including) pointing lasers or warning shots. It's very, very dangerous," he said. The UN peacekeeping force known as UNIFIL works with the Lebanese army to enforce the ceasefire agreement that ended more than a year of conflict between Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah and Israel. According to a French diplomatic source, the UNIFIL troops involved in Sunday's incident were French.—APP

Jailed leader Marwan can unify Palestinians

RAMALLAH: Jailed Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti's son urged US President Donald Trump to "seize the opportunity" created by the Gaza truce to secure his father's release and revive the two-state solution to the Middle East conflict. Sometimes dubbed the "Mandela of Palestine" by his supporters, Marwan Barghouti, 66, was one of the leaders of the second intifada, the Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s. In June 2004, an Israeli court sentenced him to five life sentences after finding him guilty of involvement in four anti-Israeli attacks. But the heavy sentences have not diminished his popularity among Palestinians. "He's capable and has the track record to unify the Palestinian people," Arab Barghouti said in an interview on Sunday in English in the Israeli-occupied West Bank city of Ramallah. "Someone like him represents a great opportunity for the international community to prove that they are serious about supporting the two-state solution."—APP

Lebanese officials say two killed in Israeli strike

BEIRUT: Two brothers were killed Monday in an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon, officials said, bringing the total toll from such attacks to 13 since Thursday. Israel's air force has stepped up bombings in recent days, saying that it is striking members of Iran-backed Hezbollah and its infrastructure, despite an ongoing truce in Lebanon reached in November 2024. Lebanon's health ministry said in a statement that two brothers were killed in the Israeli strike on the village of Al-Bayyad in the Tyre district. Lebanese official news agency ANI said the two were killed in an attack on a sawmill in Al-Bayyad. Lebanese leaders have accused Israel of attempting to prevent reconstruction in the region, devastated by last year's war, by targeting the machinery including diggers and bulldozers. Three people were killed on Sunday in raids on southern and eastern Lebanon. The Israeli army said it targeted an arms dealer working for Hezbollah and another man who was "aiding the group's attempts to rebuild its capacity for military action." Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem told the group's Al-Manar channel in an interview broadcast Sunday that the group was "prepared to defend itself" if needed. "The possibility of war exists but is uncertain, it depends on their calculations," Qassem said in reference to Israel.—APP



BAKU: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani arrived in Baku to attend parliamentarians conference. Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov is also seen in the picture. DNA

Pak, Azerbaijan vow to deepen parliamentary cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation through regular parliamentary exchanges, mutual visits, and joint initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development, regional stability, and deeper people-to-people linkages. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani and Speaker of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan Sahiba Gafarova, held on the sidelines of the International Parliamentary Conference marking the 30th anniversary of the adoption of Azerbaijan's Constitution, said a news release. At the outset, the Chairman Senate extended warm greetings to the Azerbaijani leadership and expressed deep appreciation for the long-standing and brotherly relations between Pakistan and

Azerbaijan.

He emphasised that the pursuit of peace, security, and prosperity represents not only the aspiration of individual nations but a collective mission of the two countries — united by bonds of faith, history, and enduring friendship. Gilani expressed his pleasure at meeting Speaker Sahiba Gafarova once again, recalling their interaction in Islamabad only days earlier, and conveyed his happiness to be back in Baku.

He referred to the successful Trilateral Conference among Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye recently held in Islamabad as a milestone in regional parliamentary cooperation.

The Chairman highlighted that Pakistan's relationship with Azerbaijan transcends formal diplomacy, rooted in centuries of shared heritage and cultural exchange dating back to the Silk Road era. Referring to the historic Multani Caravanserai in Baku, a 14th-century inn that served as a resting

place for traders from Multan, he noted that this site remains a symbol of the deep historical and cultural ties connecting the peoples of both nations.

He added that his own roots in Multan further strengthen this special connection, and extended an invitation to Speaker Gafarova to visit Multan.

Reflecting on his tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Gilani recalled his meeting with President Ilham Aliyev during the World Economic Forum in Davos (2012), where both sides discussed deepening cooperation in energy, infrastructure development, and agriculture.

He said that the foundation laid during those high-level engagements continues to guide the strong and trusting relationship between the two nations today. He congratulated Azerbaijan for bringing peace and stability to the region through its recent rapprochement with Armenia, and expressed support for ongoing

efforts to promote peace and development in the South Caucasus. The Chairman also extended an invitation to the Azerbaijani leadership to participate in the upcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC) being hosted by the Senate of Pakistan in Islamabad from November 10-12, 2025.

He underscored that the event will provide an important platform to discuss regional peace, security, and development, while further strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation and friendship. Gilani further recalled Pakistan's active engagement with Azerbaijan through multilateral forums such as the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network (NAMPN). He congratulated Azerbaijan on its re-election within NAM's parliamentary structure, emphasizing that this continuity would enhance institutional stability and

strengthen parliamentary cooperation across member states.

Speaker Sahiba Gafarova warmly welcomed Chairman Gilani and noted that this was their second meeting within a month.

She expressed appreciation for the hospitality extended to her delegation during their visit to Pakistan, and thanked Chairman Gilani for attending the celebrations marking the Year of the Constitution and Statehood of Azerbaijan, declared by President Ilham Aliyev following the restoration of full sovereignty over the Karabakh region.

Speaker Gafarova briefed Chairman Gilani on the recent peace and development efforts between Azerbaijan and Armenia and expressed the need for further initiatives to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. Both sides looked forward to Pakistan's participation in upcoming events, to which Chairman Gilani assured his full support.

EU foreign chief for stronger int'l law, support for ICC

LONDON: The EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas has called for renewed global commitment to international law and stronger backing for the International Criminal Court (ICC), warning that the world faces "a broad assault" on the international legal order. Speaking at the College of Europe in Bruges, Kallas said international law "is not perfect and does not solve all problems, but without it, we would sink into an anarchy." Kallas praised signs of progress in international justice, noting that "international law has never been more developed, more codified, and more accessible." She cited the establishment of the "Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression" against Ukraine, the growing number of ICC member states—now 125, with Armenia and Ukraine recently joining—and a new UN Human Rights Council investigation into alleged human rights violations in Afghanistan. However, she also warned of serious challenges. "Eclipsing this positive news is a fifth observation, the dangerous paradox we face today," she said. "A broad assault is going on against the international legal order, human rights, international norms, and the institutions we have established to enforce them.—APP

Pak-Malaysia coop reviewed to boost Pak's meat exports

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan here on Tuesday chaired a meeting at the Ministry of Commerce to review Pakistan-Malaysia cooperation in the meat sector aimed at enhancing Pakistan's meat exports to Malaysia and formulating a comprehensive policy framework for the sector.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries Haroon Akhtar Khan, senior officials from the concerned ministries and representatives of the private sector.

Jam Kamal said that the government was determined to strengthen Pakistan's meat export base and ensure greater access to high-value international markets, particularly Malaysia, which offers significant potential.

He added that the Prime Minister had tasked the committee to develop a comprehensive policy that addresses both short-term export challenges and long-term sectoral reforms.

The Minister emphasized that Malaysia represents a "low-hanging fruit" for Pakistan's meat industry, provided that the country effectively manages price competitiveness, compliance standards, and supply consistency.—APP

Rupee gains 03 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.97 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 281.00. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 282.55 and Rs 282.65, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 93 paise to close at Rs 327.43 against the last day's closing of Rs 326.50, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.84, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound increased by 36 paise to close at Rs 374.46 compared to the previous day's Rs 374.10. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal reduced by 01 paise each to close at Rs 76.49 and Rs 74.92, respectively.—APP

Gazans returning north face deadly risks from unstable ruins: UN

UNITED NATIONS: More than 470,000 movements by civilians heading north inside the Gaza Strip have been recorded since the ceasefire began, according to UN aid coordination office. Many families are returning to shattered neighbourhoods where unstable buildings and unexploded ordnance pose deadly risks, it said. "Water, food and essential services are still desperately needed," OCHA said, as humanitarian partners race to meet soaring demand amid widespread destruction. Meanwhile, aid continues to enter Gaza, with more than 300 truckloads of supplies collected from the Palestinian side of the Kerem Shalom crossing between Friday and Saturday. The cargo included thousands of pallets of wheat flour, canned food, rice and supplies for hot meals, alongside medical equipment, tents, tarpaulins and winter clothing. While data from Sunday's deliveries is still being compiled, the UN confirmed that hygiene kits, post-partum kits and shelter materials entered the Strip. The UN Office for Project Services, which provides comprehensive emergency services (UNOPS), also distributed some 329,000 litres of diesel to keep hospitals, telecommunications, and food operations running. Humanitarian partners, working with 170 community kitchens, have now provided more than one million hot meals — mostly in southern and central Gaza. In Deir al Balah, Khan Younis and Gaza City, 15 UN-supported bakeries are producing tens of thousands of bundles of bread daily, distributed free to shelters and communities across hundreds of sites. Teams are also expanding work to reduce the risk from unexploded ordnance — largely from the Israeli offensive — as people begin returning to their homes. Over the weekend, nearly 3,200 people in central and southern Gaza received safety briefings.—APP

PSX sheds 2,063 more points to close at 160,101

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a continued bearish trend on Tuesday, as the benchmark KSE-100 Index lost 2,062.78 points, showing a negative change of 1.27 percent, closing at 160,101.03 points against 162,163.81 points on the previous trading day. A total of 476 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 113 recorded gains, 324 sustained losses, while 39 remained unchanged. The overall trading volume in the ready market stood at 1,018.74 million shares compared to 1,006.69 million shares on the prior day, whereas the traded value increased to Rs36.94 billion from Rs34.82 billion. Market capitalization fell to Rs18.46 trillion from Rs18.70 trillion. K-Electric Ltd. topped the volume chart with 94.59 million shares, followed by WorldCall Telecom with 83.30 million shares and the Bank of Punjab with 60.38 million shares.—APP

Saudi envoy urges Security Council to end Gaza siege

NEW YORK CITY: Saudi Arabia on Monday reaffirmed its long-standing support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as it called on the UN Security Council to take decisive action to end Israeli settlement activity, lift the blockade on Gaza, and protect holy sites in Jerusalem. Speaking during a meeting of the council on the latest developments in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia's permanent representative to the UN, Abdulaziz Alwasil, said the Kingdom "reiterates its firm position towards the Palestinian people and their just cause," and asked for renewed efforts to achieve a comprehensive and just peace. "My country has been working for years to find a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question," he said. "As a result of the unprecedented suffering to which the Palestinian people have been subjected in the Gaza Strip, the Kingdom has intensified its efforts to restore normalcy, begin reconstruction, and enable the people to live in dignity in their land." He highlighted recent diplomatic initiatives by Saudi Arabia, including the joint Saudi-French conference on the implementation of a two-state solution that took place at the UN in September, which resulted in the New York Declaration. The envoy said that declaration had encouraged several additional countries to officially recognize the State of Palestine. Alwasil also announced the launch of an Emergency Coalition for Financial Sustainability of the Palestinian Authority, a joint initiative by Saudi Arabia and several friendly countries to help address what he described as an "unprecedented financial crisis." The fund, he said, "aims to stabilize the financial condition of the Palestinian Authority and ensure its ability to govern, provide services and maintain security." The ambassador expressed his appreciation for mediation efforts by Qatar, Egypt and Türkiye, as well as the active role of the US president, Donald Trump, in the implementation of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza and the creation of "a comprehensive and just path towards peace." He said these efforts were critical to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians, secure a full Israeli withdrawal, and restore stability. "The Kingdom condemns the Israeli Knesset's preliminary approval of two bills that aim to impose Israeli sovereignty over the occupied West Bank and to legalize Israeli sovereignty over an illegal colonial settlement," Alwasil continued. He reaffirmed Saudi Arabia's "complete rejection of all settlement and expansionist violations adopted by the Israeli occupation authorities.—DNA

Lebanese army walks political tightrope to disarm Hezbollah

BEIRUT: Lebanon's army has blown up so many Hezbollah arms caches that it has run out of explosives, as it races to meet a year-end deadline to disarm the Shiite militia in the south of the country under a ceasefire agreed with Israel, two sources told Reuters. The explosives shortage, which has not been previously reported, has not stopped the army quickening the pace of inspection missions to search for hidden weapons in the south, near Israel, the two said, one of whom is a security source and the other a Lebanese official. It would have been unimaginable for Lebanon's military to embark on such a task at the zenith of Iran-backed Hezbollah's power just a few years ago, and many observers were skeptical even after the ceasefire agreement. But Hezbollah was hit hard by Israel's war last year, which killed thousands of fighters and the upper echelons of both the military and political wings, including leader Hassan Nasrallah. The war also killed more than 1,100 women and children and destroyed swathes of Lebanon's south and east. Hezbollah was hit hard by Israel's war last year, which killed thousands of fighters and the upper echelons of both the military and political wings, including leader Hassan Nasrallah. President Donald Trump's deputy Middle

East envoy Morgan Ortagus is in Beirut this week to discuss momentum on disarmament with Lebanese officials. As they wait for US deliveries of explosives charges and other military equipment, Lebanese troops are now sealing off sites they find instead of destroying them, said one of the sources and two other people briefed on the army's recent activities. Their searches yielded nine new arms caches in September, the two other briefed officials said. The security source said dozens of tunnels used by Hezbollah had also been sealed and more soldiers were being steadily recruited to deploy to the south. Reuters spoke to 10 people including Lebanese officials, security sources, diplomats and a Hezbollah official, all of whom said the army expects to complete its sweep of the south by the year's end. Meeting the deadline would be a considerable feat for an institution once unable or unwilling to stop Hezbollah rebuilding a military presence near Israel after a previous war in 2006 — and for a country in which Hezbollah was once the dominant political force. Progress in the rest of the country looks far less certain. Despite its advances, the army wants to avoid inflaming tensions and to buy time for Lebanon's politicians to reach a consensus about the group's arsenal in other

parts of the country, a second Lebanese official who is close to Hezbollah and two security sources said.

It has not published images of the work destroying weapons caches, or even said the weapons belong to Hezbollah.

Under the November 2024 ceasefire that ended more than a year of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, Lebanon agreed that only state security forces should bear arms in the country. That would mean fully disarming Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has publicly committed to the ceasefire but is not a formal signatory. It insists the disarmament as mentioned in the text only applies only to the south of Lebanon.

On September 5, the cabinet adopted a more detailed five-phase plan for imposing the state monopoly on arms — starting in the south and gradually moving north and east, the security sources and the second Lebanese official said.

The army said it would clear the south by December, without committing to a timeline for the rest of the country. The government has said the plan is contingent on Israel halting air strikes that have continued despite the ceasefire. All the sources said the army would have to navigate treacherous political terrain to achieve full disarmament.—APP

Briefs

**Turkiye,
UK sign
eurofighter
typhoon
fighter
jet deal**

DNA

ANKARA: President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) Keir Starmer signed a cooperation agreement concerning Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jets, in a move that strengthens bilateral military partnership and enhances the capabilities of the Turkish Air Force. Signed at the Presidential Complex in Ankara on Monday, following a closed meeting between Erdoğan and Starmer, the agreement aims to enhance defense and military cooperation and expand industrial partnerships in the aerospace sector. At a joint press conference, President Erdoğan said that this cooperation opens the door for joint defense projects. The Turkish President deemed the agreement a new milestone in Turkish-UK strategic relations as close allies, noting his intention to increase trade volume with the UK to USD 30 billion in the first phase, and then to USD 40 billion. For his part, Prime Minister Starmer said that the UK and Türkiye were today announcing a strategic partnership and the first framework for bilateral cooperation between the two nations. He affirmed that the Eurofighter Typhoon cooperation agreement would strengthen security within NATO and raise the level of bilateral collaboration in defense industries.

**‘Xi-Trump
interactions
most valuable
strategic asset’**

DNA

ISTANBUL: The interactions and mutual respect between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump have become the “most valuable strategic asset” in bilateral ties, the country’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi said. Wang told this to US State Secretary Marco Rubio during a phone conversation, ahead of a summit between Xi and Trump. Wang expressed his hopes that China and the US “will work in the same direction, make preparations for high-level interactions, and create conditions for the development of bilateral relations,” according to a statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The State Department separately said the top diplomats “discussed the importance of the U.S.-China relationship,” as well as the upcoming Trump-Xi sit-down. The phone call came as Trump is set to meet Xi in South Korea, according to the White House. The two leaders will visit South Korea for an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

**Romania,
Ukraine
to expand
military
cooperation**

BUCHAREST: Romanian Defense Minister Ionut Mosteanu and Ukraine’s First Deputy Defense Minister Sergiy Boyev have discussed development of military-technical cooperation, the Romanian Defense Ministry said in a statement. “During the meeting, the delegations reviewed the key points of multilateral assistance that Romania provides to Ukraine and discussed ways to expand cooperation in the field of defense industry, joint military research projects, as well as training and interaction programs between the armed forces of the two countries,” the statement said. Parties agreed to intensify contacts at the technical and institutional levels, and to meet periodically to discuss defense industry issues, designed to stimulate joint projects and partnerships between companies. — APP

Pakistan, Bangladesh revive long-stalled economic ties

Islamabad, Dhaka to establish direct air connectivity; Pakistan proposes use of KPT as trade gateway for Bangladesh



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Bangladesh have revived their long-stalled economic partnership after two decades, agreeing to expand cooperation in trade, investment, and regional connectivity during the 9th Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting held in Dhaka,

The News reported on Tuesday. The session — the first since 2005 — was co-chaired by Pakistan’s Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and Adviser for Finance to the Government of Bangladesh Dr Salehuddin. Both sides signed the Agreed Minutes of the JEC, which outlined broad cooperation in trade, energy, industry, agriculture, education, health, tourism, IT, and

climate change. A major breakthrough came with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Halal Trade Cooperation between the Pakistan Halal Authority and the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute, opening new opportunities for joint certification and exports of Halal products to global markets. In a significant offer to strengthen logistics

links, Pakistan proposed the use of Karachi Port Trust (KPT) as a regional trade gateway for Bangladesh’s commerce with China and Central Asian countries. Both countries also agreed to work toward establishing direct air connectivity, which is seen as crucial for boosting tourism and business exchanges. Pakistan announced the creation of a Pakistan-Bangladesh Knowledge Corridor, including 500 fully funded scholarships for Bangladeshi students, along with an expansion of technical training slots under the Pakistan Technical Assistance Programme from five to 25. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in medical and religious tourism, promote cultural exchanges, and set up Joint Working Groups on trade, maritime affairs, and information technology to ensure sustained collaboration. A Joint Working Group on Trade will meet soon to explore a concessionary trade arrangement and mechanisms for facilitating two-way commerce. The meeting, held in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect, reaffirmed the shared commitment of both nations to deepening economic integration and regional stability. Federal Minister Malik thanked the government of Bangladesh for its hospitality, expressing optimism that the renewed engagement would pave the way for a new era of Pakistan-Bangladesh economic cooperation.

Pakistan expresses solidarity with Türkiye

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday expressed solidarity with the people of Türkiye as 6.1 magnitude earthquake struck Sındırgı district in western Türkiye’s Balıkesir province late Monday. “Pakistan stands in full solidarity with the people of Türkiye following the 6.1 magnitude earthquake,” Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar wrote on his X timeline. He said that Pakistan stood ready to extend humanitarian assistance and aid in search and rescue efforts. “Our prayers are with all those affected. May the region recover swiftly and with resilience,” he remarked. — Agencies

Japanese PM to travel to South Korea

DNA

TOKYO: New Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi will travel to South Korea later this week to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, where she is likely to engage in bilateral meetings with participants, the Japanese government said Tuesday. Takaichi, who took office last week, will visit South Korea for three days from Thursday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said, with a diplomatic source adding she is expected to hold her first meeting with President Lee Jae Myung on the day of her arrival. At the APEC summit, Takaichi will stress the need to uphold a rules-based, free and fair economic order and reaffirm Japan’s commitment to stronger growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, Kihara said at a regular press conference. All eyes will be on whether Takaichi, known for her hard-line stance toward China, will hold her first talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the APEC summit in Gyeongju starting Friday. Xi, who plans to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump later this week, has not sent a congratulatory message on Takaichi’s inauguration, despite having done so for her recent predecessors, the source said. Takaichi and Trump held their first summit in Tokyo on Tuesday.

One-third of Pakistan's taxpayers declare zero income in returns

FBR identifies nearly one million filers who have declared less income in their returns

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Nearly one-third of Pakistan’s tax filers, around 1.7 million individuals, have declared zero taxable income. This flood of “nil” returns, from a total of 5.5 million submissions, presents a critical challenge to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Ironically, the FBR has identified nearly one million return filers who have declared less income in their returns for the current fiscal year compared to the last. This has raised alarm within the organisation, which is now preparing major plans to conduct audits to detect tax evasion. “We have found 977,000 filed returns where the declared income was shown as less than in the last fiscal year.” “Certain exporters are showing losses in their returns. The FBR has decided to dispatch tax notices to them after the deadline of October 31, requesting them to revise their returns or the law will take its course,” top official sources confirmed while talking to the publication. So far, the FBR has received around 5.5 million returns, out of which more than 1.7 million declared nil or null income. “We have obtained very crucial information even through such returns, and it will now be used to expand

the narrow tax base and turn this information into tax revenue,” the sources said. Official sources stated that the FBR has already sent three messages to return filers, including one reminding taxpayers to file returns. After the October 31 deadline, the FBR will dispatch a nudging message to all those showing less income than in the previous fiscal year. The FBR has hired 2,000 auditors and will conduct an effective audit for the current fiscal year.

When contacted on Monday, FBR Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial said that the FBR sent messages to 853,000 return filers, informing them that the tax authority possessed data of their transactions and other details, and that they must file their income tax returns keeping this information in mind. The FBR also included an assumption-based income assessment in its message, advising filers to proceed cautiously as the FBR would scrutinise returns and take action against potential tax dodgers. “The FBR possesses a lot of data and information and will proceed against those who choose to hide their income,” the FBR Chairman said, adding that the organisation would send two notices before performing an ex parte assessment against those who do not respond. One tax official said that they were not concerned about “no income” filings, as they have evidence of them making significant financial transactions, and the law will proceed against them. The sources said the FBR extended the deadline for filing tax returns to October 31, mainly because the tax authority was expecting three million more returns.

Indian refiners pause new Russian oil orders US, EU, and UK impose a raft of sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine

NEWS DESK

HYDERABAD: Indian refiners have not placed new orders for Russian oil purchases since sanctions were imposed, as they await clarity from the government and suppliers, sources told Reuters on Tuesday. Some refiners are tapping the spot markets to meet their crude oil needs, said the sources, who did not want to be named as they are not authorised to speak to the media. State-run Indian Oil has issued a tender for the purchase of oil, while conglomerate Reliance Industries has boosted purchases from spot markets, according to sources. The European Union, the UK, and the US have imposed

a raft of sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine, including fresh US sanctions on Thursday that target Russia’s two top oil producers, Lukoil and Rosneft. Indian refiners are poised to sharply curtail imports of Russian oil to comply with the new US sanctions, Reuters reported on Thursday, potentially removing a major hurdle to a trade deal with the US. Last week, Reliance, the top Indian buyer of Russian oil, said it will abide by the sanctions while maintaining its relationship with current oil suppliers. Reuters also reported that the firm plans to stop importing oil from Rosneft. “We have not placed orders yet for fresh cargoes and have cancelled some that were booked from traders with links to the sanctioned entities,” said one of the sources. “We need to ensure that our purchases are not linked to sanctioned entities as banks will not facilitate payments,” a third source said. A separate source said his firm is waiting to see if it can get cargoes from non-sanctioned traders or entities. India bought 1.9 million barrels per day in the first nine months of 2025, or 40% of Russia’s total exports, according to the International Energy Agency. India’s Russian oil imports between April and September fell 8.4% on year due to narrower discounts and tighter supplies, with refiners seeking more oil from the Middle East and the US, according to trade sources and shipping data.

Pakistan reaffirms ‘ironclad’ support for one-China policy

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has firmly reaffirmed its adherence to the one-China policy at a seminar held at UN Headquarters in New York, saying it underscored that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Peoples Republic that can never be separated from the motherland. “As an all-weather strategic cooperative partner and an ironclad friend, Pakistan has always adhered firmly to the One-China Principle - a position that enjoys universal recognition and legitimacy within the international community,” Pakistani Ambassador Asim Ahmad said to some 40 diplomats and academics attending the seminar commemorating the 80th Anniversary of Taiwan’s Recovery in 1945 and Upholding the Authority of General Assembly Resolution 2758. The event was hosted by the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations. Under the terms of the General Assembly Resolution 2758, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority on 25 October 1971, Taiwan was expelled from the UN and the lawful rights of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) restored. The resolution recognized the representatives of the PRC government as the “only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations.” The then Pakistan delegation, led by the country’s star diplomat Agha Shahi, played a leading role in the campaign that restored the inalienable rights of China at the U.N. 23 years after its liberation. In his comments, Ambassador Asim Ahmad, the Pakistani envoy, called it a “seminal event” that heralded a new era in world politics and multilateral diplomacy that reaffirmed that the legitimate

aspirations of peoples for dignity, freedom, and respect can neither be denied nor delayed indefinitely. “The restoration of China’s legitimate rights at the United Nations imbued this Organization with renewed strength, vitality, and legitimacy,” he said. “Since its rightful return, China, acting as a responsible Member State and a major world power, has played a commendable role in upholding international peace and security and in advancing the purposes and principles of the UN Charter,” the Pakistani envoy added. “We remain confident that, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the goal of peaceful reunification will be realized, in accordance with the aspirations of the Chinese leadership and people.” Amid the unprecedented and multifaceted challenges the world faces, ranging from disrupted global supply chains to the eruption of new geopolitical flashpoints and, most critically, the erosion of faith in multilateral diplomacy itself, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said that under the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping, China is working actively to address these interlocking crises. “His far-sighted approach has guided China’s peaceful rise on the global stage and positioned it as a champion of development, stability, and win-win cooperation.” China’s steadfast commitment to international cooperation and its vigorous efforts to restore multilateral diplomacy to its full vitality were a matter of deep satisfaction, he said. “We are confident that China will continue to inject renewed dynamism into the United Nations and play a leading role in reinvigorating multilateral diplomacy. In the pursuit of this noble objective, China will always have Pakistan’s firm support and cooperation.”

Lahore becomes world's most polluted city

Karachi ranked third for “unhealthy” AQI; New Delhi placed at second position with “very unhealthy” air quality

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Citizens of Lahore continue to reel under dense smog, driven by worsening air pollution, with the Swiss air quality monitor, IQAir, reporting the city’s air quality index (AQI) recorded at 329, “hazardous” at around 9am. The metropolis’s AQI had shot up to as high as 424 earlier in the morning, with the level of deadly particulate matter (PM2.5) pollutants, the fine particulate matter in the air that causes the most damage to health, reaching 287 µg/m³. The Punjab’s capital is not the only city on the list as the country’s financial hub, Karachi, ranked third with an AQI of 174, which is termed “unhealthy”. Meanwhile, India’s capital, New Delhi, was ranked as the second most polluted city with an AQI of 276, which is termed “very unhealthy”. 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. Every winter, much of South Asia experiences a surge in pollution as cold air traps fine particles near the surface. Emissions from transport, factories, construction dust and crop residue burning all contribute to the dense smog that lingers for weeks. Health experts warn that prolonged exposure to such high pollution levels can lead to severe health issues, including stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and chronic respiratory illnesses — a growing concern for millions across South Asia.

General Practice HOSPITAL

We Are OPEN

General Practice Hospital is a state-of-the-art healthcare facility offering comprehensive medical services to the community. Our hospital is equipped with advanced diagnostic and treatment modalities, including specialized OPD clinics, an urgent care unit, a modern radiology unit, well-equipped IPD rooms, operation theatres, an on-site laboratory for precise diagnostics, dialysis services, and comfortable inpatient wards. We are dedicated to providing quality, easily accessible, and patient-centred healthcare in a welcoming and professional environment.

OPD

LABORATORY

PHARMACY

X-RAY

MRI

CT SCAN

ULTRASOUND

ENDOSCOPY

CARDIOLOGY

NEUROLOGY

ONCOLOGY

NEPHROLOGY

DERMATOLOGY

GYNACOLOGY

PAEDIATRICS

GERIATRICS

REHABILITATION

MENTAL HEALTH

PALLIATIVE CARE

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ORGAN DONATION

BLOOD BANK

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PICU

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PERINATOLOGY

MATERNITY

FETAL MONITORING

ANTENATAL CARE

POSTNATAL CARE

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

ADOLESCENT HEALTH

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

MEN'S HEALTH

WOMEN'S HEALTH

FAMILY PLANNING

CONTRACEPTION

INFERTILITY TREATMENT

SURGACY

IVF

EGG DONATION

SPERM DONATION

SURROGATE MOTHER

GESTATIONAL CARRIER

SURROGATE PARENT

SURROGATE GRANDPARENT

SURROGATE GREAT-GRANDPARENT

SURROGATE GREAT-GRANDCHILD

SURROGATE GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER

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SURROGATE GREAT-GRANDCHILD (100TH GEN)

General Physician Services

Maternity

Gynaecology & Women's Health

Dermatology & Aesthetics

General Surgery

Urology

Paediatrics & Child Health

Plastic Surgery

Eye, Nose & Throat

Cardiology

Neurology

Nutrition, Dietetics & Lifestyle

Technology

Dermatology & Skin Medicine

Optometry

Dental & Maxillofacial Surgery

Psychiatry

Gastroenterology

Pharmacology & Rehabilitation

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