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Finance Minister says IMF deal to boost Pakistan economy

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Senate Chairman attends sports event in Attock

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Bilawal Bhutto says

PML-N sought support on the 27th Amendment

The 27th amendment is reported to target further judicial reform: the creation of a separate constitutional court, transferring jurisdiction over certain matters from the Supreme Court, and giving the executive greater authority over magistrates and judicial staffing

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, has disclosed that the PML leader headed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had met with the President Asif Zardari requesting his support on the proposed 27th amendment. According to the PML-N side, the amendment proposal includes several key components: the establishment of a new constitutional court, wide executive magistrate authority, transfer of judges across jurisdictions, removal of protections for the provincial share in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, several amendments to existing constitutional provisions for the judiciary and provinces. Both Bilawal and Asif Ali Zardari listened to the PML-N demands and are expected to take the matter back to PPP leadership for deliberation. The meeting signals renewed momentum behind constitutional reform after the controversial 26th amendment. Bilawal has convened meeting of the CEC on November 6 to further discuss this matter. The 26th amendment, passed in 2024, introduced major changes in judicial appointment processes, including changing how the Chief Justice of Pakistan is selected. The 27th amendment is reported to target further judicial reform: the creation of a separate constitutional court, transferring jurisdiction over certain matters from the Supreme Court, and giving the executive greater authority over magistrates and judicial staffing. It also touches on provincial-federal financial issues: altering the NFC Award structure and potentially

Continued on Page 06

PTI rejects proposed 27th Amendment

Asad Qaiser warns of "chaos in country" if "NFC Award was tampered with" in proposed amendm

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Asad Qaiser on Monday rejected the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment, saying the tweak would "abolish the independence of the judiciary". PML-N formally approached the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for their support in introducing the amendment, which would establish a Constitutional Court, and make certain changes to the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. Speaking exclusively to Geo News, Qaiser said that his party was ready to hold talks with PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on the "restoration of the Constitution" and the NFC Award. However, he said that the PTI was against the establishment of a Constitutional Court, similar to its opposition to the constitutional benches in the 26th Amendment.

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Khanpur Dam SC issues notice to KP on water contamination

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's constitutional bench on Monday issued a notice to the Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a suo motu case pertaining to the supply of contaminated water from Khanpur Dam. The five-member bench, headed by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, Justice Shakeel Ahmed and Justice Aamer Farooq, heard the matter. During the proceedings, WAPDA's counsel Hasan Raza informed the court that Khanpur Dam is the sole source of drinking water for around five million people. He stated that the number of boats operating in the dam has drastically increased – from 20 in the past to the present 326 – due to recreational activities and resorts, which has led to rising pollution levels. He added that the district administration continues to facilitate these activities. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail remarked that the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) is also present and should formulate certain rules in this regard.

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Pak a natural maritime bridge between East and West, says Ahsan

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Monday termed Pakistan a "natural maritime bridge" between the East and the West as he inaugurated the second edition of Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC) in Karachi. The event is being held from today to November 6 (Thursday) at Karachi's Expo Centre, and will see the participation of 45 countries, including Pakistan. It has been organised under the overall responsibility of the Pakistan Navy and with the support and patronage of federal and provincial departments. Addressing PIMEC, Iqbal highlighted that Pakistan had a unique geography as the regions of South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa converged here, which positioned the country as a "natural maritime bridge

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ISTANBUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar held a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of Türkiye, H.E. Hakan Fidan, on the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting on Gaza in Istanbul. – DNA

Dar meets Hakan Fidan

Pakistan, Türkiye reaffirm to support peace in Gaza

Senator Ishaq Dar commended Türkiye's proactive diplomatic efforts in advocating for peace and justice for the people of Palestine, while Foreign Minister Fidan appreciated Pakistan's consistent stance on the issue and its solidarity with the Palestinian people

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISTANBUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar held a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of Türkiye, H.E. Hakan Fidan, on the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting on Gaza in Istanbul. During the meeting, both ministers expressed satisfaction over the steady and positive trajectory of Pakistan-Türkiye relations, noting the strong foundation of friendship and cooperation between the two brotherly nations. They reaffirmed their shared resolve to further deepen collaboration across political, economic, and defence sectors for the mutual benefit of both countries.

Continued on Page 06

Israel returns 45 Palestinian bodies

DNA

ISLAMAD: Israel returned the bodies of 45 Palestinians to Gaza, bringing the total number handed over under the ceasefire deal to 270, the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory said. Under a ceasefire deal brokered by US President Donald Trump, Israel was to turn over the bodies of 15 Palestinians for every deceased Israeli returned. Israel confirmed on Monday that remains handed over by Hamas the day before

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

3 terrorists killed in KP

DNA

PESHAWAR: Security forces neutralised three terrorists belonging to Indian-proxy, Fitna al-Khawarij, including two Afghan nationals, during two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Monday. The operations were conducted in KP's North Waziristan and Tank districts a day ago. In North Waziristan's Esham, security personnel picked up the movement of a group of khawarij, who were trying to infiltrate through the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The troops effectively engaged the group of terrorists and killed them via a precise and skilful engagement, the military's media wing said. One of the killed terrorists was identified as "Kharji Qasim", an Afghan national, who was actively serving in the Afghan Border Police, it said.

Court unhappy with Punjab govt

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday expressed serious concern over rising air pollution and showed dissatisfaction with the Punjab government's anti-smog measures. During the hearing of a set of petitions on environmental issues, Justice Shahid Kareem remarked that around 70% of Lahore's pollution is caused by transport, urging that instead of blaming others, "we must fix ourselves." The court ordered strict action against smoke-emitting vehicles and summoned the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore to appear in person. Justice Kareem also questioned the effectiveness of anti-smog guns, asking what purpose they serve in the current situation.

Re-organization of PTI

PTI's Salman meets Qureshi in hospital to discuss 'political situation'

PTI's secretary general visits party's vice chairman at hospital in Lahore to inquire latter's health

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Salman Akram Raja visited the party's vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi at a hospital in Lahore and inquired after him, The News reported on Monday citing sources. Qureshi was recently shifted to a hospital. Raja held a brief meeting with him during the visit. PTI leaders Shaukat Basra and Zaheer Babar accompanied him. According to the party sources, Raja and Qureshi also discussed the current political situation. It is worth noting that a few days earlier, former PTI leaders, including Fawad Chaudhry, had also met Qureshi.

After that meeting, the former leaders criticised the current PTI leadership and announced plans to meet the PTI founder and launch a campaign for his release. Ismail, while speaking in an interview lashed out at the current PTI leadership, accusing it of neglecting Imran Khan, who has been behind bars since 2023. Ismail, a close aide of PTI founding chairman and former Sindh governor, had parted ways from the party amid the crackdown following May 9, 2023, riots, during which military installations were attacked following the arrest of Imran, the former prime minister. "I went to meet him because I have great respect for him. I also met other imprisoned PTI leaders," he added.

India may stage false flag operation via sea route: ISPR

DG says certain KP areas being used for opium cultivation; 6200 intelligence-based operations conducted so far

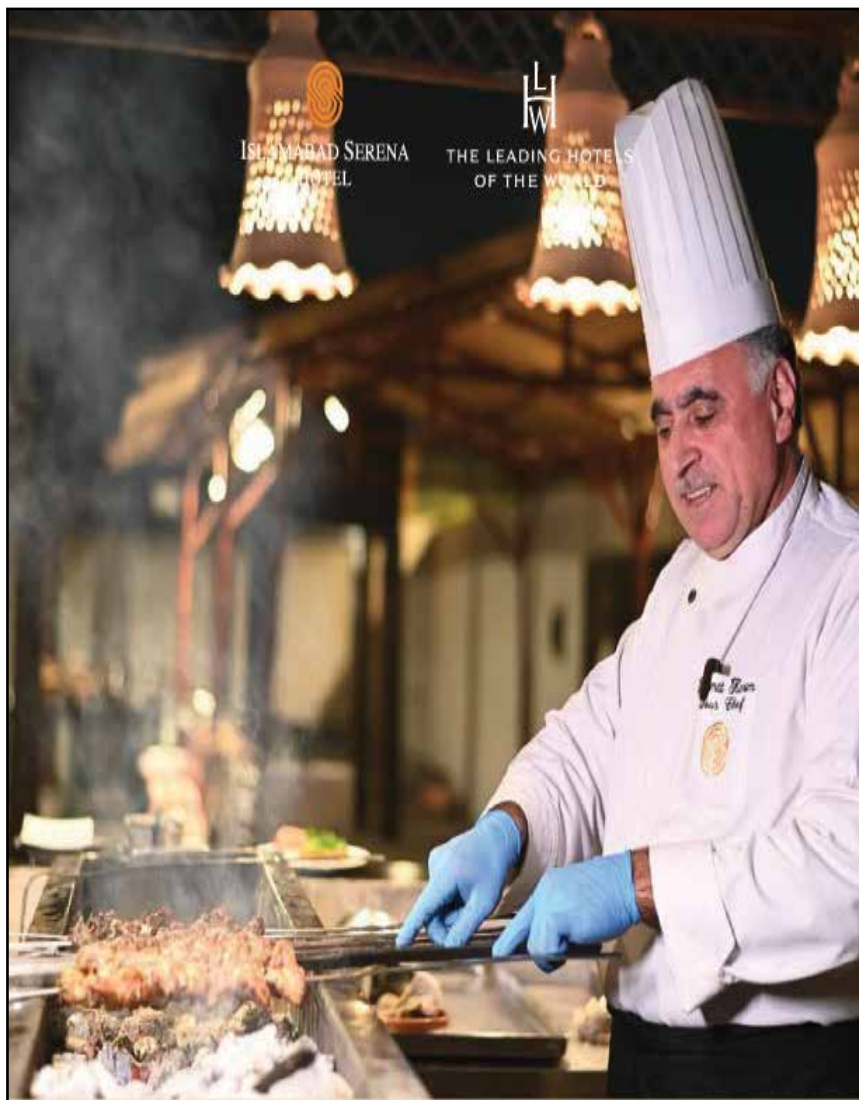
DNA

DIRECTOR-General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry on Monday categorically rejected the Afghan Taliban regime's allegation of allowing the US drones to carry out attacks in Afghanistan. "This allegation is false," said Lt Gen Chaudhry during a closed-door briefing to senior journalists, adding that Pakistan has not allowed the US to launch attacks on Afghanistan from its soil. The military spokesman spoke to the country's senior journalists today, during which he briefed them about the status of Pakistan-Afghanistan talks, cross-border attacks, counterterrorism operations, financial hubs of the terrorists, and India's nefarious plans. Lt Gen Chaudhry further clarified that Islamabad and Washington have no such agreement which allows the latter to attack Afghanistan. This briefing was conducted amid a fragile ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which was extended after days-long Istanbul talks from October 25 to 30, where both sides also reached an understanding to establish a monitoring and verification mechanism to ensure peace and penalise any violator. In the next round of talks, Islamabad and Kabul would finalise operational details of the joint framework in Istanbul on



November 6. The DG ISPR told journalists Pakistan had killed numerous cross-border terrorists, many identified as Afghan nationals, and highlighted extensive opium cultivation funding militancy. The military spokesman outlined a series of recent operations and allegations, saying that in clashes over the past three to four months, 112 foreign fighters were killed and that roughly 60% of the militants were Afghan nationals. "In these actions, 206 Afghan army soldiers were also reported killed," he added. The spokesman said counter-narcotics activity formed a key part of the campaign. He said that KP terrorism is linked to a narco-economy. "Drones, the ANF and the Frontier Corps destroyed poppy fields in the Tirah valley," the DG ISPR said, pointing to operations that targeted cultivation and processing sites. He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had some 12,000 acres under poppy cultivation and that profits ranged from Rs1.8 million to Rs3.2 million per acre. "Local politicians and others are involved in this cultivation," he warned. The military spokesman said Islamabad's problem stemmed from the Afghan Taliban's failure to honour the Doha agreement. "Taliban promised a Loya Jirga and a representative government in Doha, but they have not fulfilled that promise," he said, urging political settlement while keeping open the option of further measures. "We want peace and prefer negotiations; if talks fail, we will consider other means," he added. The statement also accused elements in Afghanistan of providing safe havens for militants from Balochistan and of relocating fighters into civilian areas to use them as human shields.

Continued on Page 06



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Musadiq, CVF delegation discuss climate prosperity plan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Dr Musadiq Malik, met a delegation from the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF-20) on Monday to discuss Pakistan's forthcoming Climate Prosperity Plan, which is due to be unveiled at COP30. During the meeting, the delegation outlined the plan's key objectives aimed at steering Pakistan towards a climate-resilient, low-carbon, and inclusive economy. Discussions also focused on ongoing green initiatives and climate adaptation projects currently under implementation across the country. Both sides explored avenues to enhance cooperation in promoting green investment, improving project execution, and fostering innovation and knowledge exchange. Dr Malik and the CVF representatives agreed to strengthen coordination ahead of COP30 to ensure that Pakistan's climate priorities, along with those of other vulnerable nations, are effectively represented in global climate negotiations. —APP

Anti-encroachment operation carried out in Bhurban

RAWALPINDI: The Murree District Administration has carried out a major anti-encroachment operation in Aliot, and in Kashmiri Bazaar and Kohsar Market in Bhurban. According to a district administration spokesman on Monday, teams removed encroachments, and illegal constructions and structures during the operation. The spokesman said the anti-encroachment drive had been under way across the hill station on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi. —APP

Kudi invites Saudi minister to invest in different projects

KARACHI: Governor of Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori invited Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics Engineer Saleh bin Nasser AlJasser to invest in the Karachi-Hyderabad Bullet Train, Circular Railway, and transport sector, emphasizing that Pakistan's modern port and logistics infrastructure offers vast opportunities for investors. He expressed these views during a meeting with the Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics held here. The meeting focused on enhancing bilateral relations and discussed projects related to transport, logistics, the bullet train, circular railway, and public transportation in detail. The Governor Sindh said that the Karachi-Hyderabad Bullet Train and Circular Railway projects will provide citizens with modern, fast, and safe travel facilities. He added that a mega city like Karachi requires at least 11,000 buses to meet its public transport needs. Tessori assured the delegation that the Governor's Office would extend all possible facilitation to Saudi investors. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Models appears on stage during Fashion Show and Award ceremony at Pakistan National Council of Arts in Federal Capital.

Quality education, digitization top priority: Ayub

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Education Arshad Ayub Khan has said that ensuring the provision of quality education, improving the results of government schools, providing adequate facilities and equipping teachers with training compatible with modern educational requirements are among his top priorities. He said the entire education system will be fully digitized to enhance efficiency and transparency. The Minister stated that comprehensive reforms will be introduced in the examination system to eliminate rote learning and to implement SLO-based (Student Learning Outcomes) examinations. To achieve this, students from primary to eighth grade will be gradually prepared under the new learning approach. He said special focus will be given to teachers' training programs, utilizing the expertise and resources of DPD and DCTE for this purpose. He expressed these views while receiving a detailed briefing on the performance and initiatives of the Education Department. —APP

Green Line Phase-II to be completed in one year: Ahsan

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Monday said the second phase of the Green Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Karachi will be completed within a year, stressing that the city's heritage and existing infrastructure must be protected during construction. During a visit to the project site, the Minister was briefed on concerns raised by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) regarding NOCs, service road diversions, relocation of a 12-inch water line and drainage issues. Iqbal assured that any infrastructure removed during development would be rebuilt and called for stronger coordination between KMC, KWSB, PIDCL and other relevant departments. He highlighted that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had launched the first phase of the Green Line at a cost of Rs. 29 billion, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif initiated the second phase, a 1.8-kilometre extension worth Rs5.5 billion, which had been delayed due to legal issues that have now been resolved. Ahsan Iqbal said three new stations are being added under the extension, with emphasis on preserving Karachi's cultural character. He added that the Sindh chief minister would consult the Karachi mayor to address KMC's reservations. "We want to complete this project as soon as possible so Karachiites get maximum transport relief," he said, adding that Karachi was the only city to receive such major transit infrastructure as a federal initiative. The Minister also reviewed progress on other key projects, including the K-IV water scheme, which he noted was now being fully funded by the federal government after initially being a joint venture with Sindh. He said efforts were underway to align major infrastructure works including K-IV, the N-25 and the Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway to improve connectivity. He mentioned that feasibility work with Chinese partners was in progress to remodel the Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway, while road infrastructure around Karachi Port Trust would be upgraded to support 24/7 port operations. Referring to the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway, the minister alleged the project was derailed by leadership in 2018, causing costs to triple. However, he said financing from international banks had been secured and construction would resume soon. Ahsan Iqbal reiterated the federal government's focus on consultation and coordination, saying the Pakistan Infrastructure Development Company Limited (PIDCL), successor to the Public Works Department, would oversee all federal development projects moving forward. Provincial Minister Jam Khan Shoro, MNA Syed Amin-ul-Haque and project officials accompanied the Minister during the visit. —DNA

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Rescue 1122 responded to 7,147 emergencies in Oct

He concluded by reaffirming Rescue 1122's unwavering commitment to serving the public with professionalism, dedication, and compassion, especially during the challenging winter months

MUZAFFARGARH: District Emergency Officer Engineer Ubaidullah Khan released the monthly performance report for Rescue 1122 Muzaffargarh for October 2025, highlighting the service's efficient emergency response and ongoing efforts to enhance public safety across the district. According to the report, the Rescue 1122 Control Room received 7,147 emergency calls during the month, with the service maintaining an average response time of just seven minutes to all reported incidents. The breakdown of emergencies included 930 road traffic accidents, 4,485 medical emergencies, 26 fire incidents, 83 crime-related emergencies, 2 drowning cases, 4 building collapses, and 561 miscellaneous emergencies. Rescue 1122 teams were able to rescue 7,410 individuals, providing first aid to 3,455 people on-site.

A total of 2,923 injured persons were shifted to hospitals after receiving initial medical assistance. Unfortunately, 76 individuals lost their lives at the scene despite the efforts of the rescue teams. Engineer Ubaidullah Khan also pointed out that with the onset of winter, the region has seen an increase in smog and fog conditions, which pose serious risks to commuters. He appealed to citizens to take extra precautions to prevent accidents and ensure community safety. He advised everyone to always wear seat belts and use fog lights when driving, to drive cautiously, and avoid overspeeding, especially in low-visibility conditions. He stressed the importance of maintaining a safe distance from other vehicles and avoiding unnecessary overtaking in foggy weather. He also recommended refraining from travel

during dense fog unless absolutely necessary. Additionally, he cautioned against using gas heaters improperly, advising people to switch them off before sleeping and place them outside the room. The safe use of mosquito coils or mats, away from flammable materials, was also emphasized, along with the installation of gas geysers in open areas instead of enclosed spaces to prevent the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Engineer Khan further urged citizens to be mindful of Rescue 1122 ambulances, giving them the right of way to ensure they can reach emergency scenes quickly and save lives. He concluded by reaffirming Rescue 1122's unwavering commitment to serving the public with professionalism, dedication, and compassion, especially during the challenging winter months. —APP

CDA chief inspects Assan Khidmat Markaz with Azerbaijani delegation

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, visited the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" Building in G-9 on Monday along with a delegation from Azerbaijan and relevant officers. During the visit, Chairman CDA and the Azerbaijani delegation reviewed the model of the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" in detail. While briefing on the progress of the construction activities of the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" the relevant officers informed that the center is being established in Islamabad with the cooperation of Azerbaijan's State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations. The primary objective of establishing the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" is to ensure the provision of various services and facilities to citizens under one roof. The briefing highlighted that work is being carried out 24/7 to complete the construction and repair work of the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" building, and the finishing and renovation work will be completed soon. It was further informed that latest technology will be utilized to develop the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" according to modern standards. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized that timely completion of the project must be ensured alongside maintaining high quality. He said that the establishment of the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" will enable the citizens of Islamabad to access services and facilities from multiple departments at one place. Chairman CDA said that the establishment of the "Assan Khidmat Markaz" will contribute to the improvement of e-governance and service delivery by the Government of Pakistan. Azerbaijan delegation said that they are providing full cooperation and technical assistance for the construction and operationalization of the "Assan Khidmat Markaz". Chairman CDA said that this project will be a significant milestone in further strengthening relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan as well as in improving service delivery. He said that providing quality facilities and services to the citizens, along with the development of the capital city Islamabad, is our top priority. Concluding the meeting, Chairman CDA also reiterated the commitment to fully benefit from Azerbaijan's technical capabilities, expertise and experience. —DNA



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Dr. Ahsan Iqbal alongwith Chief of the Naval Staff and other dignitaries visiting stalls of Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference 2025 at Expo Centre.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria
National Day

Nov 04/Italy
Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation
Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia
National Day

Nov 11/Poland
Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan
Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium
Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil
Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
National Day

Nov 18/Oman
National Day

Nov 18/Morocco
Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh
Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon
Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname
National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania
National Day

Nov 28/Albania
Flags Day



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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

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Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

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Hospitals

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MH.....561116

Cannt Hospital.....9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey witnessing an exhibition at the PNCA. DNA

WB mission visits BISP Hqs, commends progress

ISLAMABAD: A high-level World Bank mission visited the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Headquarters on Monday, where discussions centered on data centralization, targeting efficiency, and enhanced collaboration in social protection systems. Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid and Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmad welcomed the delegation led by Mr. Cristobal Ridao-Cano, Practice Manager for Social Policy, MENAP Region. The mission, comprising Mr. Amjad Zafar Khan, Mr. Gul Najam Jamy, Mr. Javier Sanchez-Reaza, Ms. Amna Khan, Mr. Sohail Saeed, and Ms. Sarah Nizami, is in Pakistan to review the social policy portfolio, assess progress at

federal and provincial levels, and explore avenues for future cooperation. Senator Rubina Khalid underscored the importance of strengthening the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) and ensuring centralized, transparent, and authentic data management. She stressed the need for alignment among federal and provincial stakeholders to reinforce social protection delivery mechanisms. Secretary Amer Ali Ahmad briefed the mission on the extensive utilization of BISP's database by government and non-government institutions. He highlighted key achievements under the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs, particularly in improving nutrition and education outcomes.

Mr. Cristobal Ridao-Cano lauded BISP's contributions to poverty alleviation and its expanding role in evidence-based social policy planning. He reaffirmed the World Bank's commitment to supporting BISP's reform agenda and deepening institutional cooperation. The meeting also discussed secure data-sharing protocols, prevention of duplication in CCT programs, enhanced targeting systems, and greater provincial engagement. Additional Secretary BISP Dr. Asmat Nawaz and Directors General of the programme were also present. Later, the World Bank delegation visited the BISP One-Window Center to interact with beneficiaries and review service delivery mechanisms by implementing partners.—APP

British Council symposium to advance inclusive

ISLAMABAD: British Council in Pakistan hosted the Education Symposium 2025, a full-day gathering of educators, policymakers, and innovators exploring new pathways for inclusive and transformative learning across Pakistan. Bringing together participants from across the country, the symposium provided a platform for collaboration, dialogue, and the exchange of ideas on how partnerships, innovation, and practical action can strengthen Pakistan's education system. The event featured a keynote address by Michael Connolly, Director of English and school education at the British Council, titled "The Future of English", which explored the evolving role of English, technology, and digital inclusion in shaping equitable and modern classrooms.

Through a series of panel discussions, talks, and hands-on workshops, participants examined how skills development, education policy, and digital learning tools can help empower both students and teachers to drive meaningful change. James Hampson, Country Director, British Council Pakistan said: "Today's event brings lots of innovation and tons of inspiration together in one Symposium. From young girls who are changing their lives through education to organisations powering better outcomes thanks to AI. We are proud to play our part connecting people who want to make a difference." Michael Connolly, Director English and School Education, British Council said: "English today is more than just a language, it's a bridge to opportunity, global connection, and innovation.

Through initiatives like this symposium, we're exploring how English, technology, and creative pedagogy can empower teachers and learners to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Our goal is to make learning accessible, relevant, and transformative for every student in Pakistan." Workshops led by partners such as Suno Kahani Meri Zubani, BrainSPACE, Taleemabad, ILMPact, and Science Fuse demonstrated creative, evidence-based teaching approaches from arts and storytelling to AI and EdTech integration in classrooms. The event also welcomed representatives from provincial education departments, development partners, and private sector organizations, reaffirming the British Council's role as a convener of dialogue and collaboration in education.—APP

Railways minister, Rector NUML discuss Margalla Station uplift

The minister said that these initiatives would greatly benefit NUML students as well as residents of the nearby areas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi met with Rector of the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Shahid Mahmood Kayani, to discuss the potential and future development prospects of the Margalla Railway Station. During the meeting, both sides held a detailed discussion on enhancing the station's facilities and exploring ways to transform it into a modern public hub, said a news release issued here on Monday. Hanif Abbasi said that the importance of the Margalla Railway Station will increase significantly in the coming years. = He informed that plans are underway to establish modern model restaurants, renovate the station and introduce various public convenience facilities. The minister said that these initiatives would greatly benefit NUML students as well as residents of the nearby areas. Shahid Mahmood appreciated the Federal Minister's ongoing reforms and efforts to modernize Pakistan Railways. He said that setting up a model food street at the Margalla Station would be a posi-

tive and welcoming step for both students and the general public.

Gwadar Port hosts special event

DNA

GWADAR: A special ceremony was held at Gwadar Port as a part of the nationwide Maritime Week, organized by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs. Students and teachers from the Government Girls Degree College Gwadar participated in the event, which was arranged under the guidance of Gwadar Port Authority Chairman Noor-ul-Haq Baloch on the ministry's directives, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. According to an official statement, the event aimed to raise awareness among the younger generation, particularly female students, about the significance of the maritime sector and Pakistan's emerging blue economy. Addressing the participants, Chairman Noor-ul-Haq Baloch highlighted the growing opportunities for youth, especially women, in the maritime industry. He said that Gwadar Port plays a pivotal role in Pakistan's economic development and urged students to explore the vast potential within the blue economy. "The maritime sector offers immense opportunities for Pakistan's youth, and women have a vital role to play in shaping the country's future through this industry," Baloch said. Students were given a guided tour of key sites, including Gwadar Port operations, the China Business Center (CBC), the Free Zone, and the Desalination Plant. They were briefed on the port's daily operations and ongoing commercial projects, gaining first-hand insights into Pakistan's maritime progress and Gwadar's expanding role in regional connectivity. The initiative, held under the nationwide Maritime Week 2025 campaign, sought to connect young minds with the strategic and economic importance of the country's maritime assets, from Gwadar's operational growth to national efforts in developing a sustainable blue economy.

Danyal leads recognition of digital talent

ISLAMABAD: The Influencer & Innovation Awards 2025 celebrated Pakistan's fast-rising digital talent and young innovators at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad, the other day. The ceremony was organized to honour youth excelling in entrepreneurship and digital creativity, bringing together students, content creators, and social media changemakers who are actively reshaping Pakistan's global digital footprint. Parliamentary Secretary for Information & Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, attended the awards night as the Chief Guest. He praised the energy and innovation of Pakistan's younger generation in a powerful keynote address. = "Sharing his experience from a recent Young Entrepreneurs showcase, Barrister Danyal said he was "amazed to witness the creativity and resilience of children as young as fourth, fifth and sixth graders, working with a positive mindset and proving that no other nation matches the potential of Pakistani youth." He also highlighted the transformation of social media into a defining platform for communication and opportunity. But he warned that Pakistan missed the early development process of digital ecosystems, resulting in "negativities and adverse effects that must be confronted carefully." As the government's spokesperson on information and broadcasting, he urged young citizens to avoid toxic online behaviour. "Our youth must distance themselves from negativity, propaganda and the abusive culture growing on social media," he emphasized. Barrister Danyal stressed that nations rise on constructive thinking, not destructive behaviours. "The real face of Pakistan is the talent we are witnessing here today. This is what will lead Pakistan forward," he said, receiving an enthusiastic applause from the audience. Throughout the night, emerging voices of Pakistan's digital sphere were recognized for their ideas, leadership and positive influence. The influential award-winners pledged to continue contributing toward a creative and responsible digital ecosystem. The event concluded with inspiring performances, group photographs, and collective expressions of pride in Pakistan's thriving innovation culture. —APP

AIOU reaffirms convocation final dates

The University Administration stated that special arrangements have been made to make this year's convocation particularly memorable, with excellent security and convenience measures finalized for all participants

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University's Islamabad (AIOU) reaffirmed the dates and also shared other details for its 2025 annual convocation, where student would be honored for their academic achievements. According to press release on Monday, the annual convocation of AIOU's Islamabad Chapter will be held on Wednesday November 12, 2025 at the Jinnah Convention Centre, Islamabad. The Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui will be the chief guest of the ceremony and will award degrees and certificates to the graduating students. The event will be attended by the University's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood, four Deans, Professors, Principal Officers, parents, education experts and representatives from the Higher Education Commission and the Ministry of Education along with a large number of students. On this occasion, students who have shown outstanding academic performance will be awarded Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals. This will be the first time the University will present Silver and Bronze Medals in addition to Gold Medals, in order to recognize and appreciate the hard work and dedication of more students. According to Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Nasir Mahmood, "A convocation is not merely a ceremony for the distribution of degrees; it is a celebration of students' academic and practical achievements that illuminate their future paths." The University Administration stated that special arrangements have been made to make this year's convocation particularly memorable, with excellent security and convenience measures finalized for all participants.—DNA

ITP vans deployed at 4 key checkpoints

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has started Phase-II of its driving licence campaign by deploying mobile licensing vans at four major checkpoints of the capital, where citizens can now get learner permits on the spot. An ITP official told APP on Monday that traffic police are checking licences at these points, and drivers without a licence or learner permit are being issued a roadside learner permit through these vans. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Capt. (R) Hamzah Humayun said: "No queues, no waiting — now citizens can get learner permits right at checkpoints." He said that this step will help ensure that unlicensed driving is reduced and road safety is improved.—APP

ANF recovers over 37 kg of drugs

RAWALPINDI :The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducted 5 operations across the country, recovered as many as 37 kilograms of drugs worth Rs 29.7 million and arrested 3 suspects, including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Monday. He informed that 8 kg of ice absorbed into clothes was recovered from a parcel sent to New Zealand at a courier office on Shahr-e-Faisal, Karachi. During another operation on Shahr-e-Faisal, 2.6 kg of heroin hidden in a face mask was recovered from a parcel sent to London. As many as 6 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of a woman on Pindi Pul, Bannu Road, Kohat. Similarly, 400 grams of ice hidden in a water cooler were recovered from the Clifton area of Karachi, and 2 accused were arrested on the spot. As much as 20 kg of heroin hidden in bushes was recovered in the Chosak area, District Catch. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway. _APP

Briefs

**Tarnol cleared
in major
CDA anti-
encroachment
drive**

ISLAMABAD: Authorities have dismantled unauthorised bazaars and removed heavy machinery illegally parked along GT Road Tarnol, reclaiming state land and improving accessibility for commuters. The move is part of a broader crackdown by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to enforce Islamabad's Master Plan, its spokesperson told APP on Monday. He said the CDA Enforcement Directorate, supported by the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration and local police, led the operation. The spokesperson warned that businesses involved in illegal parking could face sealing action. Meanwhile, in Saidpur Village, 17 illegally constructed houses were removed, recovering 344 kanals of state land. The CDA spokesperson confirmed all houses were vacated voluntarily, with debris removal scheduled to begin shortly. Operations continued in Margalla Town, where 39 illegal structures were demolished and approximately 80% of encroached land cleared. Authorities said the campaign will persist until all public spaces are fully restored. The CDA urged residents and businesses to comply with land-use regulations, warning that further violations would meet strict enforcement action. **_APP**

**IRSA releases
105,500
cusecs water**

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 105,500 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 54,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1543.07 feet which was 141.07 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 30,400 cusecs and 52,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1232.50 feet, which was 182.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 5,700 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 60,300, 47,500, 48,000, and 8,600 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 4,700 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala. **_APP**

**Winter alert
issued for
Murree**

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Emergency Service Department (Rescue 1122) Murree has issued a special warning ahead of the winter season, urging citizens to remain vigilant and avoid unnecessary travel owing to expected severe weather. "In view of the winter season, rainfall and hail, all rescue stations and key points in Murree and Kotli Sattian will remain on full alert round the clock under our Emergency Core Plan," a Rescue 1122 spokesman said on Monday. The Pakistan Meteorological Department has forecast rain, thunderstorms, high winds and snowfall in Murree, Galiyat, Attock District, Jhelum, Chakwal, Talagang and other upper areas as western winds enter the country's northern regions on the night of November 3 and remain until November 5. The spokesman said personnel had been provided with rescue vehicles, ambulances and life-saving equipment, adding that camp-points staffed 24 hours a day had been established for public convenience. He explained that the risk of accidents "rises because of snowfall, extreme cold and slippery terrain in the winter" and urged the public to avoid unnecessary travel, ensure their vehicles are fitted with snow chains and sufficient fuel, and call the Rescue helpline 1122 immediately in an emergency. **_APP**

Port Qasim to be turned into maritime-industrial ecosystem

"The vision is to make Port Qasim not just a cargo handling facility, but a comprehensive maritime-industrial ecosystem powering Pakistan's future growth," he said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said Monday that Port Qasim will undergo major modernization to help generate at least half of Pakistan's \$100 billion revenue target, highlighting its expanding role as a key industrial and trade hub. Speaking as chief guest at a ceremony marking Port Qasim's recognition as the world's ninth most improved container port globally, the minister said the milestone reflected the success of ongoing modernization and management reforms. "Port Qasim improved its performance score by 35.2 points, demonstrating significant progress in reducing cargo dwell time, streamlining berth operations, and adopting digital management tools," he said. Junaid Chaudhry said the government aims to transform Port Qasim into a regional trade and industrial gateway capable of driving economic growth through infrastructure expansion, industrialization, and green maritime initiatives. The port, he added, has the potential to deliver a large share of the national revenue target owing to its industrial complex and strategic location along key shipping routes. The minister also highlighted the government's \$13 billion savings plan for the country in the next decade through the establishment of the country's first 'Sea-to-Steel Green Maritime Industrial Corridor, designed to revive Pakistan Steel Mills. The initiative, he said, will integrate port operations with industrial activity, creating a continuous value chain from maritime logistics to steel manufacturing. In the second phase of the project, Minister Chaudhry said the Iron Ore and Coal Berth (IOCB) terminal to oversee its revival. He said an Integrated Maritime Indus-



trial Complex (IMIC) will be established there, linking ship recycling facilities with steel production to enhance domestic output and generate employment. "The 'Steel-to-Green Sea' project will be jointly implemented by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Ministry of Industries to ensure sustainable industrial development," he added. The minister said the Port Qasim Authority (PQA) is also driving multiple projects aimed at expanding capacity and improving efficiency. He cited the development of new multipurpose and container terminals, the Port Qasim

Special Economic Zone (PQSEZ), and the integration of environment-friendly "Green Port" technologies. These, he said, are part of a broader modernization plan that also includes dredging, improved cargo handling systems, and digital connectivity to facilitate trade flows. Minister Chaudhry said the PQSEZ will serve as a modern industrial and logistics hub attracting both local and foreign investment. He added that enhanced connectivity through upgraded road, rail, and communication networks will reduce logistics costs and strengthen national trade competitiveness. Energy and

industrial projects, including LNG terminals and power plants within the port area, are also contributing to Pakistan's energy security and industrial growth. Reaffirming the government's commitment to maritime-led development, Junaid Chaudhry said modernization of port infrastructure, expansion of trade corridors, and creation of specialized industrial zones were central to achieving long-term economic stability. "The vision is to make Port Qasim not just a cargo handling facility, but a comprehensive maritime-industrial ecosystem powering Pakistan's future growth," he said.

**Pakistani
students
depart for
China**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Thirty-one students from Punjab have departed for China to continue studies under the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) Punjab's Dual Diploma Programme, an initiative aimed at promoting technical education and international collaboration. According to a Gwadar Pro's report on Monday, the group is part of the second batch of 70 students selected for the programme. Among them, 20 are enrolled in the Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) in Software Technology at the Government College of Technology (GCT) PGA Lahore, while 11 specialise in Advanced Construction Technology at GCT Taxila. The Dual Diploma Programme operates under an agreement between Punjab TEVTA and the Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology (SIIT), China. The three-year curriculum includes two years of study in Pakistan and a final academic year in China, covering four disciplines: Mechatronics, Software Engineering, Textile Technology, and Advanced Construction Technology. The first batch of students under the programme recently returned to Pakistan after completing their third academic year in China. TEVTA said the initiative aims to equip youth with globally relevant skills and strengthen educational and people-to-people ties between Pakistan.

Clean water, preventive care key to national health reform

"Hospitals in the country are under immense pressure because a proper primary healthcare system is missing," he said, adding that "healthcare begins outside hospitals

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal on Monday said that Pakistan's healthcare system is in a state of decline due to a lack of focus on prevention and public health awareness. Addressing a Pharmacovigilance Workshop, he said the global healthcare model has transformed and now emphasizes protecting people from falling ill rather than only treating diseases. He added that the world has shifted towards lifestyle medicine, which promotes healthier living without relying solely on medication. "Hospitals in the country are under immense pressure because a proper primary healthcare system is missing," he said, adding that "healthcare begins outside hospitals." Highlighting the deteriorating sanitation situation, he said, "We don't even have a concept of proper sewage treatment in Pakistan." He pointed out that contaminated water is the major cause of diseases, responsible for nearly 70 percent of illnesses in the country. "If clean water is ensured, the burden of patients on hospitals would drop by 70 percent," he emphasized, adding that polluted water flowing from Gilgit-Baltistan to Karachi continues to spread diseases. He said establishing sewage treatment systems at the local level was essential to control waterborne diseases. Kamal stressed that "prevention is better than cure," and Pakistan's national health strategy must prioritize precautionary and preventive measures. "We need to adopt a healthier lifestyle," he said, noting that lifestyle medicine is closely aligned with the natural order of health. He remarked that while the world will likely overcome cancer within the next decade, Pakistan may still be debating whether vaccines are halal or haram. The health minister said Pakistan, unfortunately, ranks among the top countries for hepatitis, diabetes, and heart diseases. He further said that a comprehensive Healthcare Management System is being developed at the National Institute of Health to improve service delivery and efficiency. Kamal emphasized that Pakistan needs committed and ethical doctors to bring real reform and improvement in the healthcare system. **_DNA**

PRCS holds pre-COP30 dialogue to amplify Pak climate voice

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), in collaboration with the German Red Cross, organized the "Pakistan Pre-COP30 National Dialogue 2025" under the theme "From Policy to Practice – Pakistan's Voice for COP30 (Brazil)" at its National Headquarters today. Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman, attended the event as Chief Guest. In her keynote address, she congratulated PRCS for convening a timely and important dialogue on one of the most pressing global challenges. She said Pakistan continues to be among the most climate-affected countries despite contributing minimally to global emissions. "Climate change and global warming have turned into a monster threatening our very existence. The poor are the most affected; their futures are being stolen, and their livelihoods are at risk," she remarked. Senator Rehman emphasized that the real challenge lies between the Global North and Global South and called for equitable climate action and financial support for developing nations. "We will present Pakistan's case at COP30 in the best possible way. This National Dialogue organized by

PRCS is a significant and timely initiative. We need sustainable measures to address the worsening impacts of climate change," she stated. She acknowledged PRCS's frontline role in responding to disasters and serving vulnerable communities. "The Red Crescent is always stretched to its limits, yet it remains committed to saving lives and rebuilding hope at the grassroots level," she said, adding that volunteers are the heart and backbone of disaster response. She encouraged them to plant trees, reduce carbon footprints, and become agents of meaningful change. PRCS Chairperson Mrs. Farzana Naek thanked the Chief Guest and all participants for contributing to the dialogue, stressing the importance of joint actions, sustained partnerships, and national advocacy ahead of COP30. "Climate change is not a challenge of one country but a shared global responsibility. We look forward to strengthened technical cooperation, financial assistance, and capacity-building support from COP30 to help countries like Pakistan adapt and build resilience," she said. Earlier, PRCS Secretary General Mr. Muhammad Abaidullah Khan welcomed the participants and shared PRCS's initiatives on climate adaptation, risk reduction, and community resilience. He reaffirmed PRCS's commitment to working with partners and stakeholders to advance climate resilience in Pakistan.

Railways earns Rs 3.95b from cargo operations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has generated a total revenue of Rs3.95 billion through the cargo vans operated directly by the department and outsourced parties in three years, beginning FY2021-22. The year-wise breakdown mentioned in official documents available with Wealth Pakistan shows that an amount of Rs 836.247 million was collected in fiscal year 2021-22, Rs 1184.213 million in 2022-23, and Rs 1939.215 million in 2034-24. The revenue generated from outsourced luggage and brake vans was nearly three times higher than that from the vans/trains operated by the department. Over the

past three years, the PR-operated trains earned Rs1.169 billion (Rs265.998 million in FY2021-22, Rs444.583 million in FY2022-23, and Rs458.410 million in FY2023-24), while the outsourced vans generated Rs2.790 billion (Rs570.249 million in FY2021-22, Rs739.630 million in FY2022-23, and Rs1480.805 million in FY2023-24). The revenue collection testifies to the department's ongoing efforts to boost freight operations, enhance logistics efficiency, and strengthen its overall financial performance across the transportation network. A senior Pakistan Railway official told Wealth Pakistan that the decision to outsource freight vans

was taken to address the growing demand of the industrial and energy sectors. Freight services are also important to connect major cities to boost trade, travel, and tourism. He said bids for outsourcing luggage and brake vans are initiated through an open tendering process. After public advertisement and completion of due procedures, contracts are awarded to the successful bidders. He said that the benchmark for the bid is set keeping in view the previous year's earnings from luggage and brake vans. The successful bidders are required to deposit 15% of the total amount in advance, with the remaining balance payable in 10 equal monthly instal-

ments. The contracts are valid for two years and are extendable to another year with mutual consent and are subject to the satisfactory performance of the contractor. The major stakeholders involved in outsourcing are Pakistan Railways and the private contractors to whom the luggage and brake vans are outsourced. Previously, the department ran regular freight trains countrywide, including cargo express from Karachi to Multan/Faisalabad and Lahore area, Kundian freight operations between Quetta and Taftan, container services for Prem Nagar and Qila Sattar Shah, oil transportation between Multan and Rawalpindi. **_APP**

COMSATS varsity receives over 2400 laptops in PMYLS ceremony

DNA

ISLAMABAD: DCOMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) participated in the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme (PMYLS) award ceremony organized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) under the vision of the Government of Pakistan to empower youth through digital inclusion and academic excellence. The event was graced by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shahbaz Sharif. Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, Rector of COMSATS University Islamabad was also present in the ceremony. Saqib UL Islam, a student of bachelor's in international relations from COMSATS University Islamabad hailing from Waziristan received the laptop from the Prime Minister during the ceremony. This year CUI students received over 2400 laptops in the 2025 PM Youth Laptop Scheme cycle. Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar lauded the efforts of the Higher Education Commission in advancing technological capacity and promoting educational opportunities for the youth of Pakistan. He said that this initiative of the Government of Pakistan was critical for advancing skills essential for Industry 5.0 among the masses. The Rector also appreciated the hard work and achievements of the talented students who were recognized under the PMYLS, describing them as the nation's future leaders and innovators. Such initiatives not only bridge the digital divide but also serve as a catalyst for cultivating a knowledge-based economy. Prof. Qamar reaffirmed COMSATS University Islamabad's steadfast commitment to supporting national programs that advance education, and youth empowerment resulting in fostering of startup culture in the country. In a separate ceremony, Prof. Qamar met with the student and team of CUI and appreciated their efforts in processing over 12,000 applications for the program. COMSATS University Islamabad has been placed among the top ten universities across Pakistan receiving a higher allocation of laptops under the PMYLS, reflecting the university's strong academic standing and the outstanding performance of its students nationwide.

Envoy Masood calls for national narrative

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Masood Khan, Pakistan's former Ambassador to the United States, China, and the United Nations and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Monday urged the nation to prioritize cohesive narrative building, digital literacy, and institutional preparedness to counter the growing threat of disinformation in the age of artificial intelligence. Speaking at a seminar hosted by the Centre for Law and Security (CLAS), Ambassador Masood Khan warned that Pakistan must brace for the growing threat of misinformation and disinformation in the age of artificial intelligence. He noted that while disinformation is not new, AI has amplified its impact with unmatched speed and sophistication. Reflecting on his long association with internet governance since his role as Chair of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) on Internet Governance in 2005, Ambassador Khan underscored how disinformation, historically considered a "legitimate weapon of war," has now evolved into a powerful strategic tool in modern conflicts. He cited examples from global and regional history, including wars between India and Pakistan and the information operations surrounding the global war on terror, to highlight how narrative-building has always played a central role in national security. "Today, AI-driven content, deep fakes, and algorithmic manipulation have made perception management a battlefield in itself," he said. Ambassador Khan elaborated on the distinction between information warfare and disinformation, noting that the former involves building a nation's narrative and legitimacy during peace and conflict, while the latter involves the deliberate distortion of facts. "Disinformation feeds on speed. Before a false story can be corrected, millions have already seen and believed it," he observed. He warned that unchecked disinformation campaigns could weaken national unity and distort public understanding of geopolitical realities. Outlining the strategic response, Ambassador Khan called for "authentic actions on the ground, systematic narrative-building, and national cohesion from north to south, east to west." He said that ef-

fective counter-disinformation strategy must begin with internal nation building unifying the country politically, economically and socially and must be supported by state capacity and citizen awareness. "If a nation is fragmented, its narrative will collapse under external manipulation," he cautioned. Highlighting Pakistan's rapid digitalization and growing academic base in new technologies, Ambassador Khan praised the country's progress, noting that 275 universities are now teaching emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, blockchain, and the internet of things. He emphasized that Pakistan's large freelancer community and global digital connectivity position it well to build technological capacity, but warned that "digital advancement must go hand-in-hand with information integrity." Citing recent information conflicts with India, Ambassador Khan contrasted Pakistan's disciplined and credible communication with what he termed "India's exaggerated and farical propaganda." He noted that India's disinformation attempts during recent crises backfired, as even Indian citizens and global media questioned official claims. "Our people remained confident and composed because our moral, legal, and political position was stronger; we were defending ourselves against aggression," he said. Ambassador Khan also urged think tanks and research centres to collaborate in formulating a legal and institutional framework for countering disinformation and developing expertise in "lawfare" the use of legal tools to fight information warfare. "We must master both the benign and malign dimensions of emerging technologies to build narratives in peace and to protect truth in conflict," he said, stressing that narrative discipline, strategic communication, and digital literacy were as vital as conventional military strength in modern geopolitics. Concluding his remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan stated that Pakistan, as a nuclear power and an emerging economy, "has no existential choice but to invest in digital resilience." He urged policymakers, academics, and media professionals to recognize that in the evolving information age, "wars are no longer fought only with weapons, but with words, algorithms, and perceptions." He closed with a call for unity, awareness, and responsibility: "Let us ensure that truth, not technology, defines our destiny."

Israeli attacks on UNRWA are an attempt to deflect failures

YOSSI MEKELBERG

ISRAELIS are generally not known for their admiration of the UN, even though it is the very international organization that voted for the establishment of their state in 1947 and subsequently admitted it as a member, thereby providing it with international legitimacy. And no single UN agency is more deplored – dare I say hated? – by the Israeli government than the UN Relief and Works Agency. It was created in 1949 as a “temporary” measure to provide humanitarian relief and assistance to Palestinians in five areas of operation: Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. It is still doing this work, with extremely impressive results under the most difficult of circumstances. The vicious, and in most cases baseless, criticism of UNRWA by Israeli officials and their allies, mainly in the US, intensified two years ago after the Oct. 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups. It came despite unequivocal condemnation of the attacks by UN leaders, including Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazarini. Shortly after the devastating attacks, Israel alleged that 12 of the agency’s employees had participated in them, but offered no conclusive evidence for the allegation. A UN investigation concluded that the allegation, “if authenticated and corroborated, could indicate that the UNRWA staff members may have been involved in the attacks.” But even if the allegation was verified, and considering that the agency employs 30,000 people, 90 percent of whom are Palestinian refugees themselves, it could hardly serve as a verdict on the organization as a whole. UNRWA is an organization that for more than 75 years has been delivering education, health-care, social assistance, protection, and other vital services to 5.9 million registered refugees in many troubled locations that suffer from constant political instability and conflict, and where the refugees do not enjoy their human rights. These services are delivered, with unparalleled results, on a scale that might be expected of a state, without comparable state infrastructure and on a meager budget of \$1.4 billion. The irony is that Israel, as a major contributor to the creation of the issue of Palestinian refugees in the first place, and as the occupying force in the West Bank and Gaza, has a legal and moral obligation to provide the essential services UNRWA is tasked with. But Israeli authorities want to have it both ways: to deny any responsibility for Palestinian refugees and leave it to the international community to provide for their basic needs, while simultaneously blaming the organization that is doing so for perpetuating the status of the Palestinians as refugees.

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The more desperate Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu becomes to blame anyone but himself for the catastrophic failures of Oct. 7, the more he looks for convenient targets to deflect from his own responsibility for failing his own people on that day. UNRWA is an easy target because of the narrative, created in Israel, that the agency is keeping alive the right of return of Palestinian refugees. Needless to say, this is a complete fabrication. The general right of return for all refugees, wherever they are from, is enshrined in the principles of international law. UNRWA must not only be maintained, the international community must also allocate adequate funding so that it can fully carry out its mandate. In the specific case of Palestinian refugees, the right was reiterated in a recent report by Ian Martin, a former senior UN official tasked by the UN secretary-general to head a strategic assessment of UNRWA. The report states that the “right of return and compensation of Palestine refugees, (is) enshrined in General Assembly Resolution 194 (III), predates UNRWA’s establishment and exists independently of the agency’s mandate or continued existence.” Martin’s thorough report sheds light on the unique nature of the contributions made by UNRWA against all the odds – and in the case of the war in Gaza, at the tragic cost of the lives of 378 of its people while they were helping to maintain some level of services in hellish conditions, in many cases also delivering life-saving assistance to people not registered as refugees. In its endless campaign of attempts to score cheap points, including ones bound to cause damage not only to Palestinians but Israel as well, the Knesset passed two laws severing all formal relations with UNRWA, which came into force at the beginning of this year. Even worse, they banned the agency from operating, directly or indirectly, in areas Israel considers its sovereign territory, including East Jerusalem. It was not the case that the Israeli government found its moral compass and decided to replace the services UNRWA provides with alternatives and funded provisions of its own. Instead, it left the entire situation in limbo at a time when conditions in Gaza are cataclysmic, and while in the West Bank tens of thousands of refugees in Jenin, Nur Shams, and Tulkarm have been displaced because the Israeli army destroyed their homes. Meanwhile, UNRWA is in a deep budgetary crisis and there is a genuine fear that within a matter of months it will not be able to pay the salaries of its staff. However, as the saying goes, “never let a good crisis go to waste.” Accordingly, Martin’s strategic assessment represents a contribution of great importance. It identifies several scenarios, based on the author’s hard-to-dispute conclusion that the financial model of UNRWA has never been sustainable, and that the same holds true for the agency’s mandate, which fails to protect it from arbitrary interference in its work. The worst-case scenario of “inaction and potential collapse of UNRWA” would only exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, the report said, and likely “heighten social unrest and deepen regional fragility. It would represent a significant abandonment of Palestine refugees by the international community.” Another scenario that should be cause for concern is “reduction of service,” which would also exacerbate an already troubling humanitarian situation for millions of Palestinians. Almost by default, the most viable option – until there is a political solution that guarantees citizenship for all Palestinians and, with it, security and well-being as citizens of Palestine – is that UNRWA’s operations must be maintained in countries that currently host refugees, and within Israel for those able to exercise their right of return, and that adequate resources be provided so that it can carry out its work.

Weapons of War vs Weapons of Words

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The geopolitical implications of this shift are significant. Not only does it reflect growing Sino-Pakistani defense cooperation, but it also signals a potential rebalancing in regional military dependencies. The stock market responses reinforce this interpretation: shares in AVIC Chengdu Aircraft, the manufacturer of the J-10C and JF-17, surged on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, while Dassault Aviation, the maker of the Rafale, saw a temporary slump in Paris following Pakistan’s claims. Amid the military exchanges

THE recent aerial and missile confrontation between India and Pakistan has once again demonstrated the volatile nature of South Asia’s security landscape, while underscoring the role of strategic ambiguity, media manipulation and disinformation in modern warfare. In this latest episode of conflict, sparked by an Indian retaliatory strike following a massacre in Indian-administered Kashmir, both countries have released conflicting narratives, with limited concrete evidence provided. The Soufan Center aptly noted that the internet has been “flooded with disinformation, false claims and manipulated photos and videos,” contributing to a deepening of confusion and strategic uncertainty. Central to this narrative fog is the sharp contrast in casualty and damage reports presented by each side. Pakistan’s military spokesperson, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif, claimed the Pakistan Air Force shot down five Indian aircraft specifically, three French-made Rafales, a Russian-made SU-30MKI and a MiG-29. According to Sharif, these were among 80 Indian fighter jets involved in the early morning raids. Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif supported this claim, noting that their air force could have downed ten jets but exercised restraint by engaging only those that attacked Pakistani targets. In stark contrast, India has not acknowledged any aircraft losses. However, debris from three aircraft was reportedly found in separate areas, lending partial credence to Pakistani assertions. Notably, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) affirms that all three aircraft types mentioned Rafale, SU-30MKI and MiG-29 are part of India’s existing fleet of over 700 combat-ready fighter aircraft. Despite this, India has offered no official confirmation of any losses, adhering instead to a strategy of silence that maintains a façade of superiority and operational success. Adding to the narrative complexity is the disputed nature of the airspace incursion. Both India and Pakistan claim their aircraft did not violate the other’s airspace, raising questions about how such aircraft were engaged. If Pakistan’s version is accurate, it suggests long-range air-to-air missile strikes or the deployment of surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems both of which have been in reasingly used in contemporary conflicts like the war in Ukraine. These tactics allow for engagement without risking aircraft or pilots, making them an attractive option for countries looking to minimize exposure in high-stakes confrontations. The possibility that Pakistan used its advanced Chinese-built J-10C fighter jets to shoot down Indian aircraft points to an evolving military procurement and alliance landscape in South Asia. Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar indicated that it was indeed the

J-10C that conducted the aerial interceptions, suggesting that Chinese PL-12 or PL-15 beyond-visual-range missiles may have been used. This aligns with statements from Lisa Curtis, Director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, who observed that this marks a strategic shift from Pakistan’s earlier reliance on U.S.-supplied F-16s which were used during the 2019 standoff toward Chinese equipment. The geopolitical implications of this shift are significant. Not only does it reflect growing Sino-Pakistani defense cooperation, but it also signals a potential rebalancing in regional military dependencies. The stock market responses reinforce this interpretation: shares in AVIC Chengdu Aircraft, the manufacturer of the J-10C and JF-17, surged on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, while Dassault Aviation, the maker of the Rafale, saw a temporary slump in Paris following Pakistan’s claims. Amid the military exchanges, the human cost of the conflict remains contested. India claimed its strikes were precision attacks targeting at least nine facilities used for planning terrorist operations against India. To support its claim, India released video footage of eight strikes four in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and four in Pakistan’s heartland. The Indian Ministry of Defense characterized the mission as a measured response aimed at neutralizing operational threats, asserting that only specific installations were targeted using precision-guided munitions. On the other hand, Pakistan reported the deaths of 31 civilians, including women and children, across its Kashmir region and Punjab province. It also claimed that two mosques were among the structures hit. While Indian officials have remained silent on these civilian casualty claims, Pakistan’s narrative attempts to frame India’s actions as indiscriminate and disproportionate, reinforcing its position in international forums. Another dimension of the conflict is the reported drone warfare. Pakistan asserted that on Thursday, the day following India’s manned airstrikes, India launched multiple attack drones specifically the Israeli-made Harop drones into Pakistani territory. According to Pakistan, it successfully shot down 29 drones. One allegedly damaged a military facility near Lahore and injured four soldiers, while another reportedly struck Rawalpindi, adjacent to Islamabad. India has neither confirmed nor denied the drone incursions but stated that its operations targeted air defense radars and missile systems. This ambiguity suggests that India is engaging in a strategic information blackout, possibly to avoid escalation or maintain tactical surprise. The use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) represents another transformation in regional military doctrines, reflecting global trends toward drone-centric warfare. Additionally, skirmishes along the Line of Control

(LoC) the de facto border in Kashmir flared up during the confrontation. Pakistan claimed that between 50 to 60 Indian soldiers were killed in cross-border shelling, although it offered no verifiable evidence. India, for its part, reported the death of a single soldier in shelling on Wednesday. This numerical discrepancy again highlights the role of information control and propaganda in shaping public perception and domestic legitimacy. Amidst all the fog and fury, one critical factor remains consistent: both India and Pakistan are engaging in information warfare as much as they are involved in kinetic conflict. Each side appears to be carefully crafting its narrative not only for domestic audiences but also for international observers. The Soufan Center’s observation that “this information warfare is compounded by both sides’ commitment to save face” reflects the strategic importance of perception in such clashes. In high-stakes conflicts between nuclear-armed neighbors, controlling the narrative is often as crucial as controlling the battlefield. Both countries have clear incentives to maintain a posture of dominance while avoiding full-scale war. For India, acknowledging the loss of sophisticated aircraft or admitting to civilian casualties in Pakistan could weaken the political leadership’s standing and embolden domestic critics. For Pakistan, projecting a successful defense, including the downing of Indian aircraft, boosts national morale and strengthens military credibility, especially amid economic challenges and political instability. Furthermore, the strategic ambiguity surrounding the use of Chinese weapons and drones opens a new chapter in the India-Pakistan-China triangle. As Pakistan increasingly integrates Chinese defense technology, it raises questions about China’s indirect role and its broader influence in South Asian security dynamics. The diffusion of Chinese military hardware into conflict zones, whether through Pakistan or elsewhere, contributes to a reshaping of regional deterrence and conflict paradigms. The latest India-Pakistan skirmish marked by aerial dogfights, missile exchanges and drone incursions highlights the evolving nature of regional conflict in South Asia. It underscores how modern warfare is not only fought with advanced weaponry but also with strategic narratives, disinformation and propaganda. As both countries continue to leverage ambiguity and selective disclosures, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate fact from fiction. However, what remains clear is that the risks of escalation persist and in a region where both actors possess nuclear capabilities, even minor incidents carry potentially catastrophic consequences. The world must pay close attention not only to what is being claimed but also to what is deliberately being left unsaid.

Dying of Thirst While Drowning

How Pakistan’s cities are running out of water - even as they flood

Ussama Bin Sajjad Kiyani

Efforts are being made that seem to be very promising. EPA Punjab has launched their Green Credit Program which has incentivized people to adopt environment friendly initiatives. They have also made rainwater harvesting systems a mandatory code for 23 building categories. Another example, is the introduction of NatCat Model 2025 by NDMA. For the first time, it feels like we have something promising at hand, a system that can forecast hazards up to 100 years ahead, powered by satellite imaging and geospatial data

WE all saw that video of a family being swept away by rising flood one by one, many of us didn’t had the heart to see it till the end, but at that moment we were united by one thought: “Could we have prevented this?” These past months of cloudbursts and heavy rains in Pakistan have been heartbreaking to witness. Every day we saw people drowning, homes collapsing, cars being swept away, crops getting destroyed, and livelihoods lost. Families clinging to rooftops or evacuating their homes while the floods carried away everything they owned. This isn’t the first time this has happened, it reminded us of 2022, when we faced one of the worst climate disasters of our history, the flood that resulted in almost \$15 billion in losses and over 33 million people affected. It was supposed to be a wake-up call, a reminder that these disasters are not random, but a pattern we can overcome. And yet once again we are drowning in our own unpreparedness. Early reports, such as one done by analysts at Arif Habib Ltd, estimate that economic toll of Pakistan 2025 monsoon floods likely is around \$1.4 billion. These events have lingering effects that carry on and cause problems for the future as well. For instance, agriculture and livestock markets have both suffered shocks of \$1,032 million and \$2 million respectively. While the Transport and Communication industry has had a hit of \$333 million. These shocks are expected to increase CPI by about 7.22% in FY26. However, despite of these flash floods and heavy rains the outlook is paradoxical. Its alarming to note that while floodwaters are rising above us, the ground beneath us is drying up. In Islamabad alone, 100 mm of rain fell in a single day, ends up turning roads into rivers. Yet CDA reports that our ground-water is dropping by over a meter per annum. Per capita water availability has steadily deteriorated from over 1500m3 in 2009 to less than 860m3 in 2023, entering water scarcity threshold. The issue extends to the Indus Water Basin. GRACE data suggests a storage decline of 2.16 cm/yr during the period, 2015-2022. This rate has been declining at an

increasing rate due to climate factors as well. To make matters worse only about 47% of current population has access to safe drinking water. Leaving the rest to rely on contaminated and unsafe water sources, making them prone to water borne diseases. “It feels like we are surrounded by water, yet dying of thirst. Like a person stranded on a boat in the middle of the ocean: water everywhere, but nothing to drink.” UNICEF estimates that around 53,000 children under the age of five die annually due to lack of safe drinking water. Storage is also an issue as Pakistan has only a 30 days of carryover storage compared to 170 days for India. Another point of concern is our weak and outdated infrastructure, leading to more than 40% losses during water supplies. In many housing societies, boring that once tapped water at 50 feet now has to go 300 feet deep while still yielding less output. Though climate change plays a role, but much of the damage is the result of our own planning failures. There exists no enforced regulation on city plans. Housing societies are built on natural water pathways. Green areas are being replaced with concrete. Resulting in less groundwater recharge due to lack of porous pavements. Rainwater utilization barely gets a mention in most urban plans. We treat rainfall as an inconvenience instead of an opportunity. Instead of storing rainfall, we rush to get rid of it. When managed properly, rainfall can recharge aquifers and improve soil conditions. Proper setups can also help reducing rainwater runoff by more than fifty percent. Multiple actors such as UN-Habitat, WWF, and CDA have all tested rainwater harvesting pilots. These include but not limited to building more than 100 recharge wells, and 3800 catchment systems. In addition to this, organizations such as PCRRW have also rehabilitated ancient methods for rainwater utilization, such as Karez system in Balochistan. We have yet to fully tap the potential of these pilots as they remain scattered and small in scale. Efforts are being made that seem to be very promising. EPA Punjab has launched their Green Credit

Program which has incentivized people to adopt environment friendly initiatives. They have also made rainwater harvesting systems a mandatory code for 23 building categories. Another example, is the introduction of NatCat Model 2025 by NDMA. For the first time, it feels like we have something promising at hand, a system that can forecast hazards up to 100 years ahead, powered by satellite imaging and geospatial data. It can identify vulnerable areas, sites of early evacuation, and where infrastructure needs to be reinforced. The question now stands: “when will we start using this information as a guide for real policy and action?” However, having tools is one thing but actually translating them from numbers on a presentation to practice is another. **From Awareness to Action:** The time for warnings has long passed. Pakistan can’t afford to keep swinging between emergency responses for floods and droughts, between drowning and thirst. Development authorities and private builders need to act now, while public awareness should be increased. We must start of by embedding forecasting tools like the NatCat Model, into urban planning and development frameworks. Natural drainage channels should not be repurposed for residential or commercial usages. Proper zoning laws should be made and infrastructure should be regulated to mitigate urban flooding. Moreover, rainwater needs to be treated as an asset rather than a problem. EPA Punjab’s RWH code should be scaled nationwide. Water supplies infrastructure needs a long awaited upgradation. While drainage systems should be redesigned not to just get the water off the streets but also return to recharge depleting aquifers. These pilots and models should not just sit in policy files but be a part of how we design cities, approve housing projects, and manage our water. We have the data, the experience, and sadly, the scars. What we need now is the courage to act and maintained efforts. – The author is a Staff Economist at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). He can be reached at: ussama@pide.org.pk

Briefs

India may stage false flag operation via sea route: ISPR

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After attending the briefing, Geo News' anchorperson Hamid Mir said that Chaudhry presented evidence before the journalists regarding the Afghan Taliban soldiers' involvement in terrorism in Pakistan. He added that they were presented with the same evidence that the Pakistani authorities shared with the Afghan Taliban during the Doha talks. India's possible false-flag maritime operation "We suspect India may attempt a false-flag maritime operation," the DG ISPR said, asserting that Pakistan was fully alert to such possibilities. He also said that through the false flag operation, India would propagate a lie about a major strike on Pakistan. The DG ISPR framed the military's actions as defensive and targeted and vowed that Pakistan would act to protect its territorial security if necessary.

Pakistan, Türkiye reaffirm to support peace in Gaza

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The two foreign ministers also discussed the evolving situation in Gaza, emphasizing the urgent need for a durable and sustainable peace in the region. They reiterated their shared commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause and working jointly at regional and international forums to end the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Senator Ishaq Dar commended Türkiye's proactive diplomatic efforts in advocating for peace and justice for the people of Palestine, while Foreign Minister Fidan appreciated Pakistan's consistent stance on the issue and its solidarity with the Palestinian people. Both leaders reaffirmed that the unbreakable bonds of brotherhood, mutual respect, and shared values continue to underpin Pakistan-Türkiye relations. They agreed to maintain close coordination on all major regional and global issues, reaffirming their commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity in the Muslim world. The meeting underscored the enduring strategic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye, rooted in historical, cultural, and religious ties, and their shared aspiration to strengthen cooperation in pursuit of common goals.

Israel returns 45 Palestinian bodies

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belonged to three hostages seized during the October 7, 2023 attack — Captain Omer Neutra, Corporal Oz Daniel, and Colonel Assaf Hamami. Hamas is "determined" to stick to the Gaza truce, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, adding it was crucial that Muslim nations play a leading role in the Palestinian territory's reconstruction. "It seems that Hamas is quite determined to adhere to the agreement," Erdogan told delegates from the Organisation of Islamic States (OIC) gathered in Istanbul for their annual COMCEC economic cooperation summit. "At this point, we need to deliver more humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and then begin reconstruction efforts. "The Israeli government is doing everything in its power to prevent this," Erdogan said. "We believe the reconstruction plan prepared by the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation should be implemented immediately," he said, referring to a plan unveiled in March for reconstructing the shattered Palestinian territory.

Chairman Senate addresses horse riding championship

Chairman Senate Gilani underscored the importance of such events for the youth, saying that they serve as vital platforms to connect younger generations with their cultural and historical heritage



DNA

MADROTA: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, attended the Horse Riding Championship in Madrota, District Attock, as the Chief Guest. In his address on the occasion, Chairman Senate lauded the rich cultural heritage, bravery, and centuries-old equestrian traditions of the region, describing Madrota as a land known for its valour, history, and deep-rooted association with the art of horse riding. He emphasized that traditional sports are the true reflection of a region's culture, customs, and way of life. "These games are not merely a source of entertainment but a living expression of our cultural identity," he noted. Pakistan, he said, enjoys a dis-

tinctive position in the world of traditional sports, with horse riding occupying a particularly esteemed place as a symbol of national heritage and pride. Highlighting the significance of the event, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani remarked that the Madrota show was not just a competition but a grand celebration of Pakistan's equestrian legacy, passion, and spirit. "The courage, skill, and traditions of our horsemen are a matter of pride for the entire nation," he added. The Chairman Senate further noted that equestrian sports such as Neza Bazi (tent pegging) are deeply rooted in ancient traditions that date back to the era of Alexander the Great. In the past, horsemen held a place of high esteem, and today, those traditions continue through such sports events. "Horse riding," he said,

"is not merely about competition, it is a discipline that teaches patience, balance, harmony, and endurance. It instills in us lessons that go beyond sport, guiding us in life with perseverance and composure." Chairman Senate Gilani underscored the importance of such events for the youth, saying that they serve as vital platforms to connect younger generations with their cultural and historical heritage. "These games bring together communities, families, and generations, reminding us of the shared spirit that unites us as Pakistanis," he remarked. He praised the performance and dedication of all participating riders, acknowledging their role in keeping the tradition alive and paying tribute to the courage and legacy of their forefathers. While appreciating the efforts of Sardar

Shani and his team, Chairman Senate said, "Your vision and hard work have made Madrota a source of pride for equestrian enthusiasts across Pakistan." He reaffirmed his full support for initiatives that promote traditional sports, noting that such activities not only encourage athletic development but also strengthen Pakistan's cultural identity. Concluding his address, Chairman Senate prayed for peace, unity, prosperity, and progress of Pakistan. The event was attended by Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider, Members of the National Assembly Syed Ali Musa Gilani and Abdul Majeed Niazi, former Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur, Pir Syed Qutab Ali Shah, and several prominent personalities from across the country.

Greece tries to clean up its act on waste

CORFU: Cell phone glued to his ear, Kosmas Vassilas watches his truck crews round up multi-coloured bins on the island of Corfu, where a groundbreaking recycling initiative is bucking the trend of Greece's anarchic waste disposal. In a country where many think nothing of dumping used appliances, old furniture and even toilets on the street with their garbage, the municipality of North Corfu has launched a programme that has residents sort their waste into more than a dozen bins. Besides yellow for paper, red for plastic and blue for aluminium, there are bins for second-hand clothing, empty ink

cartridges, used lightbulbs, electrical appliances and cooking oil, among others. "People call to throw away a mattress, a fridge, anything you can imagine," said Vassilas, a municipal supervisor, as bright red and yellow trucks emptied matching bins behind him. Recycling only reclaims around 20 percent of household waste in Greece. The European Union average was 48.2 percent in 2023. Under EU rules, this percentage must increase to 65 percent by 2035. And only 10 percent of municipal waste can be buried in landfills. Running out of time, Greece is now considering large-scale waste in-

cineration. But the plan has run into strong opposition from local councils, which cite health concerns. In Corfu, change came after a protest shut down the local landfill in 2018, choking the island in garbage. "People were throwing garbage out of balconies and cars. It was hair-raising," said deputy mayor Spyridoula Kokkali. Inspired by grassroots recycling by local British and German expatriates, North Corfu decided to have its 18,000 residents sort their waste into a rainbow of separate bins. Kokkali, who is in charge of the programme, helped retrain municipal personnel to follow the new rules. — APP

Magnitude 6.3 quake hits northern Afghanistan

MAZARI SHARIF: A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck northern Afghanistan overnight Sunday into Monday, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, two months after a tremor killed over 2,200 people in a country grappling with poverty and other woes. The agency said the quake hit in northern Afghanistan at a revised depth of 28 kilometers (17 miles) in Kholm, near the city of Mazar-i-Sharif. It was felt by AFP correspondents in the capital Kabul. The agency had initially given the depth as just 10 km. On August 31 the deadliest quake in recent Afghan history, measuring 6.0, struck in the country's east, killing more than 2,200 people. — APP

Xi Jinping extends congratulations to Egyptian president

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi on the opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum. In the message, Xi extended his sincere congratulations to Sisi and the Egyptian people on the occasion of the opening of the museum. Xi expressed his belief that the Grand Egyptian Museum will leave a profound mark on Egypt's cultural history and play an important role in preserving and passing on the ancient Egyptian civilization. He noted that China and Egypt share a time-honored friendship, and their comprehensive strategic partnership has flourished in recent years. The two countries have enjoyed vibrant and diverse people-to-people and cultural exchanges, said Xi, adding that a grand exhibition of ancient Egyptian artifacts was successfully held at the Shanghai Museum and that a joint China-Egypt archaeological team is now working together beneath the pyramids at Saqqara to explore the mysteries of ancient Egyptian civilization. Xi said it is encouraging to see the two ancient civilizations reaching out to each other, with the two peoples growing ever closer through mutual understanding and affinity. — Agencies

PSB imposes bans on Pakistan Weightlifting officials, athletes

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has announced bans on multiple athletes and officials associated with the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation (PWF), following conclusive anti-doping violations established by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the International Testing Agency (ITA) under Operation Jasmine. Those banned include Sharjeel Butt, Abdul Rehman, Ghulam Mustafa, Farhan Majeed, Hafiz Imran Butt (former PWF President), Irfan Butt (Coach), and Waqas Akbar (Coach), said a press release. The PSB clarified that athletes and coaches will remain barred for the full duration of their international bans, while officials are prohibited from all sports-related activities for four years, effective immediately. The decision follows a sequence of events beginning in 2021, when several athletes evaded testing and later tested positive, leading to multiple suspensions confirmed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport Anti-Doping Division (CAS ADD) in early 2025. The banned individuals cannot participate in any sports activity, hold office, or access PSB facilities or benefits until the expiry of their ineligibility period. PSB reaffirmed that Pakistan, as a signatory to the International Convention against Doping in Sport, remains committed to upholding integrity, clean competition, and zero tolerance for doping. — Agencies

Ex-World Cup star Cho Gue-sung earns 1st nat'l team call-up in 20 months

Cho last played for South Korea during the second round of the Asian World Cup qualification in March 2024. He has scored nine times in 39 international appearances

SEOUL: Former World Cup star Cho Gue-sung has received his first men's national team call-up in 20 months. Cho, forward for the Danish club FC Midtjylland, was one of 27 players named to the South Korean squad by head coach Hong Myung-bo on Monday, ahead of friendly matches against Bolivia on Nov. 14 in the central city of Daejeon and Ghana on Nov. 18 in Seoul. Cho last played for South Korea during the second round of the Asian World Cup qualification in March 2024. He has scored nine times in 39 international appearances. Two of those goals came against Ghana

in South Korea's 3-2 loss during their group stage match at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. The brace made Cho the first South Korean to score multiple goals in a single World Cup match. Cho's performance in Qatar opened up opportunities for him to take his talent overseas, and he signed with FC Midtjylland in 2023. However, he missed over a year after undergoing knee surgery and then suffering complications from the procedure. He returned to action in August and has scored four goals in 12 matches in all competitions so far this season. According to the Korea Football Association (KFA), Hong recently traveled to Denmark to see Cho in person. "Before my trip, my coaches had also checked on his condition on a few occasions," Hong said in a KFA press release. "We decided he should be good to go with the national team." The squad includes many of the usual suspects, including Son Heung-min of

Los Angeles Football Club, Kim Min-jae of Bayern Munich, Lee Kang-in of Paris Saint-Germain, Hwang In-beom of Feyenoord and Lee Ja-sung of Mainz 05. German-born half-Korean midfielder Jens Castrop is also back after playing in three of South Korea's past four matches. Yang Min-hyeok, a 19-year-old forward on loan from Tottenham Hotspur to the second-tier club Portsmouth FC, made the national team for the first time in eight months. Kwon Hyeok-kyu of FC Nantes will look to collect his first cap. He was called up for World Cup qualifiers in October last year but did not see any action then. The KFA said the national team will train at the brand-new National Football Center in Cheonan, some 90 kilometers south of Seoul. The two matches this month will be the final ones of the year for South Korea. So far in 2025, the Taegeuk Warriors have recorded six wins, three draws and two losses. — DNA

SC issues notice to KP on water...

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Justice Shakeel Ahmed observed that the dam administration has the authority to prohibit motorboats. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq questioned how so many boats were operating without permission, while Justice Mandokhail asked what measures WAPDA had taken to stop boating. The counsel for WAPDA replied that an application had been filed before the magistrate, but the situation worsened after Khanpur was granted tehsil status. Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan asked WAPDA to propose alternatives if motorboats were contributing to pollution. The counsel responded that electric boats were available and could be used as an eco-friendly alternative.

Pak a natural maritime bridge...

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between the East and the West". However, despite these advantages, the maritime sector contributed less than 1pc to Pakistan's GDP, compared to 4-7pc in several other maritime nations, he lamented. The planning minister pointed out that Pakistan had a coastline of over 1,000 kilometres, an exclusive economic zone of nearly 290,000 square kilometres, and "vast offshore potential" in renewable energy, fisheries and mineral resources. Noting that the government's Uraan Pakistan plan aimed to transform Pakistan into a \$1tr economy by 2035, Iqbal underscored the importance of the 5Es framework — exports; e-Pakistan; equity and empowerment; environment; and energy and infrastructure. He further said the government had identified "eight key drivers of export-led growth" — agriculture and food processing, manufacturing and industry, information technology and digital services, mines and minerals, manpower and skills export, creative and cultural industries, services sector and tourism, and blue economy.

PML-N sought support on the 27th...

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impacting the guaranteed provincial shares, a matter long sensitive in Pakistan's federal governance context. Bilawal has repeatedly dismissed rumours of a finalized 27th amendment, stating that no minister or official has formally approached him or the PPP on this. He emphasised that the 26th amendment was achieved through consensus and compromise, and that the PPP wanted a constitutional court but accepted a constitutional bench for wider agreement. On NFC Award issues, he has argued that provincial shares cannot be reduced, and that a new award must reflect the post-18th amendment reality of greater provincial responsibility. If the PML-N secures PPP support, the 27th amendment could be tabled in Parliament fairly soon. Its passage would mark a significant shift in Pakistan's judicial-federal architecture. However, given PPP's public caution and insistence on consensus, there may be delays or demands for substantial safeguards—especially to protect provincial rights and judicial independence.

PTI rejects proposed...

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Initiated by the PML-N and backed by PPP and Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) among others, the constitutional amendment was challenged by the PTI, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the Sunni Ittehad Council in the Supreme Court. The tweak, passed on October 21 last year, established constitutional benches at the Supreme Court and high courts. Qaisar, who has also served as the speaker of the National Assembly, said that the proposed 27th Amendment would "completely abolish the independence of the judiciary". The PTI leader said that he had introduced an amendment to include a provision for appeal in the high court after conviction from the military courts.

Half Yours favourite at Australia's 'race that stops a nation'

Jamie Melham, who came third last year aboard Okita Soushi, has perhaps the best chance since to match the feat on five-year-old galloper Half Yours, trained by father-son duo Tony and Calvin McEvoy

MELBOURNE: Half Yours heads into Tuesday's Melbourne Cup as short-priced favourite ahead of Valiant King and Al Riffa, setting the scene for a woman jockey to win Australia's "race that stops a nation" for only the second time. First run in 1861, the punishing 3,200-metre (two-mile) handicap at Flemington is regarded as the ultimate test of stamina and staying power. In all those years, only one woman has tasted victory. That was Michelle Payne, who famously steered 100-1 outsider Prince of Penzance to glory in 2015, propelling her into a household name with a movie, "Ride Like a Girl", made about her exploits. Jamie Melham, who came third last year aboard Okita Soushi, has perhaps the best

chance since to match the feat on five-year-old galloper Half Yours, trained by father-son duo Tony and Calvin McEvoy. She rode the gelding to victory at the Group 1 Caulfield Cup last month — the first woman to win that race in its 149-year history — and will start from an ideal barrier eight. "It was a beautiful ride she gave to Half Yours in the Caulfield Cup and it's much different to me riding a 100-1 shot in the Melbourne Cup," Payne told reporters. "Riding the favourite, like she did in the Caulfield Cup, she took it all in her stride and gave him the perfect ride to win the race and also to prepare for a Melbourne Cup." New Zealand's Maree Davey was the first woman jockey to saddle up at the Melbourne Cup in 1987. A record four women

took part last year. With Aus\$10 million (US\$6.5 million) at stake, the winner of the 24-strong field will bank Aus\$4.5 million and instantly become famous in Australia, where the race is a cultural institution. This year there are three women jockeys with Rachel King on outsider Arapaho and Celine Gaudry entrusted with Geelong Cup winner Torranzino. Working in Half Yours' favour is forecast rain and his light 53kg weight, with Calvin McEvoy saying: "Love it, bring it on. We're doing the rain dance." "He absolutely loves the wet, this horse." Stayer Al Riffa was an early equal favourite, elevated after previous frontrunner Sir Delius was ruled out after vet scans showed the English galloper at "heightened" risk of injury.

However, a horror barrier 19 draw saw the Joseph O'Brien-trained hope slip down the betting ladder. But with ace jockey Mark Zahra at the reins, the six-year-old remains a serious contender after a dominant four-length win at the Irish St Leger over 2,800-metres in September. O'Brien is a two-time Melbourne Cup winner with Rekindling (2017) and Twilight Payment (2020) and is excited despite Al Riffa being the top-weight horse at 59kg. "He's a multiple Group 1 winner so he's going to carry a lot more weight, but he's going to carry it because he's a very high-class horse," O'Brien said. Zahra rode Gold Trip to Melbourne Cup success in 2022 and repeated the feat on Without a Fight a year later. — Agencies

Briefs

Fostering green innovation to power growth in Asia-Pacific

BEIJING : As the latest wave of scientific and technological revolution reshapes global industries, the world economy is accelerating toward digitalization, sustainability, and intelligent development, generating strong momentum for global economic integration. As a member of the Asia-Pacific family, China remains committed to ensuring broad access to technological advancements while deepening regional cooperation in green innovation. This approach actively supports higher-quality, more resilient development across the Asia-Pacific region. At Peru's Chancay Port, the first smart and green port in South America, giant blue automated gantry cranes move containers with precision, while self-driving trucks shuttle back and forth. In a central control room, the port's production operation system dispatches tasks to the cranes, rail-mounted gantries, and trucks, directing their automated operations efficiently. _APP

Thousands flee as Sudan conflict spreads east from Darfur

PORT SUDAN, Sudan: Over 36,000 Sudanese civilians have fled towns and villages in the Kordofan region east of Darfur, according to the UN, as the paramilitary warned that its forces were massing along a new front line. In recent weeks, the central Kordofan region has become a new battleground in the two-year war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. Central Kordofan is strategic because it is located between Sudan's Darfur provinces and the area around the capital Khartoum. The widening of the war comes just over a week after the RSF took control of El-Fasher – the army's last stronghold in Darfur. The RSF has set up a rival administration there, contesting the pro-army government operating out of the Red Sea city of Port Sudan. In a statement late Sunday, the UN's migration agency said an estimated 36,825 people have fled five localities in North Kordofan between October 26 and 31. Residents on Monday reported a heavy surge in both RSF and army forces across towns and villages in North Kordofan. The army and the RSF, at war since April 2023, are vying for El-Obeid, the North Kordofan state capital and a key logistics and command hub that links Darfur to Khartoum, and hosts an airport. The RSF claimed control of Bara, a city north of El-Obeid last week. _APP

Erdogan says Hamas determined to stick to Gaza truce

ISTANBUL: Hamas is "determined" to stick to the Gaza truce, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Monday, adding it was crucial that Muslim nations play a leading role in the Palestinian territory's reconstruction. "It seems that Hamas is quite determined to adhere to the agreement," Erdogan told delegates from the Organization of Islamic States (OIC) gathered in Istanbul for their annual COMCEC economic cooperation summit. His remarks came as Turkiye prepared to host the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Pakistan and Indonesia for talks on Gaza's reconstruction as fears grow for the shaky October 10 ceasefire. The talks are to begin around 1100 GMT at an Istanbul hotel, with a news conference due several hours later. "At this point, we need to deliver more humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and then begin reconstruction efforts." _APP

Uzbekistan Airways increases flight frequency

With four weekly flights, modern aircraft, affordable fares, and world-class service, Uzbekistan Airways continues to bring the people of Uzbekistan and Pakistan, and the wider world, closer than ever before

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan Airways, the national carrier of the Republic of Uzbekistan, is expanding its flight operations to Pakistan. Starting from October 28, 2025, the airline operates a total of four weekly flights between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, doubling the frequency of its Tashkent-Islamabad service and continuing its regular Tashkent-Lahore flights. According to Uzbekistan Airways, the decision to expand its services was driven by strong passenger demand, with previous Islamabad flights often operating at full capacity and tickets selling out days in advance. "Tashkent-Islamabad-Tashkent" flights operates twice weekly, every Tuesday and Saturday. "Tashkent-Lahore-Tashkent" flights also operates twice weekly, every Wednesday and Friday. With this expansion, Uzbekistan Airways strengthens its role as a key bridge between Central and South Asia, offering Pakistani travelers greater choice, convenience, and connectivity to destinations across the world. Flights from Tashkent to Islamabad take around two hours, offering a fast and efficient link between the two capitals. One-way fares start from approximately USD 200, while round-trip tickets are available from USD 400, making this route one of the most affordable and time-saving options

for business, education, and leisure travelers alike. "Tashkent-Lahore" route is equally attractive, with one-way fares from approximately USD 200 and round-trip fares from approximately USD 400. All flights



are operated on modern, comfortable aircraft, ensuring passengers enjoy world-class onboard service, professional crews, and the highest safety standards. Tashkent International Airport, the airline's primary hub, is strategically positioned at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, offering passengers efficient connections and

a comfortable travel experience. Beyond direct travel between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, the Airport serves as a strategically located transit hub connecting travelers to over 50 international destinations across

Europe, North America, the Middle East, East Asia, and South-East Asia. Passengers flying via Tashkent can enjoy smooth transit connections to major global cities including Istanbul, Frankfurt, Paris, London, New York, Moscow, Dubai, Tokyo, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Baku, Astana, Batumi, and many more. This extensive network makes

Uzbekistan Airways an increasingly popular choice for Pakistani travelers seeking both regional and long-haul connections, combining competitive pricing with superior comfort and efficiency. Uzbekistan and Pakistan share centuries-old historical, cultural, and spiritual ties rooted in the heritage of the Silk Road and the Islamic civilization. The enhanced air links will further strengthen tourism, trade, and people-to-people exchanges between the two brotherly nations. For Pakistani tourists, Uzbekistan offers a gateway to the legendary Silk Road cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, all renowned for their magnificent Islamic architecture, vibrant bazaars, and shared cultural heritage. At the same time, Uzbek visitors are increasingly drawn to Pakistan's diverse landscapes, historic landmarks, and renowned hospitality: from the scenic valleys of the north to the bustling cultural centers of Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and others. The increased frequency also aligns with Uzbekistan's and Pakistan's shared vision for greater regional connectivity, trade facilitation, and economic cooperation across Central and South Asia. Enhanced air links will make it easier for companies, students, and families to connect, while boosting mutual investment and tourism growth. The expanded Pakistan flight network marks a new chapter in Uzbekistan-Pakistan relations, transforming shared aspirations into tangible connections.

CPI increased 6.2% YoY basis in Oct

ISLAMABAD: The core inflation measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 6.2 per cent on a year-on-year basis in October 2025, as compared to 5.6 per cent in the previous month and 7.2 per cent of the corresponding month of the last year. On month-on-month basis, the CPI increased by 1.8 per cent in October 2025 as compared to an increase of 2.0 per cent in the previous month and an increase of 1.2 per cent in the same month of the previous year (October 2024), according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Meanwhile, the CPI inflation Urban, increased by 6.0 per cent on year-on-year basis in October 2025 as compared to 5.5 per cent of the previous month and 9.3 per cent in October 2024. On month-on-month basis, it remained stable at 1.5 per cent both in October 2025 and the previous month compared to an increase of 1.1 per cent in October 2024. The CPI inflation Rural, increased by 6.6 per cent on year-on-year basis in October 2025 as compared to an increase of 5.8 per cent in the previous month and 4.2 per cent in October 2024. On month-on-month basis, it increased by 2.3 per cent in October 2025 as compared to an increase of 2.8 per cent in the previous month and an increase of 1.5 per cent in October 2024. The SPI inflation on year on year basis increased by 4.8 per cent in October 2025 as compared to an increase of 4.5 per cent a month earlier and an increase of 9.7 per cent in October 2024. On month on month basis, it increased by 0.9 per cent in October 2025 as compared to 2.0 per cent in a month earlier and an increase of 0.6 per cent in October 2024. The WPI inflation on year on year basis increased by 1.1 per cent in October 2025 as compared to an increase of 0.6 per cent in the previous month and an increase of 3.9 per cent in October 2024. On month-on-month basis, it remained stable at 0.5 per cent both in October 2025 and the previous month as compared to no change in October 2024. Measured by non-food non-energy Urban increased by 7.5 per cent on year on year basis in October 2025 as compared to 7.0 per cent of the previous month and 8.6 per cent in October 2024. On month month-by-month basis, it increased by 1.1 per cent in October 2025 as compared to 0.3 per cent in previous month and an increase of 0. per cent in the corresponding month of last year. Measured by non-food non-energy Rural increased by 8.4 per cent on a year-on-year basis in October 2025 compared to 7.8 per cent in previous month and an increase of 11.7 per cent in October 2024. On month on month basis, it increased by 1.3 per cent in October 2025 as compared to 0.6 per cent in the previous month and an increase of 0.7 per cent in the corresponding month of last year. —DNA

CCP issues Competition assessment study of steel sector

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has released a report titled "Competition Assessment Study of the Steel Sector in Pakistan," highlighting key competition-related challenges faced by the industry. The study underscores the absence of a national steel policy and recommends the establishment of a dedicated Steel Ministry, citing successful models from China and India, said a release issued here on Monday. Pakistan's manufacturing sector has remained a cornerstone of economic expansion, contributed 71 percent of total exports and employed about 15 percent of the workforce. Within this sector, the steel industry plays a vital role. The report explores it from a competition perspective. — Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) dominates the sector, accounting for more than 69 percent of manufacturing and 8.2 percent of GDP. In FY24, local steel production was 8.4 million MT, including 4.9 million MT of long steel (billets and ingots) and 3.5 million MT of flat steel (coil and plates). Steel scrap imports stood at 2.7 million MT, underscoring the industry's reliance on imported raw material. Despite this, per capita steel consumption remains low at 47 kgs, reflecting limited industrial activity and slower infrastructure development. Demand is driven by infrastructure development, urbanization, industrial growth, and major projects like CPEC, with construction and real estate as key consumers. On the supply side, the industry faces heavy import dependence, energy constraints, and limited local raw material availability. Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM), once a strategic asset with 1.1 million tons annual capacity, has been non-operational since 2015 due to financial losses and outdated technology, leaving liabilities of PKR 400 billion. By contrast, international peers like China, India, and Russia advanced through government support, innovation, and strategic investment. Lessons from global players highlight the need for Pakistan to develop local coal and iron ore, modernize infrastructure, and adopt sustainable, energy-efficient technologies. On regulatory and institutional inefficiencies exacerbate challenges; the Ease of Doing Business Committee lacks industry-specific expertise, while frequent changes in SROs create uncertainty for businesses. Substandard steel accounts for 50–60% of domestic production due to weak enforcement by the concerned authorities, disadvantaging compliant producers. Tax exemptions in ex-FATA/PATA district competition, with 1.5 million tons of untaxed steel entering settled areas annually, causing PKR 40 billion in revenue losses. The sector also suffers from market concentration, policy biases, and limited diversification into high-value-added products. High entry barriers, the dominance of undocumented units, and minimal R&D investment constrain competitiveness. —DNA

Turkey, Pak strengthen economic, cultural ties

MUNEEB UR REHMAN

LALAMUSA: The relationship between Pakistan and Turkey continues to grow stronger, grounded in shared history, culture, and religion. Both nations remain committed to improving the economic well-being of their people through expanded cooperation and new trade opportunities. Holiya, President of the Turkish Aid Association, has emerged as a key figure in strengthening bilateral economic relations. Deeply connect-



ed with Pakistan's development, she has been actively promoting trade partnerships that benefit both sides. Her association purchases rice and

other commodities from Pakistan and exports them to international markets, including Morocco and Uzbekistan. Despite maintaining a broad global business network, Holiya and her association prioritize Pakistan as a central partner in their economic and humanitarian efforts. Through the signing of memorandums of understanding with various countries and the exchange of diplomatic delegations, the Turkish Aid Association continues to play a vital role in promoting Pakistan's trade potential and internation-

al cooperation. Given the deep-rooted friendship between the two nations — with Turkey being among the first countries to recognize Pakistan after its independence in 1947 — both sides are now focusing on translating their historic bond into tangible progress in trade, investment, and development. Officials from both nations reaffirmed that initiatives like those of the Turkish Aid Association will continue to serve as a bridge of goodwill and prosperity, reflecting the enduring spirit of Pakistan-Turkey brotherhood.

IRS seminar highlights Pak's diplomatic successes

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Attaullah Tarar (N.I.) praised the professionalism of Pakistan's diplomatic apparatus in highlighting the country's strategic importance in regional affairs

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted a high-profile seminar titled "Pakistan's Diplomatic Achievements: Reinvigorating Foreign Relations through Renewed Global Engagement." In his inaugural address, Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif lauded Pakistan's diplomatic resurgence, calling it a transformative shift from reactive diplomacy to proactive global engagement. He stated that Pakistan has re-emerged as a credible and confident voice in international affairs "forging alliances, not dependencies." The Minister underscored the government's focus on economic diplomacy, noting that strengthened ties with Saudi Arabia, China, the UAE, and the United States have attracted multi-billion-dollar investments in energy, minerals, infrastructure, and technology. He commended Pakistan's diplomatic corps for restoring the nation's image as a stable, dependable, and forward-looking state. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Attaullah Tarar (N.I.) praised the professionalism of Pakistan's diplomatic apparatus in highlighting the country's strategic importance in regional affairs. He stressed that Pakistan has been a victim, not a sponsor, of terrorism as alleged over the years, underscoring the government's commitment to justice and transparency. Commending the unity of the nation, the armed forces' valor, and the media's responsible role, he said Pakistan's high-level engagements from Riyadh to Beijing and from Doha to Washington reflect renewed confidence and strategic clarity. He emphasized that Pakistan is "no longer an observer but an architect" in shaping regional security and economic cooperation across the globe. In his wel-

come address, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS highlighted Pakistan's reinvigorated diplomatic posture marked by successful high-level visits and renewed partnerships with key global and regional powers. He noted, "From Riyadh to Baku, from Beijing to Washington, Paki-



stan's handshake today spans continents. Our diplomacy is forward-looking, economically grounded, and strategically balanced." Ambassador Saleem commended Pakistan's foreign service for their dedication, and highlighted the vital role of diplomacy in securing economic, energy, and defence partnerships. He underlined that Pakistan still faced a number of challenges externally and internally and only a stable, secure and economically resilient Pakistan can sup-

port a global engagement befitting a nation of 250 million people. He expressed hope that the seminar would generate insightful recommendations to help sustain the country's reinvigorated foreign policy that could project a confident and forward looking Pakistan abroad. Former Minister for Energy, Commerce, and Foreign Affairs, Khuram Dastgir Khan, delivered the keynote address underscoring that courage is the virtue enabling all others and commended the leadership for making bold decisions during challenging times. Mr. Khan also praised Pakistan's enduring partnership with China and acknowledged the role of the armed forces and political leadership in effectively demonstrating the resilience of China's defense infrastructure during the May 6th episode, as well as safeguarding Pakistan's nuclear deterrent. He concluded by stressing the need to skillfully navigate the geo-economic landscape to achieve national strength through economic revival and investment. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Former Foreign Secretary, observed that Pakistan's diplomatic outreach reflects a process of geo-economic consolidation, emphasizing the need for institutional coordination to sustain recent diplomatic gains. He reiterated that Pakistan intends to remain a peacemaker in the region; however, this optimism is conditional and should not be mistaken for complacency, as demonstrated by Pakistan's firm response to the May 6th misadventure. He commended both the political and military leadership for making difficult yet necessary decisions, and also acknowledged the United States for its renewed interest in maintaining positive relations with Pakistan.

India looks for Bahrain's support in strengthening GCC ties

NEW DELHI: Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday sought Bahrain's support in advancing India's engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council as he received his Bahraini counterpart, Abdullatif Al-Zayani, in New Delhi. Al-Zayani arrived in India on Sunday to co-chair with Jaishankar the fifth session of the India-Bahrain High Joint Commission, which was established in 2018 as the top institutional mechanism to strengthen bilateral relations. "Since our last HJC meeting we have made significant progress bilaterally in defense, security, trade and commerce, health, culture and people-to-people ties. But there are new areas such as space, fintech and technology that hold considerable promise for our partnership," Jaishankar told Al-Zayani in his opening remarks. "We look forward to your support for further intensifying India-GCC cooperation," Jaishankar said. India has been pursuing a free trade pact with the GCC for the past two decades. A Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation was signed in 2004 but two rounds of negotiations — in 2006 and 2008 — were inconclusive. _APP

Truck rams into bus in southern India, killing at least 20

HYDERABAD, India: A truck loaded with concrete stone chips rammed into a passenger bus in southern India early Monday, killing at least 20 people and injuring about two dozens, local authorities said. The state-run transport bus was carrying around 70 passengers en route to Hyderabad city in southern Telangana state when a truck coming from opposite direction collided with it near the town of Chevalla, local district official K. Chandrakala told The Associated Press. The front of the bus was badly mangled, trapping several passengers inside. Rajendra Prasad, superintendent at Chevalla hospital said 20 bodies have been moved to the mortuary and will be handed over to their families after verification. The accident came a day after a minibus carrying passengers in western state of Rajasthan rammed into a parked truck late Sunday, killing at least 15 people and injuring two others. The passengers were returning to the desert city of Jodhpur after offering prayers to a Hindu deity in the pilgrimage town of Kolayat, officials said. Among the dead were 10 women, four children, and the driver, senior government official Shweta Chauhan told The Associated Press. The injured have been admitted to a local hospital for treatment. The victims were trapped in the mangled mass of metal that the tempo traveler minibus was reduced to after the accident, Chauhan said. Senior police officer Kundan Kanwaria said the driver was trying to overtake another vehicle but crashed into the truck parked on the highway. —APP

Thousands evacuated as typhoon bears down on Philippines

MANILA: Thousands were evacuated in coastal provinces of the Philippines on Monday, ahead of a typhoon due to make landfall in a region hit by some of the country's deadliest storms. Typhoon Kalmegi is on a collision course with Leyte island, bringing 120-kilometer (75-mile) per hour winds and gusts of up to 150 kph, according to the national weather service. "Evacuations are ongoing in Palo and Tanauan," said Leyte disaster official Roel Montesa, naming two of the towns hardest hit by storm surges in 2013, when Super Typhoon Haiyan killed more than 6,000 people. Thousands of residents have also been evacuated since Sunday on neighboring Samar island, where three-meter (10-foot) surges are predicted, according to civil defense official Randy Nicart. —APP

Briefs

Pak eyes launch for first Chinese submarine next year

DNA

BEIJING: The Pakistan Navy expects its first Chinese-designed submarine to enter active service next year, the country's top admiral told Chinese state media, bolstering Beijing's bid to counter regional rival India and project power toward the Middle East. A deal under which Islamabad will take delivery of eight Hangor-class submarines by 2028 is "progressing smoothly," Admiral Naveed Ashraf told the Global Times in an interview published on Sunday, adding the submarines would boost Pakistan's ability to patrol the North Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. The update on the Chinese submarine deal follows Pakistan Air Force using Chinese-made J-10 fighter jets in May to shoot down Indian Air Force planes including Rafale, made by France. The altercation between the nuclear-armed neighbours surprised many in the military community and raised questions over the superiority of Western hardware over Chinese alternatives. Under the terms of the submarine agreement — reportedly worth up to \$5 billion — the first four diesel-electric attack submarines will be built in China, with the remaining vessels assembled in Pakistan to improve the country's technical capabilities.

India's federal agency freezes Anil Ambani Group's \$351m properties

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India's financial crime agency has provisionally frozen 30.84 billion Indian rupees (\$350.87 million) in assets linked to Reliance Anil Ambani Group as part of a money-laundering investigation, a government source said on Monday. The case involves loans taken by the group, owned by the younger brother of billionaire Mukesh Ambani, from India's YES Bank between 2017 and 2019 in excess of \$568.86 million. Investments made with the funds delivered no returns. The Enforcement Directorate has now blocked any transactions from taking place on residential units and land parcels across Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai, including industrialist Anil Ambani's family residence in Mumbai, the source added. Reliance Group did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

PSX rises on IMF tranche hopes, earnings momentum

DNA

KARACHI: The stock market rose on Monday as investors priced in an imminent International Monetary Fund (IMF) tranche and a stabilising regional backdrop amid earnings season momentum, with rupee steadiness and firming oil prices supporting risk appetite. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index settled at 162,803.15 points, up 1,171.42 points, or 0.72%, from the previous close of 161,631.73. Advertisement During the session, the index climbed to an intraday high of 163,935.02, gaining 2,303.29 points, or 1.43%, and registered a low of 161,892.59, reflecting a gain of 260.86 points, or 0.16%. "Bullish activity witnessed on strong earnings outlook and imminent receipt of IMF tranche. Rupee stability and surging global crude oil prices played a catalyst role in bullish activity at PSX," said Ahsan Mehaniti, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities.

Macroeconomic stability achieved through reforms, says Aurangzeb

Says successful completion of the second IMF review and the subsequent staff-level agreement in Washington reaffirmed that the country's economic trajectory was on the right path

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday said that Pakistan's economic direction had been set right through a series of structural reforms, which were now being operationalized to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth. "I believe there is a broad consensus that we have made significant inroads and achieved considerable progress in terms of macroeconomic stability," he said while addressing a joint news conference on economic reforms. He was accompanied by Federal Minister for Power Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation Muhammad Ali. Aurangzeb said the government had achieved macroeconomic stability, backed by external validation as three leading international rating agencies upgraded Pakistan after a gap of three years. "These agencies are now aligned not only on where we stand but also on our positive outlook," he added. He said the successful completion of the second IMF review and the subsequent staff-level agreement in Washington reaffirmed that the country's economic trajectory was on the right path. "When the exchange rate stabilizes, foreign ex-



change reserves rise, inflation declines, and the policy rate comes down, the benefits are evident for industries," the minister remarked, adding that investors had repatriated more than four million dollars in profits and dividends.

Aurangzeb said investor confidence was crucial for attracting new foreign direct investment (FDI). "Until our existing investors are satisfied, we cannot talk about further FDI," he said, adding that the government had moved in the right direction toward stability. Highlighting the next phase of economic management, the finance minister said Pakistan must now focus on avoiding historical boom-and-bust cycles and move toward sustained and inclusive growth. "Alhamdulillah, Pakistan today stands at a unique confluence of economic stability and favorable geopolitical tailwinds," he said, pointing to stronger trade and investment opportunities with China, the United States, and GCC countries. He stressed that structural reforms were indispensable for achieving sustainable growth.

The minister said the government's reform agenda covered key areas including taxation, energy, restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), privatization, rightsizing of the federal government, digital transformation, debt management, and pension reforms. "These are the areas consistently highlighted by analysts, think tanks, and our bilateral and multilateral partners," he added.

PTI's path blocked by establishment's distrust

"Khan's refusal to consider dialogue leaves little room for political normalisation, reconciliation with establishment"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Despite repeated efforts by some Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and ex-leaders to open a dialogue with the government and ease tensions with the military establishment, there has been no change in the party's confrontational strategy. The main impediment remains Imran Khan himself, whose uncompromising stance has blocked any move towards reconciliation. Sources say that a number of senior PTI figures — both inside and outside jail — have been quietly advocating for political dialogue, arguing that confrontation has only further isolated the party and worsened its prospects. Their efforts, however, have failed to gain any success because of Imran Khan's categorical opposition to any talks

with the ruling political parties.

Just days after senior PTI leaders imprisoned in Kot Lakhpat Jail publicly endorsed dialogue with the ruling coalition, Khan from Adiala jail had issued a strongly worded message rejecting the proposal outright. In his July 8 statement, he declared that "The time for negotiations is over," and announced a nationwide protest movement beginning in early August this year.

Khan's message effectively nullified the conciliatory approach being pushed by his own senior leadership, including Shah Mehmood Qureshi and others, who had urged a more pragmatic path towards normalisation.

Political observers believe that as long as Khan adheres to his confrontational posture — particularly against the military establishment and its top command — there is little chance of PTI regaining its political space. Even those within PTI privately acknowledge that no meaningful engagement can begin unless the party's founder chairman and its social media stop targeting the army.

However, insiders point out that even if PTI were to soften its tone, the military establishment's distrust of Imran Khan runs deep. His relentless criticism of the army's leadership over the past three years has alienated not only the current command but much of the institution's top tier — both present and foreseeable.

While Imran Khan remains the most popular and central figure within PTI, his personal standing with the establishment appears seriously damaged.

This has led some observers to argue that PTI's political rehabilitation may ultimately depend on alternative leadership — figures such as Shah Mehmood Qureshi or Chaudhry Pervez Elahi, who might be acceptable to the power circles. For now, though, PTI's politics remain hostage to Imran Khan's defiance, his refusal to consider dialogue leaves little room for political normalisation, and even less for reconciliation with the establishment.

The choice before him is clear: continue the politics of confrontation and isolation, or allow a pragmatic shift that could restore PTI's political space.

FBR cell flags 'tax dodgers' living lavishly

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) Lifestyle Monitoring Cell has identified taxpayers displaying lavish lifestyles while declaring negligible income in their returns. The Cell has forwarded dossiers on additional suspected tax dodgers to FBR headquarters and the relevant Regional Tax Offices (RTOs) to initiate formal proceedings. Some individuals showcase substantial assets and earnings on social media yet report little of substance in their income tax filings. The owner of a Lahore-based fintech company holds 30 late-model vehicles valued at Rs2.741 billion, including a Lamborghini Aventador (yellow) worth Rs300 million, a Rolls-Royce Phantom (silver) Rs250 million, a Lamborghini Aventador (black) Rs300 million, among others. A travel influencer displayed on social media that she travelled to more than 25 countries in the last five years, from 2021 to 2025, but declared income ranging from Rs442,046 to Rs3.79 million. Another social media influencer, model and content creator from Islamabad travelled to 13 countries and owns

Zari Zam Jewellery, multiple luxury clothing items from international brands, Louis Vuitton Neverfull MM Handbag, Gucci apparel and accessories.

They transitioned from a Honda Civic to a Toyota Land Cruiser V8, and display a Dior Book Tote Bag, a Rolex Watch, high-end winter apparel, luxury resort wear accessories and expensive electric gadgets, but declared income ranging from Rs3.5 million to Rs5.49 million in the last few years. The FBR has scrutinised the assets and income of potential tax-evaders at a time when the tax machinery is facing a challenging task to achieve the annual tax collection target of Rs14.13 trillion. The Board faces a shortfall of Rs274 billion in the first four months (July-Oct) of the current fiscal year. The CEO and founder of a Fintech and digital solution company explicitly showcased a luxurious lifestyle on social media with high-end vehicles and other assets. However, scrutiny showed that none of the expensive vehicles acquired by the taxpayer were declared in the income tax declarations. — Agencies

Trump says Russia, China have secretly tested nuclear weapons

'They do not talk about it': Trump claims Pak among countries testing nuclear weapons

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump alleged Sunday that countries including Russia and China have conducted underground nuclear tests unknown to the public, and that the United States would follow suit.

"Russia's testing, and China's testing, but they don't talk about it," he told CBS's "60 Minutes" program, in an interview released Sunday. "I don't want to be the only country that doesn't test," he said, adding North Korea and Pakistan to the list of nations allegedly testing their arsenals. Confusion has surrounded Trump's order that the United States begin testing, particularly if he meant conducting the country's first nuclear explosion since 1992.

The 79-year-old Republican first made his surprise announcement by social media post on Thursday, minutes before entering a summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in South Korea. The announcement came in the wake of Russia saying it had tested a new nuclear-powered cruise missile, the Burevestnik, and a



nuclear-powered and nuclear-capable underwater drone. Asked directly if he planned for the United States to detonate a nuclear weapon for the first time in more than three decades, Trump told CBS: "I'm saying that we're going to test nuclear weapons like other countries do, yes." No country other than North Korea is known to have conducted a nuclear detonation for decades. Russia and China have not carried out such tests since 1990 and 1996 respectively. Pressed on the topic, Trump said: "They don't go and tell you about it." "As powerful as they are, this is a big world. You don't necessarily know where they're testing."

"They test way underground where people don't know exactly what's happening with the test. You feel a little bit of a vibration," he added. Trump's energy secretary on Sunday however downplayed that the United States was planning to set off a nuclear explosion. "I think the tests we're talking about right now are system tests. These are not nuclear explosions," Chris Wright said in a Fox News interview on Sunday. "These are what we call 'non-critical explosions,' so you're testing all the other parts of a nuclear weapon to make sure they deliver the appropriate geometry and they set up the nuclear explosion," he said. The United States has been a signatory since 1996 to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which bans all atomic test explosions, whether for military or civilian purposes.

Lahore breathes toxic air

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Lahore's air quality hit "Hazardous" on Monday morning, topping the global IQAir ranking with a US Air Quality Index (AQI) of 471 and PM2.5 at 311 microgrammes per cubic metre at 08:00am, IQAir's dashboard showed. The PM2.5 level was 62.2 times the World Health Organisation's annual guideline value. PM2.5, particles 2.5 microns or smaller, can lodge deep in the lungs and enter the bloodstream, raising risks of respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Karachi also featured near the top of the list, ranking fourth with a US AQI of 163, which falls in the "Unhealthy" band on the US scale, the same readout showed. Delhi was second on 253 and Tashkent third on 176, while Dubai posted 160.

In Multan, smog levels are rising with changing weather conditions and are expected to intensify in coming days, according to the Meteorological Department. The

department reported a maximum temperature of 31 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 18°C on Monday, and warned conditions could worsen in Multan and nearby areas such as Gadhra Nawab.

Heavily affected city corridors include Khanewal Road, Bosan Road and the Mathla Road area, where older factories and heavy transport add to the haze. Authorities said action is underway against industries emitting excessive smoke.

Officials noted Multan's Environmental Protection Agency lacks real-time monitoring, with only one functional device, hampering data collection. The loss of urban greenery has allowed smog to settle in the early morning and evening, they added, contributing to a rise in respiratory illness, particularly among vulnerable groups.

Citing deteriorating air quality, the Punjab Environment Department has barred public and private schools from opening before 8:45am across the province, including Lahore, until January 31, 2026.

Governor condemns terrorist attack

Governor Kundi said Governor Kundi reiterated that cowardly acts of terrorism cannot weaken the morale and determination of the police force

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the convoy of the District Police Officer (DPO) in North Waziristan on Monday. Governor Kundi expressed deep concern over the incident in which terrorists opened fire on the DPO's squad, injuring several police personnel. He prayed for the swift recovery of the injured officers and extended his heartfelt wishes to their families. "The attack on DPO Waqar Khan's vehicle is deeply regrettable," Governor Kundi said Governor Kundi reiterated that cowardly acts of terrorism cannot weaken the morale and determination of the police force. "Our police personnel are the frontline defenders against terrorism, and their courage and sacrifices will never be forgotten," he affirmed. — APP

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