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Azerbaijan greatly values relations with Pakistan, says envoy

Detailed News On Page-08

Puttin says Russia ready for N. test

Detailed News On Page-08



Passengers offloading probe ordered

Detailed News On Page-04



Tensions persist

Pakistan rejects Afghanistan claim over border clash

“Firing was initiated from Afghan side, to which our security forces responded immediately,” says info ministry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday rejected claims made by the Afghan regime regarding the latest exchange of fire at the Chaman border crossing, saying that the incident was triggered from the Afghan side. In a statement posted on X, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said that firing was initiated by Afghan forces, prompting Pakistani security personnel to respond “in a measured and responsible manner”. “The situation was brought under control due to the disciplined and professional action of our forces,” the statement said, adding that the ceasefire at the border remains intact. The ministry said Pakistan remains committed to resolving border matters through dialogue and expects “reciprocity and seriousness” from Kabul. “Pakistan has consistently worked to maintain peace along the Pak-Afghan border,” the statement added, urging Afghan authorities to avoid steps that escalate tensions. The statement follows Afghan military officials’ claims of coming under fire from across the border earlier in the day. The Afghan Taliban officials claimed that the Pakistani forces opened fire on Spin Boldak in the afternoon, which lasted 10-15 minutes, according to a report by AFP. While the Taliban claimed they refrained from returning fire, Pakistan maintains that it was Afghan forces who initiated the exchange along the border. The exchange of border fire comes as delegations from the two countries are currently in Istanbul for another round of the peace talks, which began in Qatar’s Doha on October 19. The two bordering nations engaged in deadly clashes after the Taliban forces, backed by their affiliated militants, resorted to unprovoked fire along the border last month. In their response, the Pakistan Armed Forces killed over 200 Taliban fighters and affiliated militants; however, as many as 23 Pakistani soldiers were martyred during the border clashes.

Continued on Page 06

Third Phase of Pak-Taliban talks kicks off

Istanbul meeting follows earlier five-day talks that resulted in a last-minute interim agreement

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISTANBUL: Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban regime kicked off the third round of talks in Istanbul today (Thursday) in an effort to ease escalating tensions following last month’s deadly border clashes. The Istanbul meeting follows the earlier five-day talks that resulted in a last-minute interim agreement. The second round of talks between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban regime began on October 25 in Istanbul, Turkey. The talks collapsed after Pakistan refused to accept the Taliban delegation’s “illogical” arguments and refusal to address Islamabad’s concerns regarding cross-border terrorism. However, mediators persuaded Pakistan to give the talks another chance, which ultimately resulted in an agreement to uphold the ceasefire. At the end of the previous round of talks, a joint statement issued by the Turkish foreign ministry stated that all parties had agreed to maintain the ceasefire and establish a monitoring and verification mechanism to ensure

Continued on Page 06

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDONESIA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Barrister Aqeel Malik, Ambassador of Indonesia Chandra W. Sukotjo and others cutting cake to celebrate the 80th Independence Day of Indonesia, 80th Anniversary of the Indonesian Armed Forces and 75 years of Indonesia-Pakistan bilateral relations. – DNA

Finance Minister lauds pharma sector's 34% export growth

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation of the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers’ Association (PPMA), under the leadership of its newly elected Chairman, Dr. Tahir Azam, along with Vice Chairman Athar Nazir Sheikh, Former Chairmen Mian Asad Shuja and Mian Khalid Misbah, and Executive Committee Members Mr. Aman Sheikh and Mr. Usman Shaukat, called on the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and his team at the Finance Division today.

Continued on Page 06

China begins limited purchases of US goods

DNA

BEIJING: China has begun modest purchases of the United States’ farm products after the leaders of both countries met last week, but traders still await significant soybean buys after the White House said Beijing pledged to buy 12 million tonnes by year-end. The top market for US farmers, China has turned its vast appetite for crops into a powerful trade war bargaining chip, largely avoiding US wheat and soybeans in favour of other supplies,

Continued on Page 06

27th Constitutional Amendment

Shehbaz assures MQM-P of local govt reforms

MQM-P delegation comprising Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Sindh governor, and others calls on premier

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has assured the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) of supporting its proposed amendments to the local government law in the 27th Amendment. The development came as the MQM-P delegation comprising Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, and others called on the premier at the PM House in Islamabad on Thursday. The MQM-P delegation also included Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal, National Assembly members Dr Farooq Sattar, Javed Hanif Khan, Syed Aminul Haque, and Khawaja Ishaq Dar, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, and federal ministers Khawaja Asif, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ahad Khan Cheema,

Continued on Page 06

Key ‘defence reforms’ in the amendment

PPP agrees to most proposed changes but opposes NFC Award amendment, say sources

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The government is finalising the draft of the proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which is expected to be ready by Thursday, as it plans to get the amendment approved by the federal cabinet on Friday before laying it in the Senate the same day. According to official sources, a key

Continued on Page 06

Türkiye Interior Minister calls on PM Shehbaz

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Turkish Interior Minister, reaffirms unbreakable Pakistan-Turkiye fraternal bonds H.E. Ali Yerlikaya, Interior Minister of the Republic of Türkiye, who is currently on an official visit to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, at the Prime Minister House in Islamabad today. During the warm and cordial meeting, the

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

South Africa thump Pak to level ODI series

SPORTS DESK

FAISALABAD: South Africa delivered an impressive batting display, comfortably chasing a 270-run target to defeat Pakistan by eight wickets in the second ODI at Faisalabad’s Iqbal Stadium on Thursday. The thumping victory helped South Africa level the series against Pakistan at 1-1, with the third and final ODI set to be played at the same venue on Saturday.

The touring side made the light work of the 270-run target set by Pakistan as they achieved the total for the loss of just two wickets and 59 balls to spare. South Africa got off to a flamboyant start to the pursuit, courtesy of a brisk 81-run stand between openers Luan-dre Pretorius and de Kock. Returning Mohammad Wasim Jr provided the home side with a much-needed breakthrough in the 12th over by getting Pretorius caught behind. The opener made a 40-ball 46 with the help of seven fours and a six.

Following his dismissal, Tony de Zorzi joined de Kock in the middle, and the duo strengthened South Africa’s position by putting together 153 runs for the second wicket. The match-defining partnership culminated in the 35th over when Faheem Ashraf got de Zorzi caught at point. He walked back after scoring a brisk 76 off just 63 deliveries, smashing nine fours and three sixes. Quinton de Kock, on the other hand, carried his bat all the way through and top-scored with an unbeaten 123 off 119 deliveries, studded with eight fours and seven sixes. He received notable support from captain Matthew Breetzke, who made 16 not out from 20 balls. For Pakistan, Wasim Jr and Faheem could pick up a wicket apiece.

Trump revises tally of downed jets during Pakistan-India clash

US president says he had threatened to decline trade deals with Pakistan and India in a bid to stop war

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has revised the number of planes shot down during the Pakistan-India clash in May this year, stating that the tally of the downed jets is “eight essentially”. Earlier this year, Pakistan and Indian engaged in a military showdown, the worst between the old foes in decades, which was sparked by a terrorist attack on tourists in IIOJK’s Pahalgalam area, which New Delhi alleged was backed by Pakistan. Islamabad denied involvement in the Pahalgalam attack, which killed 26 men and offered to participate in a neutral probe into the deadly incident. During the clashes,

Continued on Page 06

FO rejects denying entry to Hindu community members

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly rejected “misleading” and “baseless” Indian media reports claiming to deny entry to certain members of the Hindu community on religious grounds who wanted to participate in the celebrations marking the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji from November 4-13.

Continued on Page 06

British army chief calls on Field Marshal Asim Munir

“Both sides reiterated the need for continued collaboration to ensure peace and stability in the region,” the military’s media affairs wing added



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The British Army’s Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Gen Sir Charles Roland Vincent Walker on Thursday met Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir in Rawalpindi, where the two discussed boosting bilateral defence cooperation. The meeting between the army chiefs took place at the General Headquarters (GHQ), a press release from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. “During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed,” it said. “Both sides reiterated the need for continued collaboration to ensure peace and stability in the region,” the military’s media affairs wing added. Gen Walker “appreciated Pakistan Army’s

Continued on Page 06

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Abbasi opens Rawalpindi's Safe, Smart Railway Station

RAWALPINDI: Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Thursday inaugurated the Safe and Smart Railway Station in Rawalpindi, highlighting ongoing measures to modernise Pakistan Railways and make it safer and more passenger-friendly.

Speaking to the media after the inauguration, Minister Abbasi said that under the special interest and vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the railway network was being upgraded on modern lines. "Practical steps are underway to modernise the railway system, and soon all major railway stations across the country will be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities like Rawalpindi," he added.

The minister noted that, in collaboration with the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO), a foolproof surveillance system comprising 143 cameras had been activated at the Rawalpindi Railway Station, enabling continuous monitoring of the station, reservation office, and surrounding areas. He said Rawalpindi had become the first railway station in the country to be equipped with such an advanced security system, which would also allow effective supervision of staff performance.

Minister Abbasi also inaugurated a new CIP lounge and waiting area, stating that modern lounges were being developed at major stations to provide passengers with a comfortable environment. "These facilities will include tea and refreshments, separate waiting areas for women and families, free Wi-Fi, and ATMs.—APP

Indian Sikh pilgrims reach Gurdwara Panja Sahib

ATTOCK: A group of over 2100 Indian Sikh pilgrims currently on a 10-day religious visit to Pakistan reached Gurdwara Panja Sahib, Hasan Abdal, on Thursday after completing their yatra at Gurdwara Sachcha Sauda, Farooqabad. The pilgrimage is being supervised by the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony. During the visit, the pilgrims traveled in three separate convoys under strict security protocols. Officials said the visit remains part of the central religious events in connection with the birth celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak, during which multiple historic Gurdwaras across Punjab are scheduled to be visited. Pilgrims expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and facilities made available by the Pakistani authorities. Nishan Singh of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee said bedding, accommodation, langar, and drinking water facilities had been upgraded this year. Deputy Party Leader Gurmest Singh Boh said Pakistan's religious heritage sites remained well preserved in original condition.—APP

Gilani calls for stronger Pak-Iran coop in various fields

Gilani emphasised the need to further strengthen political dialogue, economic connectivity and people-to-people exchanges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani met H.E. Dr Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran, and members of his delegation, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The meeting was followed by a luncheon in their honour. The Acting President said that Pakistan and Iran enjoy deep-rooted bonds of faith, history and culture, which continue to define their friendship and cooperation. He said that parliamentary engagement provides an important channel to advance understanding and promote cooperation for the benefit of the people of both countries. Gilani emphasised the need to further strengthen political dialogue, economic connectivity and people-to-people exchanges. He highlighted the role of regular interac-

tion between parliamentary committees and friendship groups in promoting cooperation on issues such as border management, counter-narcotics and facilitation for pilgrims. Mr Gilani said Pakistan wishes to significantly enhance bilateral trade with Iran as agreed during a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian held in August 2025. The Act-

ing President also called for greater collaboration between the two countries in education, culture and youth linkages through academic and medical cooperation and exchange programmes. A wide range of subjects, including bilateral trade, overall bilateral relations, the regional situation and international developments, were also discussed. Both reaffirmed their commitment to deepening co-

operation in all fields and to continuing close consultation on matters of common interest. Dr Ghalibaf thanked Mr Gilani for the warm welcome and said that Iran regarded Pakistan as a brotherly country and a trusted neighbour. He echoed the sentiments expressed during the Iranian President's address on the floor of the Iranian Parliament regarding the resolution for soli-

darity with Iran passed by the Senate of Pakistan. He said Iran is keen to expand parliamentary and economic ties and added that a parliamentary delegation from Iran would attend the upcoming Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference in Pakistan. The Iranian delegation also included Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam, Ambassador of Iran; Mr Fida Hossein Maleki, Chairman, Iran-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group; Mr Mohammad Nour Dehani, Vice Chairman, Iran-Pakistan PFG; Mr Rahmdel Bamiri; Mr Mehrdad Goodarzvand Chegini; Mr Fazlollah Ranjbar, Members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran; Mr Vahid Jalalzadeh, Deputy Minister for Parliamentary, Consular and Iranian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Mr Abolfazl Amouei, Special Assistant to the Speaker for International Affairs.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif with the Turkish Delegation led by Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya.

Pak aims to build \$100b blue economy by 2047: Junaid

Speaking about the event, the federal minister said PIMEC-2025 successfully gathered international partners, investors, experts, and maritime professionals to explore the vast opportunities within the blue economy

DNA

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry stated on Thursday that Pakistan aimed to build a \$100 billion blue economy by 2047 and emphasized that the Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC-2025) was more than just an ambition; it was a declaration of the nation's intent. He made these remarks while addressing the gathering as the chief guest at the PIMEC-2025 closing ceremony at the Expo Center here. The minister said that the sea was our next frontier for trade, prosperity, energy, food and climate resilience. By 2047, we aim to transform Pakistan into a globally recognized blue economy powerhouse driving regional integration and sustainable maritime growth across the North Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Speaking about the event, the federal minister said PIMEC-2025 successfully gathered international partners, investors, experts, and maritime professionals to explore the vast opportunities within the blue economy. "Under the guidance of Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif," he added, "we have launched an ambitious reform agenda to unlock this potential." He said that we were at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and East Africa. Pakistan is naturally positioned to be a regional maritime hub. After years of under-utilization, our fleet is now becoming the centre of our economic vision, trade stability and sustainable growth, he said and added that over the past few months, we have achieved mean-

ingful progress. The Pakistan National Shipping Corporation fleet has grown from 10 to 12, he said and added, three more ships will be arriving over the next two months, inshallah, this amounts to 60 percent growth in just five months. Our target is 30 ships by 2026 and 60 within three years, inshallah. The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs said that we also processed award of licence to first ever private sector company for the ferry service. We have initiated the establishment of Pakistan's first bridge ship repair and recycling yard at Port Qasim, which is part of our sea to steel integrated maritime industrial complex, he said, that will also support the revival of Pakistan's steel. He said that we are reviving the Qadani Ship Repair and Recycling Yard with Rs 12 billion investment fully equipped with Hong Kong Convention on Environmental Standards. He said that the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 2025 to 2035 has finalised targeting the double fisheries export within one year, inshallah. The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs said that we also look far beyond the present of Pakistan's maritime century 2047-2147. He said that his vision for next century is based on five pillars which include, we have already Port 1, Port 2, Port 3, Port Qasim, KPT, and Gwadar. Development of three new deep seaports, Port 4, Port 5, and Port 6, inshallah, he added. He said that he envisions building Pakistan's ship in future, inshallah. Achieving 100 percent regional and green ports with modern connectivity to road, rail, and air. Leading regional maritime cooperation, promotes peace, sustainability, and shared for prosperity across our

sea, he said. The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs said that since he has taken charge of this ministry and observed its operations, he is very pleased with its ongoing performance. He said that the Rs 100 billion target we are pursuing is not just a target; it is a testament to our resolve. We must be determined and have the sincere intention to strengthen Pakistan. If we do, then we can generate not Rs 100 billion, but Rs 2300 billion from here, and we can further strengthen our country's economy, he said. He said that we welcome investors from all corners. It is absolutely their right to invest here, but it is also our country, we must think about it. He expressed confidence that our blue economy is our future and the officials at Port Qasim, Gwadar and, Fisheries department—they are all ready to serve the investors day and night. If the investors face any problem, go directly to these institutions, contact the ministry. We are prepared to provide them with every possible facility. The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs said that our waters are ready to contribute to our economy, but we must also come with a passion to change these winds and build Pakistan into a strong and stable country.

It is pertinent to mention here that as many as of 83 Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs), with a combined value of Rs 76 billion, were inked during the PIMEC-2025 held from November 3 to 6. Commander Karachi, Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi, Chairman of Badar Group and CEO of Badar Expo Solutions, Zohair Naseer and other dignitaries were also present.

Govt to set up 'Olive Oil Council' to cut imports, promote exports

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to establish a dedicated Olive Oil Council under the forthcoming National Olive Policy to regulate the fast-growing olive industry, strengthen exports and cut reliance on imported edible oils. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the proposed council will serve as a central body for coordination, certification, branding, and quality control of olive oil and its by-products. It will also oversee the implementation of the National Olive Policy and Action Plan. The new policy marks a major step toward institutionalizing Pakistan's olive sector, aligning it with global standards set by the International Olive Council (IOC). It emphasizes sustainable production, rural livelihood improvement, foreign exchange savings, and value-added exports through a modern governance framework. A senior official of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research told Wealth Pakistan that the policy aims to transform Pakistan from a nascent olive grower into a competitive global player within five to seven years. The country's domestic olive oil production has already reduced imports by nearly half, while export volumes continue to rise amid growing recognition of Pakistani brands abroad. Reflecting this progress, Pakistan's indigenous olive oil brand "LO" recently won a silver award at the New York International Olive Oil Competition, competing with more than 1,200 global entries from 28 countries. Under the government's Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), Pakistan's olive cultivation has expanded rapidly. Between 2014 and 2025, around 33,000 acres of marginal and barren land have been converted into olive orchards, with over 4.3 million trees planted across 60 districts. The total olive ecosystem now spans more than 55,000 acres with 6.9 million trees, engaging over 11,000 farmers. To improve processing capacity, 51 olive oil extraction units are operational across Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The government has also set up six fruit-processing units, 14 nursery tunnels, five automated weather stations, and four International Olive Council-standard laboratories to ensure compliance with global quality benchmarks. The initiative is being supported by international partners, including the Government of Italy, through CIHEAM Bari and AICS, which provided 1.5 million for the first phase of the Olive Culture Scale-up Project and an additional 3 million for the ongoing Phase II (2024-27). A 20 million TVET Umbrella Project is also underway to train local technicians and farmers in modern olive cultivation and processing methods. The official said that the upcoming Olive Oil Council will coordinate these efforts and develop branding, marketing, and export strategies to position Pakistan as a credible player in the global olive oil market. "The council will serve as the backbone of Pakistan's olive economy," he said. "It will unify public and private stakeholders, support farmers, and open new avenues for export-led growth.—DNA

Amir reaffirms Pakistan's support for Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Thursday paid rich tribute to the martyrs of Jammu, reiterating Pakistan's unwavering political, moral and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for self-determination. Addressing a seminar held at Kashmir House, Islamabad, in connection with Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Jammu (Jammu Martyrs Day), organized by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference under the leadership of Convener Gulam Muhammad Safi, the minister saluted the courage and sacrifices of the Kashmiri people. He said the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, despite all hardships, had kept the Kashmir issue alive at the international level. "Many people are unaware of the atrocities committed in occupied Jammu and Kashmir where hundreds of thousands of people were martyred within a few days in 1947," Amir Muqam remarked.—DNA

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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

Emergency Ambulance.1122

& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Canth 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

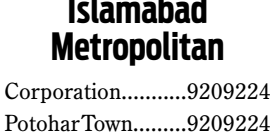


Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343



Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Ali Yerlikaya paid homage at the Martyrs’ Monument



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya, accompanied by Pakistan’s Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, visited the Pakistan Monument. A smartly turned-out contingent of Islamabad Police presented a guard of honour to the visiting Turkish Interior Minister. Ali Yerlikaya paid homage at the Martyrs’ Monument, laid a floral wreath, and offered Fateha (prayers) for the martyrs. From Shakarparian, the Turkish Interior Minister viewed Islamabad city and the Margalla Hills, and appreciated the beauty of the capital. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, and Inspector General of Islamabad Police were also present on the occasion.—DNA

Pak, Afghan urged to reset ties through strategic, respect-based diplomacy

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The complexities in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and the deep-seated structural flaws within the Taliban regime, such as the lack of a well-defined authority structure, political fragmentation, absence of credible action against the TTP, a tilt towards India, and divisive media narratives, have prevented the two countries from realizing the full potential of their relationship and have contributed to recent border hostilities. Addressing these challenges will require sustained political will, the establishment of verifiable engagement mechanisms, and a shift from reactive to strategic diplomacy grounded in a balanced, mutually respectful, and forward-looking approach. This should be characterized by effective communication, cooperation, sensitivity to each other’s national concerns, and a shared focus on regional interests. These views were expressed at a roundtable discussion titled ‘Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: A Multi-dimensional View,’ organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, which brought together diplomats, academics, defense analysts, and journalists. The speakers included Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain, vice-chairman IPS, Prof Dr Shabana Fiaz, HOD Defence and Strategic Studies, QAU, Major General (r) Inam-ul-Haque, international affairs expert, Brigadier (r) Said Nazir, defense analyst, Tahir Khan, a journalist, Dr Ashraf Ali, security and political analyst, Dr Abdullah Khan, managing director at PICSS, Salman Javed, director general South Asia Times, Dr Khuram Iqbal, associate professor, National Institute of Intelligence and Security Studies, QAU, and Dr Faisal Javid, HOD International Relations, FUUAST, Islamabad. Participants observed that since the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul in August 2021, the group has been transitioning from a religious movement to a nationalist force seeking legitimacy at home and abroad amid an apparent disconnect with its population. Meanwhile, Pakistan has exercised “strategic patience” as a conduit for engagement. The discussion emphasized that both sides must reframe their narratives, strengthen institutional linkages across political, defense, economic, and cultural domains, and craft a sustainable framework rooted in mutual respect and shared regional stability. The speakers noted that the contours of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations rest on five fundamental pillars: political, defense, economic, people-to-people interaction, and culture. While the two countries have made advancements in the last three domains, they have consistently fallen short of replicating the impact of these gains in the political and defense arenas for decades. Underpinning these issues are structural shortcomings such as the absence of a distinct authority structure in Afghanistan, which became evident during the recent negotiations between Islamabad and Kabul in Istanbul. This has hindered the Afghan authorities’ ability to formulate a consensus-based Pakistan policy, leading to further deterioration in relations. Another key limitation is the oversensitization of critical issues that affect both countries’ national interests, which fuels negative sentiments and deepens the trust deficit between the two sides. Despite these constraints, participants expressed optimism that Pakistan and Afghanistan can still craft and exercise a workable relationship grounded in mutual respect, shared interests, and regional security. However, they emphasized that Pakistan must remain cautious in its future engagements regarding threats emanating from Afghan territory, especially those of a non-conventional nature, such as India-backed proxies or potential water-related conflicts. In this regard, Pakistan needs to establish an engagement mechanism with the Afghan Taliban that includes tangible and verifiable guarantees to address Islamabad’s security concerns proactively.

SC reinstates police constable, terms dismissal unlawful

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has declared the dismissal of Police Constable Ghulam Murtaza unlawful and ordered his reinstatement, ruling that a departmental action cannot be sustained once an employee has been acquitted of the only criminal charge forming its basis. According to the written judgment approved for reporting, the apex court held that when the sole allegation against a public servant is their involvement in a criminal case, an acquittal by a criminal court automatically nullifies the departmental proceedings. A two-member bench comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi announced the verdict in Civil Petition No. 4757/2024, filed against the decision of the Punjab Service Tribunal dated May 16, 2024. The judgment stated that Ghulam Murtaza, who was serving as a Police Constable (BPS-07), was booked in FIR No. 722/2021 under a murder charge in 2021. Based on that case, the department initiated disciplinary proceedings and dismissed him from service in December 2021. Although he was acquitted of the criminal charges on April 26, 2022, the department reopened the inquiry and dismissed him again.—APP



Islamabad: Coordinator to the PM on Commerce, Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan meets with the Netherlands delegation led by Ms. Henriëtte van Beynum, CEO of Beddinghouse, along with representatives from Invest International.

Marri slams PTI founder over anti-state remarks

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Central Spokesperson Shazia Marri on Thursday strongly condemned the recent statement by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder on the social media platform X. In a statement issued here, Marri termed the post “highly condemnable,” saying it reflected “the mindset of a self-centered person willing to harm Pakistan for personal political gain.” She said the PTI founder’s remarks echoed “the rhetoric of Narendra Modi and the narrative of Pakistan’s adversaries.” “His politics has weakened state institutions, divided the nation, and undermined national unity,” Marri said, adding that his lust for power had crossed all moral and patriotic limits. “This is not politics, it is an anti-Pakistan agenda,” she asserted. The PPP spokesperson reiterated her party’s unwavering commitment to safeguarding democracy, state institutions and the Constitution.—APP

Guidelines issued for trading accounts

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), in collaboration with the National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL) and the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC), has issued guidelines for opening trading accounts for minors under the age of 18. This initiative was developed under the guidance of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), said a press release issued by the SECP on Thursday. This initiative marks a significant milestone in promoting investor awareness and financial inclusion. It aims to foster a culture of saving and investment among the next generation in Pakistan, enabling minors’ early participation in the capital markets, instilling financial discipline, and providing access to formal investment avenues. The guidelines provide a clear process, modalities, and terms & conditions for opening and operating minor accounts in the capital markets through natural or court-appointed guardians. The process ensures accessibility while maintaining robust compliance and operational safeguards. Furthermore, the guidelines outline the process for transitioning to a regular trading account upon turning 18, including the tax impact applicable to the transfer of inventory. These guidelines are an important leap toward broadening investor participation and building a financially aware future generation.—APP

RCCI pays tribute to late ex-President Major (R) Amanullah

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) on Thursday held a condolence reference to honour the services of its former President, late Major (Retired) Amanullah Khan. The event was attended by Dr Amjad Saqib, Founder and Executive Director of Akhuwat Foundation; Group Leader Sohail Altaf; RCCI President Usman Shaukat; Vice President Fahad Barlas; former presidents; former Senator Mian Atiq; representatives of Akhuwat Foundation including Lt Gen Faiz Jilani Malik, Junaid Farid, and Haroon Ihsan Piracha; Chairman ISE REIT; trade association representatives; Sheikh Hafeez; members of the executive committee; and numerous chamber members. Speakers remembered Major (R) Amanullah Khan as a respected and dedicated leader who played a key role in strengthening regional linkages, promoting trade, and serving the community with compassion. They highlighted his contributions during crises, including floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, reflecting his commitment to humanitarian work. He was also remembered as a sincere colleague, loyal friend, and inspiring figure whose dedication to public service will remain a guiding example. Prayers were offered for the elevation of his soul and for patience and strength for his bereaved family.—DNA

DREAMS-1 project to ease water supply issues in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi is expected to complete laying the remaining 600 metres of a 36-inch diameter pipeline on the Sixth Road within a week, marking a key milestone in the DREAMS-1 project to enhance the city’s water supply. WASA Rawalpindi Managing Director Muhammad Saleem Ashraf on Thursday said the total pipeline length from Rawal Dam was 9.6 kilometres, of which seven kilometres had already been installed. “The work on the remaining 600-metre section on Sixth Road faced challenges due to dense population and heavy traffic, but these obstacles have now been overcome,” he added, assuring that the work would be completed within a week. The WASA MD said the project “forms part of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s vision to provide clean drinking water to Rawalpindi’s residents.” He apologised for the inconvenience caused during the project’s execution and said its completion would help resolve the city’s long-standing water supply issues.—APP

Briefs

HEC's testing body postpones LAT in Balochistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD/QUETTA: Education Testing Council (ETC), the testing entity of Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has postponed the Law Admission Test (LAT), which was scheduled for November 9, 2025, in Quetta, Balochistan in view of the prevailing law and order situation. The new date for LAT will be announced within due course of time. LAT has been made postponed in the wake of the Government of Balochistan's decision to impose Section 144 in District Quetta for a period of 15 days.—APP

IRSA releases 106,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 106,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 59,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbella Dam stood at 1540.78 feet which was 138.78 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 29,800 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs, respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1230.30 feet, which was 180.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 5,600 cusecs and 33,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 57,000, 43,600, 46,700, and 10,100 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 8,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

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Peddler put behind bars

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Shehzad Town Police station arrested a narcotics peddler and recovered a total of 570 grams of heroin during an intelligence-based operation. An official told APP on Thursday that the action was taken in continuation of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi's anti-narcotics initiative "Nasha Ab Nahi". Acting on directions of SP Rural Muhammad Shoaib and SDPO Shehzad Town Muhammad Inzamam Khan, SHO Shehzad Town Ashfaq Waraich led a special team to track down the suspect.—APP

Salik orders swift action on workers offloading at airport

Chaudhry Salik Hussain stated that, even though workers possessed valid work visas and protector certificates, they were still offloaded at several airports

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Thursday took notice of workers being offloaded at airports and directed the authorities to address the issue without delay. During the high-level meeting, he presided over, officials briefed him regarding the offloading of workers at multiple airports. Chaudhry Salik Hussain stated that, even though workers possessed valid work visas and protector certificates, they were still offloaded at several airports. He emphasized that the

matter is being addressed with urgency to prevent such occurrences in the future. Riffat Mukhtar, the Director General of the FIA, participated in the meeting in a special capacity, where Chaudhry Salik Hussain instructed him to take immediate action to resolve the problem of workers being offloaded at airports. The federal minister assured that, going forward, no holder of a valid work visa will be offloaded at the airport. The minister affirmed that no worker will be unlawfully stopped at airports, stressing that Paki-

stanis going abroad for employment hold a place of great respect and value. Salik highlighted that remittances from Overseas Pakistanis provide crucial foreign exchange, sustaining the national economy. He added that the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, in collaboration with FIA officials, is drafting SOPs to prevent such incidents in the future. The DG FIA stated that incidents of workers being offloaded at Lahore and Karachi airports have been reported, and an inquiry is in progress. He emphasized that if any FIA personnel

are found involved, strict action will be taken. He further clarified that no new conditions have been imposed on individuals traveling abroad on work visas, nor has any requirement been introduced for obtaining an affidavit from a government officer. The DG FIA also announced that a new digital system will soon be launched, enabling workers to complete their immigration process online prior to departure. A delegation from the Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association also attended the meeting.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan in a meeting with Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa FIFA Senior Vice President.

Business community supports new constitutional amendment

DNA

ISLAMABAD :The business community fully endorses the proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment, calling it crucial for economic recovery, national unity, and defense readiness. Former Islamabad Chamber of Commerce president Shahid Rashid Butt stated that Pakistan cannot sustain a strong defense with a weak economy and urged all parties to support the reform in the national interest. During an emergency meeting of traders and industrialists, Shahid Rasheed Butt explained that the amendment aims to fix a fiscal imbalance that has harmed the federation since the 18th Amendment. He said that the earlier reform reduced fiscal discipline and hurt the center's ability to handle debt payments, defense, and development. "Provinces have surpluses over PKR 600 billion, while the federal deficit exceeds PKR 5 trillion, which is clearly unsustainable," he pointed out. He added that after gaining fiscal autonomy, provinces did not expand their revenue base, improve public services, or enhance internal security.

They received large federal transfers but failed to deliver funds to the people, causing deprivation, unrest, and even violence. He noted that their increasing debts despite high funding show financial mismanagement. The business leader emphasized that the 27th Amendment is not a political move but an economic necessity to strengthen democracy, the judiciary, and defense by fixing federal finances. The proposed plan would increase federal resources, lessen dependence on borrowing, and promote fair development across provinces. Butt warned that without urgent reforms, the economic crisis would worsen, hurting business, investor confidence, and national security. He said stabilizing the financial system is vital for Pakistan's future, urging political parties to reach an agreement to protect the economy and support sustainable growth. Shahid Rasheed Butt pointed out that the reform aligns with IMF recommendations for fiscal consolidation and transparent use of provincial funds. Business leaders at the meeting called on the government and opposition to agree on a charter of the economy to maintain better policies beyond political cycles.

Pakistan calls for technology transfer

ISLAMABAD: The 7th International Symposium on the Technology Transfer & Innovation Cooperation and Biohealth Agriculture was being held in Xianyang, Northwest China from November 4 to 8, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. More than 300 home and abroad representatives, from Belarus, Thailand, Pakistan, Arab countries, ASEAN countries and regions, participated in the forum. This symposium focuses on major issues such as climate change, food security, healthy agriculture, biomedicine, water-saving irrigation, and smart breeding. It is committed to international cooperation and the transformation of achievements in the field of high-tech agriculture and serves the development of bio-health agriculture under the Belt and Road initiative. Dr. Shakil Arshad, Director to Minister at Ministry of Science and Technology, stated that technology transfer is key to improving agricultural productivity and promoting sustainable development. He called on China and Pakistan to deepen cooperation in areas such as smart irrigation, agricultural AI monitoring, and water resource security, and to strengthen partnerships through exchanges among entrepreneurs and inter-provincial cooperation. In his keynote speech Technology Transfer in

Agriculture Field between China and Pakistan, Dr Arshad introduced that technology transfer is a vital mechanism for boosting agricultural productivity, sustainability, and innovation. "Its importance includes increasing crop yields and resource utilization efficiency; encouraging agricultural innovation and modernization; and supporting rural development and food security," Dr. Arshad specifically highlighted key areas of technology transfer that are of great interest to all parties in Pakistan, including hybrid seed technology, precision agriculture and AI-based monitoring, water-saving irrigation systems, as well as post-harvest management and value addition. "I believe that China's smart greenhouse technology, soil nutrient management systems, integrated pest management (IPM), and drone-based field monitoring could be very useful in Pakistan to help farmers solve problems and increase income, looking forward to deeper cooperation in these specific areas." The Doctor also mentioned some challenges that may be encountered in technology transfer cooperation, including infrastructure and logistical barriers, local soil and climate adaptability, intellectual property and cost barriers, and personnel training and education needs, "all of which require us to overcome together.—DNA

Chinese, Pakistani partners ink MoU to advance EV manufacturing

Warm Waters Advisory Group Pakistan, a Lahore-based strategic investment and advisory firm, will serve as Skywell's local partner, supporting regulatory compliance, infrastructure development, and market integration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT) on Wednesday facilitated the signing of a landmark memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Skywell Automobile, a leading global electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer in China, and Warm Waters Advisory Group Pakistan, paving the way for large-scale investment in sustainable mobility and EV infrastructure in Pakistan. The MoU was signed by Mr. Huang, head of international business at Skywell Automobile, and Adeel Malik, general partner and CEO of Warm Waters Advisory Group. Under the collaboration, PBIT will provide full facilitation to Skywell as it establishes its investment footprint in Punjab, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The signing ceremony was attended by Muhammad Mun-taha Ashraf, chairman of PBIT, who reaffirmed the

Government of Punjab's commitment to facilitating foreign direct investment and promoting innovative, green technologies across the province. "This partnership is another step toward transforming Punjab into a regional hub for electric-vehicle (EV) production and green industrial growth," Mr. Ashraf said, adding that the provincial government is prioritizing sustainable industrialization to reduce emissions and create jobs. Skywell Automobile, one of China's major EV and new-energy vehicle (NEV) producers, has expanded rapidly across Asia and the Middle East in recent years. Its collaboration with Warm Waters Advisory Group marks Skywell's first major investment initiative in Pakistan. Warm Waters Advisory Group Pakistan, a Lahore-based strategic investment and advisory firm, will serve as Skywell's local partner, supporting regulatory compliance, infrastructure development, and market integration.

Police nab man over house theft, Rs 3m recovered

RAWALPINDI: The Dhamial Police arrested a man accused of committing a house theft about two weeks ago and recovered Rs 3,000,000 allegedly obtained through the sale of stolen gold ornaments. According to a Rawalpindi Police spokesman on Thursday, the suspect was traced and apprehended after investigators employed both technical and human intelligence methods. The spokesman said the recovery was made following the suspect's disclosure and subsequent identification of the place where the sale proceeds of stolen jewellery had been concealed. Superintendent of Police (SP) Saddar Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar directed the Dhamial Police to prepare a case against the accused with solid evidence to ensure his conviction by the court.—APP

Blind murder solved

Prime suspect held-capital Police, HIU

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's Secretariat Police, in coordination with the Homicide Investigation Unit (HIU), solved the blind murder case of Muhammad Ali and arrested the prime suspect. An official told APP on Thursday that the victim's son Mustafa Ali approached Secretariat Police Station, reporting his father missing and expressing suspicion over their neighbour Salar Abbasi. Following the complaint, FIR No. 604/25 was registered under murder charges. He said the body of Muhammad Ali was recovered from Ramli Village near Shahdara Khurd (forest area). The corpse bore firearm injuries, and five spent cartridges of a 30-bore pistol were collected from the crime scene as evidence. He said that acting on the directions of DIG Muhammad Jawad Tariq, SHO Mian Imran formed a special investigation team. The HIU and police team used modern technical aids, including CCTV footage, call-data records and geo-fencing, and carried out focused raids which led to the arrest of prime suspect Salar Abbasi. He added that further interrogation of the accused is underway and more arrests are expected as raids continue to trace possible accomplices. SHO Mian Imran said that those involved in this heinous crime will be brought to justice and no offender will be spared.—APP

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Mamdani to move from campaign poetry to the prose of governing

DR. ABDEL AZIZ

AS a former New Yorker, I found Zohran Mamdani’s great political upset on Tuesday remarkable. But the 34-year-old recent Muslim immigrant from Uganda with Indian roots did not do it the usual way. He did not just repeat the mainstream ideas of one of the two major parties, as candidates from marginalized communities usually do, nor did he hide or apologize for his religious or ethnic identity. He did the opposite, running against the mainstream, advocating unorthodox views and wearing his minority bona fides on his sleeve, while focusing on the main goal, which was how he could serve New Yorkers better. It was a historical upset against long odds – his opponents threw everything at him. President Donald Trump trashed him as a communist and threatened to cut off federal funds. Calling him a communist, as Trump and Elon Musk have done, is a stretch; Mamdani ran as a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, but he was not the first to do so in New York and there have been scores of officials across the country who belonged to this group. Democratic socialism can be placed on the left of social democracies in Europe, but way to the right of authoritarian socialism or communism. Major newspapers supported his opponents. Billionaires from across the country condemned him and poured money into his opponents’ campaigns. Musk, the richest man in the world who has 229 million followers on his X platform, attacked him. And while Mamdani was endorsed by the city’s Democrats, the party’s national leaders distanced themselves. He flipped conventional wisdom on its head. In a city where supporting Israel was considered a prerequisite for being mayor, he expressed support for the Palestinians, condemned the Gaza genocide and pledged to arrest Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a war criminal. Israeli officials and US supporters called him an antisemite and warned against what his victory could lead to. But those warnings did not deter supporters. In the words of one Jewish organization that supported Mamdani, “the relentless, irrational but unfortunately in-character Zionist obsession with bullying anyone living within a radius of 100 light years of New York into calling Mamdani an antisemite has merely backfired and garnered immeasurable sympathy for him, not to mention tons of votes.” In the end, most voters saw through the personal attacks and chose Mamdani because he spoke to their interests: affordable housing and free healthcare and buses. Mamdani is the first Muslim mayor of New York, but there have been other Muslim mayors in the US. In November 2021, three Muslim mayors were elected in three Michigan towns with sizable Muslim electorates. However, New York is a large city with more than 8 million inhabitants, with Muslims making

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up less than 10 percent of the population. Although the new mayor took pride in his Muslim, Indian and African roots, he did not run on identity politics but on the issues that mattered most to New Yorkers. Mamdani began his campaign by asking people what they thought and needed rather than telling them what they should want or think. He turned their replies into a platform they could understand. The victory euphoria needs to be followed by governing America’s largest city and its economic and cultural capital. Former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, father of Mamdani’s chief opponent, used to say, “You campaign in poetry but govern in prose,” meaning that you need to adopt practical solutions to implement the ambitious promises you make during the campaign. There are enormous challenges facing the city, including easing communal tensions and fighting corruption. New York is the most diverse city in the US: 3.3 million of its residents, about 40 percent of the total population, are foreign-born, hailing from about 150 countries. Some of those tensions surfaced during the campaign; most Jewish, Catholic and Protestant voters did not vote for Mamdani. He needs to earn their trust for his program to succeed. Mamdani ran on fighting corruption and mismanagement – historically endemic in the city’s politics. Current Mayor Eric Adams was charged and prosecuted in several serious cases of corruption and would probably have gone to jail had it not been for the Trump administration’s intervention earlier this year. Adams is not alone; many of his predecessors were also accused of being involved in corruption. New York is a “city for sale,” in the words of famous journalist James Breslin, who wrote a bestseller with that title. At the same time, Mamdani has to deliver on his main campaign promises of universal healthcare and free buses. He also needs to address the housing crisis; nearly half of renters are considered “rent-burdened,” spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. He also promised to address economic disparities through job creation and upward mobility for all residents. The challenge lies in ensuring policies that encourage economic growth and that also allow more people to benefit from that growth. In the end, most voters saw through the personal attacks and chose Mamdani because he spoke to their interests. Mamdani also faces the strain of New York’s deteriorating infrastructure. The American Society of Civil Engineers this year awarded New York a “C” grade on its infrastructure report card, noting that its bridges, roads and public transit systems are in desperate need of repair. Tens of billions of dollars are needed to fix all this, which is going to be daunting, especially in the face of objections from Albany and threats voiced during the election campaign from Washington and from business leaders. Trump threatened to cut off all federal aid to New York, state Gov. Kathy Hochul opposed Mamdani’s tax proposals and business leaders said they would leave the city if he raised taxes to fund his community programs. Having lived in New York for about two decades and followed its politics for decades more, I think it is going to be an enormous task for Mamdani to tackle all these problems while keeping the city afloat financially. When I moved there in 1981, it was under the supervision of the Municipal Assistance Corporation, a receivership of sorts that lasted for 10 years to deal with the city’s financial troubles, as it was near bankruptcy. This could happen again, as Mamdani inherits a financially ailing city that is now also threatened by powerful adversaries.

The immigrant who rewrote America’s political destiny

Qamar Bashir



His campaign was a marathon of endurance. While others relied on corporate donors and media machinery, Mamdani relied on people. He walked the streets of Queens and Harlem, crossed Brooklyn bridges, spoke in Bronx parks, and listened to the working poor – the forgotten backbone of the city. Against him stood a coalition of multimillionaires, landlords, and political veterans, supported by powerful lobbying groups that had long influenced New York’s policies

A new chapter has been written in the political and administrative history of the United States – one authored not by an old establishment figure, but by a 34-year-old South Asian whose intellect, integrity, and irresistible smile conquered one of the most challenging cities in the world: New York. Zohran Mamdani’s victory as Mayor is not just a political triumph; it is a moment of moral reawakening for America – a reminder that the nation still rewards courage, clarity, and conviction over color, creed, or capital. Born in Kampala, Uganda, raised in a South Asian family, and educated in the United States, Mamdani’s rise is nothing short of revolutionary. In a city long ruled by power brokers, media barons, and billionaires, he stood alone – an immigrant’s son knocking on every door of every borough, shaking every hand, and smiling through every insult hurled his way. With unshakable composure, he challenged the system and charmed New Yorkers of every race and religion. His campaign was a marathon of endurance. While others relied on corporate donors and media machinery, Mamdani relied on people. He walked the streets of Queens and Harlem, crossed Brooklyn bridges, spoke in Bronx parks, and listened to the working poor – the forgotten backbone of the city. Against him stood a coalition of multimillionaires, landlords, and political veterans, supported by powerful lobbying groups that had long influenced New York’s policies. Even in the face of personal attacks – accusations of “communism,” threats to his safety, and attempts to question his loyalty – he never lost his calm. His reply was always the same: “My loyalty rests with New York and the United States – not with any foreign power.” When asked whether he would visit Israel after his victory – as every other mayoral candidate promised – Mamdani’s answer shocked the establishment. “Why should I?” he said. “My duty is to the people of New York – to every Jew, Muslim, Christian, and atheist who calls this city home. My allegiance is to America.” His words, honest and unvarnished, unleashed a storm. Traditional media branded him anti-Israel, while social media – the new voice of conscience – hailed him as a patriot unafraid to speak truth to power. For the first time, a mainstream U.S. politician publicly rejected the unspoken rule that loyalty to Israel was a test of American legitimacy. In many ways, Zohran Mamdani is the mirror America needed. His victory exposed the fault lines between old-guard politics and the emerging conscience of a new generation. He represent-

ed the immigrant who built this nation yet was too long kept away from leading it. He reminded America that New York – the city that welcomed Italians, Irish, Jews, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis – owes its greatness to its diversity. During his victory speech, his voice carried both gratitude and defiance: “New York was built by immigrants, and today, it is led by one.” That line alone set the tone for a new political age. Mamdani promised affordable housing for all New Yorkers, a moratorium on rent increases, fare-free buses, and city-run grocery stores to fight inflation. He vowed to make public services not a privilege but a right. Critics dismissed these pledges as utopian. But Mamdani replied with characteristic wit: “Every day I will wake up to make New York better than it was yesterday.” His agenda reflects the deep inequities that define the modern metropolis. In 2025, median rent in Manhattan surpassed \$5,000 a month – a record high. More than 60,000 New Yorkers sleep in shelters nightly, while the city’s billionaires doubled their wealth since 2020. Mamdani’s victory came as a moral revolt – a democratic uprising against profit-driven governance. Even President Donald Trump, when asked about Mamdani’s win, could not resist commenting. “He’s a communist,” Trump said, half-smiling. “He’ll fail, and that will only help Republicans.” Yet, observers noted the unease behind his humor – a recognition that a formidable force had entered the national arena. Trump, a master of populist energy, recognized in Mamdani a younger reflection of his own political magnetism – only directed by conscience rather than ego. In the weeks following the election, the White House reportedly tried to assess how to handle the new mayor who refused to be co-opted. Mamdani, however, made his position clear: “I will cooperate with Washington if Washington cooperates with New York’s people. My loyalty is to my voters, not to the corridors of power.” He stood unshaken even when both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi mocked him publicly for his promise to honor international warrants for their arrest should they enter New York. Netanyahu had sneered, “He’ll never be mayor,” and Modi dismissed him as irrelevant. Yet, the ballots proved otherwise – the people of New York had spoken. Mamdani’s win has triggered more than political ripples; it has ignited a national awakening. Across the United States, from Chicago to San Francisco, young South Asians,

African Americans, Latinos, and Arab-Americans have found new hope. His unapologetic independence has inspired debates on the corrosive influence of foreign lobbies and corporate donors in American politics. A recent independent survey by the Pew Research Center showed that 68% of Americans now believe politicians should prioritize domestic welfare over foreign alliances – a shift many attribute to Mamdani’s rhetoric and example. Conversations once whispered in private – about AIPAC funding, media bias, and political coercion – are now part of mainstream discourse. For decades, America’s unquestioned alignment with Israel – despite global condemnation of its actions in Gaza – was seen as untouchable. But Mamdani’s stance has torn that veil. His refusal to visit Israel, his insistence on compassion for both Jews and Palestinians, and his commitment to New York’s multicultural reality have forced the nation to rethink where its moral compass truly points. Political analysts across U.S. networks now call Zohran Mamdani “the Obama of a new era.” Like Barack Obama’s 2008 rise, Mamdani’s victory carries symbolic power – proof that the American dream, though battered, still breathes. He may not seek the presidency soon, but many already whisper that history has found its next great contender. If an African-American from Chicago could rise to the presidency in 2008, why not a South Asian from Queens in the decade ahead? His journey embodies the American ideal – not of inherited privilege, but of earned respect. In an age of polarization, Mamdani offers something rare: a unifying moral vision that transcends political lines. He speaks not as a partisan but as a citizen-leader who loves his city more than his career. His victory reminds America that greatness lies not in dominance but in decency – not in fear, but in faith. As the confetti of his triumph settles over the streets of New York, one truth rings clear: the son of immigrants has rekindled the immigrant spirit of America. And if his light continues to rise, he may yet illuminate the path to a better nation – one where every child, regardless of origin, can dream not just of belonging, but of leading. —The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC Macomb, Michigan, USA

The pulse of regional diplomacy beats in Islamabad

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



These gatherings, steeped in camaraderie and mutual respect, speak to the enduring friendships Pakistan has cultivated with these nations – friendships rooted in shared faith, mutual support, and a collective vision for regional stability. In the midst of this renewed diplomatic enthusiasm

DIPLOMATIC activities in Pakistan’s capital have entered a phase of remarkable vibrancy. Islamabad, a city long known for its tranquil beauty and poised diplomacy, is once again emerging as a hub of regional and international engagement. The embassies are alive with receptions, cultural evenings, and flag-hoisting ceremonies that reflect not merely formalities but a deeper sense of shared celebration and fraternity. The recent series of events held to commemorate the national days of China, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey were not mere diplomatic rituals; they carried a symbolic warmth, as if Pakistan were celebrating its own milestones. These gatherings, steeped in camaraderie and mutual respect, speak to the enduring friendships Pakistan has cultivated with these nations – friendships rooted in shared faith, mutual support, and a collective vision for regional stability. In the midst of this renewed diplomatic enthusiasm, the visit of the Speakers of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye Mr. Numan Kurtulmuş and the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan Ms. Sahiba Gafarova to Islamabad, at the invitation of the Speaker of Pakistan’s National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, marked a defining moment in parliamentary diplomacy. The trilateral conference of the three Speakers was not a mere ceremonial gathering but a serious dialogue on issues of mutual concern and regional importance. The discussions revolved around economic cooperation, trade facilitation, counterterrorism, and enhancing parliamentary exchanges to strengthen democratic institutions in the region. Such engagements have rekindled the spirit of collaboration among nations that share historical, cultural, and religious bonds. The joint resolve to promote peace and prosperity through legislative cooperation demonstrates that diplomacy is no longer confined to foreign offices alone – parliaments, too, are becoming dynamic arenas of international understanding and partnership. Adding further weight to these diplomatic endeavors, the arrival of the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran Mr. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on the special invitation of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, accompanied by a high-level parliamentary delegation, has given a new dimension to Islamabad’s

diplomatic momentum. The Iran-Pakistan relationship, grounded in deep historical and cultural ties, has always carried a potential far greater than the political frictions or external pressures that occasionally shadow it. The ongoing parliamentary interactions between the two countries are expected to focus on issues of mutual concern, including border management, trade corridors, energy cooperation, and cultural exchange. More importantly, these interactions are likely to promote a spirit of understanding and collaboration not only between the two nations but also among other neighboring Islamic countries that look toward Pakistan and Iran as influential actors in the region. This series of high-profile visits and conferences is not happening in isolation; it represents a conscious effort by Pakistan to revive and reinforce its diplomatic engagement with the Muslim world. The region, undergoing significant transformations, and Pakistan appears determined to play its rightful role as a bridge between nations – not only geographically but also politically and culturally. The willingness of countries like Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Azerbaijan to engage Pakistan in such depth and frequency signals a collective recognition of Islamabad’s strategic importance and the trust placed in its leadership. Particularly commendable are the cooperative efforts undertaken between Pakistan and Afghanistan, often facilitated by other brotherly Islamic countries. Despite the complexities that define the border regions and the political sensitivities involved, several friendly states have voluntarily and sincerely assisted in bridging the gaps between Islamabad and Kabul. Their mediatory and humanitarian roles – aimed at fostering dialogue, promoting stability, and addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by the Afghan people – are beginning to yield positive outcomes. Pakistan’s commitment to regional peace, coupled with its historical responsibility as Afghanistan’s closest neighbor, continues to shape its foreign policy vision toward a more peaceful and interconnected region. The spirit of these recent engagements reflects a broader transformation in Pakistan’s diplomatic posture – one that emphasizes multilateralism, parliamentary

diplomacy, and people-to-people connections. The country’s leadership, both political and parliamentary, appears to have recognized that diplomacy in the modern world cannot rely solely on traditional statecraft. It must now include collaborative dialogues, cultural exchanges, economic partnerships, and parliamentary initiatives that bring nations closer on the basis of mutual respect and shared destiny. As Islamabad hosts one high-level delegation after another, it is not merely witnessing the rituals of diplomacy but scripting a new chapter of regional cooperation. The vision taking shape in Pakistan’s capital today is one that seeks harmony among its neighboring Islamic countries – a vision where prosperity replaces suspicion, and cooperation triumphs over competition. Such diplomacy, if sustained with consistency and sincerity, has the potential to unlock vast economic opportunities, strengthen political trust, and create a regional environment conducive to peace and development. The way forward lies in institutionalizing these engagements. Pakistan must continue to encourage parliamentary diplomacy by holding regular trilateral and multilateral forums that focus on trade, education, energy, and security cooperation. The foreign policy apparatus should complement these efforts by translating parliamentary goodwill into concrete agreements and practical projects. Enhanced connectivity, cultural exchange programs, and youth cooperation among Islamic countries could further deepen these ties. Islamabad today stands at the crossroads of renewed diplomatic vitality and immense potential. Its active engagement with friendly nations is not only a reflection of its resilience but also a reaffirmation of its desire to shape a peaceful and prosperous regional order. The ongoing flurry of diplomatic activity – from the celebrations of friendship to the convening of serious policy dialogues – signals that Pakistan is once again reclaiming its role as a unifying force in the Muslim world. With wisdom, patience, and perseverance, the seeds of cooperation sown in these days of diplomatic fervor can indeed blossom into a future of shared progress and enduring peace.

Briefs

Pakistan rejects Afghanistan claim over...

FROM PAGE 01

The security forces also conducted strikes inside Afghanistan, including in Kabul, destroying terrorists' hideouts in the country. The two sides agreed to a temporary ceasefire on October 17, bringing an end to hostilities after week-long clashes. Following the first round of talks in Doha, the two sides met again in Istanbul on October 25 for talks, which continued till October 31. Delegations from both sides are currently in Türkiye to further discuss matters regarding peace in the region. Pakistan recorded a sharp increase in terror incidents, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban regime took power in 2021. Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Taliban regime to prevent terrorist groups from using its soil to launch attacks inside Pakistan.

Third Phase of Pak-Taliban...

FROM PAGE 01

peace and penalise any violations. "All parties have agreed to put in place a monitoring and verification mechanism that will ensure maintenance of peace and imposing a penalty on the violating party," the communiqué read. A day earlier, speaking to journalists outside the parliament, the defence minister said that a delegation had departed to resume talks with the Taliban regime's delegation. "Afghanistan should act wisely for peace in the region... If there is no possibility of progress, then it is just a waste of time," he added. Earlier this week, DG ISPR Lt General Ahmed Sharif, in an informal briefing to journalists, warned that any external aggression against Pakistan will be met with a "firm and severe" response.

Trump revises tally of downed...

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan downed seven Indian fighter jets, including three Rafale, and dozens of drones. After at least 87 hours, the war between the two nuclear-armed nations ended on May 10 with a ceasefire agreement brokered by the US. Addressing the America Business Forum in Miami on Wednesday, President Trump said some newspapers had reported that seven or eight planes were shot down during the Pakistan-India war. He added that one newspaper claimed seven aircraft were downed and another damaged.

FO rejects denying...

FROM PAGE 01

Indian media had alleged that Pakistani authorities blocked access to a group of Hindu community members on religious grounds. Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi, in a statement, said: "Pakistan categorically rejects the unfounded and misleading allegations that members of the Hindu community were denied entry into its territory. "These claims are entirely baseless and represent yet another attempt to distort facts and politicise a matter that was purely administrative in nature."

China begins...

FROM PAGE 01

after rounds of tit-for-tat tariffs. Chinese buyers have booked two cargoes of US wheat, the first such purchases since October last year, two traders said on Thursday, while a sorghum shipment has been sent from the US to China, a US industry official said. The deals to import US agricultural goods come as Beijing confirmed on Wednesday that it suspended retaliatory tariffs on US imports, including duties on farm goods, although shipments of US soybeans still face a 13 per cent tariff.

AFC President Hails Pakistan's Rising Girls' Football Talent

During his visit, the AFC President interacted with players, coaches, and the school administration, appreciating their dedication to promoting sports alongside education. He also toured the school facilities and met with faculty members, commending their efforts in encouraging girls' participation in football and other sporting activities

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA Senior Vice President, Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, on Thursday attended a thrilling girls' football match at Islamabad College for Girls (ICG), F-6/2, Islamabad, lauding Pakistan's growing enthusiasm for women's football at the grassroots level. The visit marked a significant moment for women's sports in Pakistan as young footballers displayed exceptional skill, teamwork, and confidence in front of one of the world's most influential football leaders. Sheikh Salman, accompanied by Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, praised the energy and commitment of the players, saying, "It's heartening to see the passion and talent of these young girls. Football has the power to empower and inspire, and I'm delighted to see it being played at the grassroots level in Pakistan." During his visit, the AFC President interacted with players, coaches, and the school administration, appreciating their dedication to promoting sports alongside education. He also toured the school facilities and met with faculty members, commending their efforts in encouraging girls' participation in football and other sporting activities.



Pakistan's Omar Ahmed elected IMMAF Police Sports Commission

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's renowned MMA promoter and security expert Omar Ahmed has been elected to the IMMAF Police Sports Commission and nominated for the IMMAF Sustainability Awards, marking a historic leap for Pakistan in the governance of global mixed martial arts. Following his election as Director for South Asia, Omar now represents Pakistan on a global platform that links the International Mixed Martial Arts

Federation (IMMAF) with law enforcement and policing bodies worldwide. The Commission's mission is to incorporate MMA and combat-sport training into police education, enhancing officers' physical fitness, discipline, and composure under pressure while promoting international competitions and professional exchanges among police forces from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Omar's appointment gives Pakistan a direct presence in international MMA decision-making, placing the country within the same

dialogue as global policing and security institutions. It also offers Pakistani athletes, trainers, and coaches unprecedented exposure and collaboration opportunities on the world stage. Educated in London, Omar Ahmed holds dual master's degrees in Strategic Communication and Security & Risk Management. He built an impressive career spanning security, sports, and entrepreneurship, founding Train2Secure, which became a major security contractor for the London Olympics, before returning to Pakistan

to lead Parwest Security, one of the country's largest private security enterprises managing high-risk national operations. Through his initiative, the Real Fight Project, Omar has introduced an innovative model that uses combat sports to foster mental health, leadership, and resilience among youth. This groundbreaking program earned him a nomination at the IMMAF Sustainability Awards in Georgia, recognising his efforts to use MMA as a platform for social transformation and youth empowerment.

Manchester City cruise to 4-1 Champions League victory over Dortmund

MANCHESTER: Erling Haaland returned to torment his former club Borussia Dortmund with a clinical finish, while Phil Foden struck twice as Manchester City cruised to a commanding 4-1 victory in the UEFA Champions League at the Etihad Stadium on Wednesday. The result lifted the defending champions to fourth in their league-phase group with 10 points from four matches, while Dortmund slipped to 14th on seven points. City, who lifted the Champions League trophy in 2023, dominated proceedings from the outset. "I like a lot of things that I see," said manager Pep Guardiola. "Ten points, we are fourth and we are much better than we were last season. Huge compliment and respect to these players – we're in a very good position." Foden opened the scoring in the 22nd minute, collecting a clever pass from Tijjani Reijnders before firing a crisp left-footed strike from outside the box past Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobel. Seven minutes later, Haaland – who now boasts 27 goals in 17 appearances for club and country – doubled City's lead. The Norwegian striker finished coolly from the centre of the box following a blistering run and pinpoint assist from Jeremy Doku. Foden completed his brace in the 57th minute in almost identical fashion to his opener, again linking up with Reijnders before bending a curling effort inside the far post – marking his first-ever double in a Champions League fixture. "Happy it's not just Erling scoring goals," Guardiola added. "Phil was simply fantastic." Waldemar Anton reduced the deficit for the visitors in the 72nd minute, converting from a free kick to the delight of Dortmund's travelling fans, who continued to sing throughout the night. However, City sealed the win in stoppage time through Rayan Cherki, who weaved between two defenders before firing a deflected shot past Kobel to make it 4-1. City were dominant throughout, registering nine shots on target compared to Dortmund's one. Doku and Savinho relentlessly stretched the German side's defence, creating space for City's midfield to dictate the tempo. Savinho came close to adding a fifth with a thunderous left-foot volley from a Foden pass, narrowly missing the top corner "I think it was one goal too many," admitted Dortmund coach Niko Kovac. "We started well and controlled the game early, but we handed the match to City. They played very clean football and deserved to win."—APP

Anisimova beats Swiatek to reach WTA Finals last four

Amanda Anisimova pulled off a stellar comeback on Wednesday to get the better of Iga Swiatek 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-2 and book her spot in the last four of the WTA Finals in Riyadh

RIYADH: Amanda Anisimova pulled off a stellar comeback on Wednesday to get the better of Iga Swiatek 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-2 and book her spot in the last four of the WTA Finals in Riyadh. Making her tournament debut this week, the fourth-seeded Anisimova secured the runner-up spot in the Serena Williams Group behind Elena Rybakina, who completed round-robin play with a perfect 3-0 mark, thanks to a 6-4, 6-4 success against Russian alternate Ekaterina Alexandrova. Anisimova improved her three-set record this season to an impressive 15-3 by posting her 10th top-10 win of the year. "It's so funny, my mom keeps telling me: 'You know you've won like so many three-set matches this year? You're so strong', I was actually thinking about that. Against Iga today it was so, so tough, but honestly, I enjoyed it," said Anisimova, who reached the finals at Wimbledon and the US Open this year. "I think I was just going for my game more today, compared to the previous days. I think I was holding back a little bit in my last few matches. I just gave it my best shot today." Swiatek and Anisimova split their two previous meetings, with the former triumphing in the Wimbledon final and the latter avenging that loss in the US Open quarter-finals. On Wednesday at King Saud University Indoor Arena, the Pole saved all four break points she faced

before she clinched the tiebreak to bag the opening set in 65 minutes. The quality was incredibly high throughout and little separated the pair until Anisimova finally converted a break point in game 10 of the second set to draw level and force a decider. The American made the first move in the final set, breaking in the fourth game on a Swiatek double-fault. Another break sealed the deal for Anisimova over the six-time Grand Slam champion in two hours and 36 minutes. This is the first time in Swiatek's entire career that she has suffered two successive losses after winning the open-

ing set. "I'm so excited (to be in the semi-finals), this is surreal, especially for my first time playing here," said Anisimova. IN-FORM RYBAKINA In a rematch of the Ningbo final from three weeks ago, won by Rybakina, the Kazakh fired eight aces and saved five of six break points en route to a 73-minute victory. The world number six extended her current winning streak to nine consecutive matches – a run that began in Ningbo on October 16 and has continued through Tokyo, from which she withdrew at the semi-final stage, and now Riyadh. "Ekaterina is always a tough



opponent and has a big serve. I'm happy I was able to win in straight sets. Each win gives you confidence and I'm pretty happy that for now my last matches have been great," said Rybakina, who was playing with a tape on her shoulder. Rybakina entered the match with Alexandrova having already secured her place in the semi-finals as the winner of the group. Alexandrova was brought in as a replacement for American Madison Keys, who withdrew ahead of the match due to a viral illness. The Australian Open champion suffered two defeats in round-robin play this week in Riyadh, to Swiatek and Anisimova, and had no chance of advancing to the knockout stage. Alexandrova is the second alternate in Riyadh. The first alternate, Russia's Mirra Andreeva, who is already competing in the doubles at this year's WTA Finals, elected not to sign in due to not being fit to play on Wednesday. Andreeva has a doubles match on Thursday, alongside her partner and compatriot Diana Shnaider, and might still be called in for duty as an alternate if any of the four singles players is unable to play. Thursday will also see the conclusion of the Stefanie Graf Group, with Belarusian top seed Sabalenka taking on defending champion Gauff of the USA and America's Pegula scheduled to play Jasmine Paolini, although the Italian has also reported feeling unwell.

Shehbaz assures MQM-P...

FROM PAGE 01

Attaullah Tarar, and Tariq Fazal Chaudhry also attended the meeting. Advisor to the Prime Minister, Rana Sanaullah, was present in the meeting. According to a MQM-P spokesperson, the prime minister assured the delegation that the government would include the party's proposed bill, related to Article 140-A of the Constitution, in the upcoming 27th Constitutional Amendment. PML-N's efforts to amend the law came to light on November 3, when Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari confirmed that the ruling party had sought their support in introducing the amendment. Bilawal said that the proposed amendment, in addition to amending Article 243, included the establishment of a Constitutional Court and certain changes to the National Finance Commission Award.

Key 'defence reforms' in the...

FROM PAGE 01

defence-related clause in the proposed amendment aims to further streamline coordination and collaboration among the country's armed forces to ensure a unified and swift response to any foreign aggression. The provision is said to have been framed in light of lessons learned from the recent Pakistan-India war scenario and the changing dynamics of modern warfare, where inter-services unification and coordination are deemed crucial. The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has been consulting its coalition partners to ensure the smooth passage of the amendment package. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by a PML-N delegation, had already met with PPP leaders President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to seek their party's support for the constitutional package.

British army chief calls on Field...

FROM PAGE 01

achievements and sacrifices in the fight against terrorism and its efforts for regional peace and stability," according to the ISPR. Upon his arrival at the GHQ, the UK CGS laid a floral wreath at Yadgari-Shuhada to pay homage to the martyrs. He was presented with a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Army.

Türkiye Interior Minister...

FROM PAGE 01

disaster management, trade, and economic development. The Prime Minister praised Türkiye's strong and unwavering support for Pakistan's stance on key issues. He particularly thanked the Turkish leadership for its role in facilitating the ongoing peace talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan in Istanbul. While thanking the Prime Minister for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation, the Turkish Interior Minister conveyed greetings for the Prime Minister from President Erdoğan and expressed Türkiye's strong desire for enhanced collaboration in law enforcement, intelligence-sharing and disaster management.

Finance Minister...

FROM PAGE 01

The meeting focused on the industry's export performance, the government's reform initiatives, and the future roadmap for making Pakistan a major player in the global pharmaceutical market. The delegation discussed the establishment of PharmEx Pakistan, a dedicated pharmaceutical export platform to plan and execute strategies for achieving USD 3 billion in pharmaceutical exports within the next three years, and USD 10 billion over the subsequent five years. The global pharmaceutical market currently stands at over USD 1.6 trillion.

Briefs

OGRA conducts public hearing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: OGRA conducted public hearing at SNGPL head office in compliance to the directions of Honorable Lahore High Court, Multan Bench in Writ Petition No, 9522/20025 dated 11-9-2025, to provide opportunity to all consumers, stakeholders to submit their comments, reservations, and intervention in respect of RLNG sales prices. The participants furnished their written as well as verbal comments and SNGPL has also pleaded their case before OGRA. OGRA-Authority members and team noted down the comments of all participants and similar public hearings will also be held at Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and final decision shall be passed by Authority after incorporation of comments of interveners / stakeholders.

PSX continues with bearish trend, loses 481 more points

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Thursday as the benchmark KSE-100 Index lost 481.40 points, a negative change of 0.30 percent, closing at 159,096.79 points compared to 159,578.19 points on the previous trading day. A total of 957,304 million shares were traded in the ready market compared to 860,262 million shares on Wednesday, while the traded value declined to Rs30,446 billion from Rs34,848 billion. The market capitalization decreased from Rs18,271.364 billion to Rs18,220.473 billion. Out of 476 active companies in the ready market, 199 closed in the positive, 230 in the negative, and 47 remained unchanged. Bank Makramah led the volume chart with 93,025 million shares, followed by Pak Int. Bulk with 74,446 million shares, and K-Electric Ltd. with 58,326 million shares. The top gainers of the day were PIA Holding Company LimitedB, which increased by Rs259.90 to close at Rs24,685.40, and Pakistan Services Limited, up by Rs133.42 to settle at Rs1,517.91. The top losers were Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited, which declined by Rs614.72 to close at Rs28,585.28, and Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited, down by Rs44.41 to Rs9,564.54. In the futures market, a total of 215,512 million shares were traded, compared to 186,602 million shares a day earlier. BML-NOV topped the futures volume chart with 27,169 million shares, followed by PIAH-CLA-NOV with 25,109 million shares, and PACE-NOV with 19,463 million shares. In the futures gainers' list, ATRL-NOVB gained Rs4.56 to close at Rs650.05, while SAZEW-NOVC declined by Rs17.01 to close at Rs1,785.50. Meanwhile, out of 318 companies, 100 advanced, 216 declined, and 2 remained unchanged in the futures market. **APP**

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.85 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 280.86. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 282.55 and Rs 282.8, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 54 paisa to close at Rs 323.36 against the last day's closing of Rs 322.82, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.82, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed an increase of 73.93 paisa and closed at Rs 366.93 compared to the previous day's Rs 366.20. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal stood stagnant to close at Rs 76.46 and Rs 74.88, respectively. **APP**



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of PML-Q led by Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

SAEP President, secretary general dismissed from PIA service amid ongoing tiff

While the PIA has claimed that the engineers are on “strike”, the SAEP maintains that its engineers were on duty but were not giving clearance certificates to aircraft without all the mandatory checks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Society of Aircraft Engineers of Pakistan (SAEP) President Abdullah Jadoon and Secretary General Awais Jadoon were dismissed from service on Thursday amid an ongoing tiff with the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). PIA spokesperson Abdullah Hafiz confirmed the development to local media. The national flag carrier also issued two dismissal notices to the engineers, copies of which are

available with local news paper. Abdullah's role was stated as an aircraft engineer (PG-VI), while Awais was an aircraft engineer (PG-VIII). The dismissal letters said that notices were issued to the SAEP president for conducting a press conference without prior authorisation and for disclosing official information to the media, and to the SAEP secretary general the unauthorised disclosure of confidential operational information and PIA images. “In order to enquire into the allegations/charges

communicated to you via the aforesaid showcase notice, an enquiry was conducted wherein you failed to participate despite providing ample opportunities to appear and defend your case,” the notices said. “After examining the available evidence and statements of prosecution witnesses, the enquiry committee found you guilty of the charges levelled against you,” they added. They further said that both the SAEP officials were provided two opportunities to appear before the chief executive officer, but

failed to do so. “Keeping in view your entire disciplinary case, the management has decided to dismiss you from the service of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited,” the notices said, adding that these dismissals would go into effect immediately. The dismissals come amid an ongoing tiff between the PIA management and the SAEP, with the protesting engineers refusing to issue clearance certificates to aircraft — a move that has disrupted flight operations in recent days. The engi-

neers have been protesting for two-and-a-half months, seeking pay hikes among other demands. While the PIA has claimed that the engineers are on “strike”, the SAEP maintains that its engineers were on duty but were not giving clearance certificates to aircraft without all the mandatory checks. Earlier, the PIA spokesperson had highlighted that the Essential Services Act was in force in PIA under which strikes or abandonment of work was a legal offence. “All elements involved in or supporting

such actions as part of a conspiracy will face legal action,” he had warned. For his part, Awais Jadoon had earlier said that the two officers were on duty and working, but could not compromise on safety and airworthiness. “We are being forced to issue clearance certificates (to release the planes), but we cannot put passengers’ lives at risk in such tense circumstances.” He had also clarified that the engineers were not on strike and said that they were only issuing clearance certificates to aircraft completely fit for flying.

US may ask UN to mandate force in Gaza for 2 years

NEW YORK: The US has drafted a UN resolution that approves a two-year mandate for a Gaza transitional governance body and an international stabilization force in the Palestinian enclave, according to the text seen by journalists. The draft — which is still being developed and could change — was shared with some countries this week, but has not yet been formally circulated to the 15-member Security Council for negotiations, diplomats said. It was not immediately clear when Washington planned to do that. A State Department spokesperson said discussions with UN Security Council members and other partners on how to implement President Donald Trump's Gaza plan were ongoing and declined to comment on “allegedly leaked documents.” The two-page text would authorize a so-called Board of Peace transitional governance administration to establish a temporary International Stabilization Force in Gaza that could “use all necessary measures” — code for force — to carry out its mandate. The ISF would be authorized to protect civilians and humanitarian aid operations, work to secure border areas with Israel, Egypt and a “newly trained and vetted Palestinian police force, which the ISF will be responsible for training and supporting. The ISF would stabilize security in Gaza, “including through the demilitarization of non-state armed groups and the permanent decommissioning of weapons, as necessary.” The Trump plan also ends Hamas governance of Gaza and says the enclave would be demilitarized. Hamas has not said whether it will agree to demilitarize Gaza — something the militants have rejected before. **APP**

Syrians furious at major hike in electricity prices

DAMASCUS: In his workshop near the Syrian capital, Ghassan Aama is at a loss following a recent decision to massively hike electricity prices, even as much of the country continues to face extensive outages. Last month, the energy ministry raised prices by at least 60 times compared to the previous tariff, sending shockwaves through a population already reeling from decades of sanctions and 14 years of war. “We were surprised to see electricity prices rise, as our income is limited,” said Aama, a blacksmith. “If the bills are high, we might not be able to make ends meet,” he added. Aama already pays a subscription to a private generator so he can run his workshop — a common practice in the country's whose electricity sector has been ravaged by the civil war, with power cuts reaching up to 20 hours a day. “We are coming out of a war, and our homes are destroyed... we were hoping things would get better, not worse,” he added. Since the toppling of longtime ruler Bashar Assad in December, Syria has slowly begun to emerge from decades of political and economic isolation. The new Islamist authorities are hoping to attract funding and investments for reconstruction, which the World Bank estimated could cost more than \$216 billion. The government's decision to hike tariffs is part of a policy of liberalization that the government seems to have adopted at the start of the year, said Jihad Yazigi, editor of economic publication The Syria Report. “What they are doing, basically, is just trying to cut costs and to remove subsidies,” he added. Contrary to what Assad claimed, Yazigi said the Syrian economy was “obviously not a socialist economy.” It was “relatively liberal... and here (they) are liberalising further,” he said, as they also lifted subsidies on bread earlier this year. But having born the brunt of the country's crippled economy for years, Syrians are struggling to accept yet another blow. “After liberation, we expected people to return and reconstruction to take place quickly,” said Muhieddine Salam, a real estate agent. “Now, if rent is \$200 and the electricity tariff is between \$200 and \$400, what will I do?” Vendor Alaa Mussa shared his frustration, arguing that “no one will pay, no one has the money.” “Let them turn the electricity off, it would be better,” she told AFP. “There are no jobs, and all factories are closed... (At first) everyone was happy, we thought money would start coming in, but no one expected this to happen.” Syria previously announced major investment agreements with countries in the region to rebuild infrastructure. It also announced major agreements with Qatar and Türkiye to supply it with gas for electricity production. But these projects have yet to make a dent in the daily lives of Syrians. Nine out of 10 people in the country live in poverty, and one in four is unemployed, according to the United Nations. Many of them resort to informal, temporary jobs to survive, like Umm Al-Zein, 43, who sells bread on the street. “I can barely afford to pay my son's university tuition and my daughter's private lessons for the high school exam,” she said. “The electricity barely comes on for an hour, and if the electricity doesn't come, the water doesn't come either. “We will be warming ourselves under blankets in the winter.” **Agencies**

Young Iraqis run for parliament to challenge sectarian rule

BAGHDAD: Anwar Ibrahim, 25, is so frustrated with Iraq's sectarian politics that he is running for parliament, joining a wave of young Iraqis challenging an entrenched elite at elections next week. “I believe young people and technocrats should be given the space to participate in the management of the state, and that we should put an end to the domination of certain parties,” said Ibrahim, a pro-democracy activist. Many Iraqis remain skeptical, seeing the November 11 vote as unlikely to bring real change to the country's stagnant politics, with the same powerful groups controlling the state and its oil wealth since Saddam Hussein's fall in 2003. Yet the presence of significant numbers of youth candidates — for the second time since elections in 2005 — marks a political coming of age for Iraqis who were infants or children when Saddam was toppled, and could energize demands for reform. “The fact that around 40 percent of registered candidates are young people shows there's growing interest among Iraq's youth to take part in shaping the country's future,” an Iraqi High Electoral Commission official told Reuters. “It reflects a desire for renewal and for a stronger voice from a generation that has long felt excluded from politics. Most of the new youth candidates are in their late 20s to mid-30s, a sharp contrast to the current parliament, where the average age of lawmakers is about 55, and include members of the country's Shiite majority as well as its Sunni minority. The IHEC says about 40 percent of registered candidates are under 40, and roughly 15 percent are under 35 — typically 28 to 35 years old. In elections in 2021, 24 percent of candidates were under 30, the IHEC said. The fresh influx of

young candidates may persuade some Iraqis to vote for the first time, eager for alternatives to the sectarian leaders repeatedly voted in by older generations. Despite routine democratic elections, Iraqis continue to grapple with corruption, unemployment and poor services. However, young Iraqis appear split on whether to vote. Some are enthusiastic, but others have given up on politics. Ali Abd Al-Hussain, 28, a violinist and graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad who works as a musician in a Baghdad restaurant, ripped up his voter registration card. “Those we previously elected to parliament started their campaigns wearing simple clothes and traveling by taxi, saying ‘vote for us so we can bring change,’” he said. “After we voted for them, big change did happen, but not for us, the poor; it happened for them. Overnight they started wearing expensive suits and driving luxury cars with tinted windows because they no longer wanted to see our faces. Of course I will not vote.” Youths have not formed new political parties and have instead opted to join well-established political blocs to try and force change from the inside, a highly ambitious goal. “Patronage networks tied to political parties distribute jobs, contracts and security positions, ensuring loyalty and limiting space for outsiders,” said Baghdad-based constitutional expert Kadhum Al-Bahadli. “Breaking this cycle would require not only political will but also a fundamental realignment of economic and security power, something Iraq's ruling elite has little incentive to allow.” A static political landscape was what analysts foresaw when Iraqis toppled Saddam's statue in Baghdad in 2003, hitting it with their shoes in celebration of the dictator's fall.

US officials thought that toppling the Sunni strongman would set Iraq on a path to freedom and prosperity enjoyed by all communities sharing its oil wealth fairly. Instead, a pro-Saddam insurgency emerged, followed by Islamist Al-Qaeda militants and a sectarian civil war that gave rise to the more extremist jihadists of Islamic State. Meanwhile the balance of political power steadily shifted from Saddam's minority Sunnis to majority Shiites, in the form of civilian politicians and armed militias backed by Iran. Any youth seeking to change the status quo will face stiff resistance. Still, many young candidates are pushing to rewrite the electoral law, create an independent elections committee and curb the influence of Iranian-backed militias over politics and elections. Some like Anwar Ibrahim were encouraged by Israel's bombing of Iran in a war in June that was briefly joined by the US, a development he thinks will weaken Iraq's pro-Iran militias. But others worry that armed Shiite groups will crush any challenge to their influence. In October 2019, protests erupted over high unemployment, poor public services and corruption, prompting a violent security crackdown which killed 149 people. A government report which investigated the episode concluded that more than 70 percent of deaths were caused by shots to the head or chest. “We are certainly worried about attempts to prevent change: parties that have armed wings will try to stop any real change in the political process in Iraq and will use their weapons against us,” said youth candidate Hussein Al-Ghurabi. “If we succeed, elections will be the first step toward a new Iraq; if not, the situation will be tragic, democracy in Iraq will decline alarmingly, and will remain only ink on paper.” **Agencies**

UAE urges ceasefire in Sudan

ABU DHABI: The UAE will remain as a diplomatic entity to help resolve conflict in the region, said Anwar Gargash, diplomatic advisor to the president of the UAE on Wednesday at the first Emirates International Press Conference. In Sudan, Gargash affirmed the urge for a lasting ceasefire and reiterated the UAE's condemnation of the atrocities committed in El-Fashir. “The UAE condemns all atrocities committed in El-Fashir and across Sudan — including allegations of chemical weapons use. These claims must be investigated, and those responsible must be held to account. “We want negotiations. We want a transition to civilian rule. And most importantly, we need a ceasefire,” he added. “This is a very complicated picture. We are concerned about the unity of Sudan. And as a result, I think we have a remarkable document, which was reached by the Quad in September this year, “The Quad meaning the United States, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, and the UAE. And this statement, I think, is today our pathway to a solution in Sudan. It emphasizes the need for a ceasefire, a three-month humanitarian ceasefire,” explained Gargash. **APP**

OGRA conducts public hearing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: OGRA conducted public hearing at SNGPL head office in compliance to the directions of Honorable Lahore High Court, Multan Bench in Writ Petition No, 9522/20025 dated 11-9-2025, to provide opportunity to all consumers, stakeholders to submit their comments, reservations, and intervention in respect of RLNG sales prices. The participants furnished their written as well as verbal comments and SNGPL has also pleaded their case before OGRA. OGRA-Authority members and team noted down the comments of all participants and similar public hearings will also be held at Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and final decision shall be passed by Authority after incorporation of comments of interveners / stakeholders.

PSX continues with bearish trend, loses 481 more points

ISLAMABAD, Nov 6 (APP): The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Thursday as the benchmark KSE-100 Index lost 481.40 points, a negative change of 0.30 percent, closing at 159,096.79 points compared to 159,578.19 points on the previous trading day. A total of 957,304 million shares were traded in the ready market compared to 860,262 million shares on Wednesday, while the traded value declined to Rs30,446 billion from Rs34,848 billion. The market capitalization decreased from Rs18,271.364 billion to Rs18,220.473 billion. Out of 476 active companies in the ready market, 199 closed in the positive, 230 in the negative, and 47 remained unchanged. Bank Makramah led the volume chart with 93,025 million shares, followed by Pak Int. Bulk with 74,446 million shares, and K-Electric Ltd. with 58,326 million shares. The top gainers of the day were PIA Holding Company LimitedB, which increased by Rs259.90 to close at Rs24,685.40, and Pakistan Services Limited, up by Rs133.42 to settle at Rs1,517.91. The top losers were Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited, which declined by Rs614.72 to close at Rs28,585.28, and Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited, down by Rs44.41 to Rs9,564.54. In the futures market, a total of 215,512 million shares were traded, compared to 186,602 million shares a day earlier. BML-NOV topped the futures volume chart with 27,169 million shares, followed by PIAH-CLA-NOV with 25,109 million shares, and PACE-NOV with 19,463 million shares. In the futures gainers' list, ATRL-NOVB gained Rs4.56 to close at Rs650.05, while SAZEW-NOVC declined by Rs17.01 to close at Rs1,785.50. **APP**

Briefs

Marriage
no bar to
daughters'
employment:
SC upholds
equality

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled that marriage cannot deprive a daughter of her right to employment under her parents' government service quota. The Court held that a married daughter enjoys the same entitlement as a married son, and any denial of such employment is unconstitutional, unlawful, and contrary to the principles of gender equality. The landmark judgment, authored by Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, was released on the Supreme Court's official website in the case titled Farakh Naz vs. Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The petitioner, Farakh Naz, had been denied appointment as a primary school teacher on the grounds that she was married. The Court declared this decision discriminatory and illegal, restoring her appointment. In its verdict, the Supreme Court observed that the quota reserved for children of retired or deceased government employees serves as financial support for the affected family and as recognition of the parents' public service. Therefore, a child's marital status, whether son or daughter, has no bearing on their entitlement to this benefit. — Agencies

Circular debt
surges by
Rs79bn in
Q1FY26 to
Rs1.69tr

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's power sector circular debt rose by Rs79 billion in the first quarter (July–September) of FY2025-26, reaching Rs1.693 trillion by the end of September, The News reported citing Power Division's stats. The debt stock, which stood at Rs1.614 trillion at the close of FY2024-25 in June, saw a renewed uptick in the first three months of the new fiscal year — a development that reignited concerns about inefficiencies and financial losses in the energy supply chain. Energy experts said the buildup reflected lingering power theft, weak recoveries and structural flaws within state-run distribution companies (Discos). Receivables from K-Electric alone stood at Rs229 billion by September 2025, including Rs42 billion in principal and Rs187 billion in markup. The growing receivables and debt pile-up have once again put pressure on the government to accelerate reforms and plug financial leakages that continue to burden the national exchequer.

Groping of
Mexico's
president
puts violence
against women
in spotlight

MEXICAN President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Wednesday she filed a complaint against a man who groped her and tried to kiss her as she walked between meetings in the capital city, a day after a video of the incident went viral. "If this happens to the president, where does that leave all the young women in our country?" said Sheinbaum, Mexico's first female president. "No man has the right to abuse women's personal space." Video of the incident quickly ricocheted across the internet before being taken down by some accounts, underscoring for many in Mexico the insecurity women face in a country steeped in machismo and gender-based violence. It has also raised questions about Sheinbaum's security detail. Like her predecessor, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, Sheinbaum travels with minimal security and makes herself widely available to the public, including wading into crowds of people. — APP

Azerbaijan celebrates 5th Anniversary of Victory Day

Envoy lauds Pakistan's unwavering support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Azerbaijan in Pakistan commemorated the 5th anniversary of the country's Victory Day with a grand ceremony held in Islamabad. The event marked Azerbaijan's triumph in the 44-day Patriotic War, which culminated in the liberation of its occupied territories on November 8, 2020. The ceremony was graced by Acting President of Pakistan, Syed Raza Gilani, as the chief guest. Senior diplomats, defense officials, media representatives, and members of the Pakistani civil society attended the event. In his address, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Khazar Farhadov, paid tribute to the courage of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces and the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, under whose command the country achieved what he called "a glorious victory ending the 30-year-long occupation of Azerbaijani lands." He recalled that despite Armenia's continued military provocations and occupation of Azerbaijani territories, Azerbaijan had long pursued peaceful resolution efforts. However, Armenia's repeated violations and aggression forced Baku to exercise its right to self-defense under the UN Charter on September 27, 2020, launching the 44-day Patriotic War that restored the country's territorial integrity. "Under the command of our victorious leader, our brave army liberated Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Gubadli, and the historic city of Shusha — a symbol of our cultural and spiritual heritage," Ambassador Farhadov said. "More than 300 settlements were freed, and subsequently, the districts of Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin were returned without a single shot being fired. In total, around 700 settlements came back under Azerbaijan's control." He added that Azerbaijan's victory effectively implemented four UN Security Council resolutions adopted in 1993, which had long called for Armenia's withdrawal from the occupied territories. Referring to more recent developments, the envoy highlighted Azerbaijan's swift counter-terrorism measures of September 2023, which eliminated illegal Armenian armed formations in the Karabakh region and restored full sovereignty.



Philippine death toll tops 140 as typhoon heads towards Vietnam

LILLOAN: Typhoon Kalmaegi killed at least 140 people and left another 127 missing after unleashing devastating flooding across the central Philippines, official figures showed Thursday, as the storm headed towards Vietnam. Floodwaters described as unprecedented rushed through Cebu province's towns and cities this week, sweeping away cars, riverside shanties and even massive shipping containers. The national civil defence office confirmed on Thursday 114 reported deaths, though that tally did not include an additional 28 recorded by Cebu provincial authorities. In Liloan, a town near Cebu City where 35 bodies have been recovered from flooded areas, AFP reporters saw cars still piled atop each other by floodwaters and roofs torn off buildings as residents attempted to dig out of the mud. Christine Aton's sister Michelle, who has a disability, was among Liloan's victims, trapped in her bedroom as the floodwaters rose inside their house. "We tried to pry open (her bedroom door) with a kitchen knife and a crowbar but it wouldn't budge.... Then the refrigerator started to float," Aton, 29, said. "I opened a window and my father and I swam out. We were crying because we wanted to save my older sister. But my father told me we couldn't do anything for her, that all three of us might end up dead." On neighbouring Negros Island, where at least 30 people were killed, Kalmaegi's driving rain loosened volcanic mudflow that buried homes in Canlaon City, police Lieutenant Stephen Polinar told AFP on Wednesday. "Eruptions of Kanlaon volcano since last year deposited

volcanic material on its upper sections. When the rain fell, those deposits tumbled down onto the villages," he told AFP. The national death tally included six crew members of a military helicopter that crashed while on a typhoon relief mission. On Wednesday, residents of Cebu's most-affected areas were busily cleaning up streets that had been rivers less than 24 hours earlier. "Around four or five in the morning, the water was so strong that you couldn't even step outside," said Reynaldo Vergara, 53, adding that everything in his small shop in Mandaue had been lost when a nearby river overflowed. "Nothing like this has ever happened. The water was raging." In nearby Talisay, where an informal settlement along a riverbank was washed away, AFP found 26-year-old Regie Mallorca already at work rebuilding his home. "This will take time because I don't have the money yet. It will take months," he said as he mixed cement and sand atop the rubble. The area around Cebu City was deluged with 18.3 centimetres (around seven inches) of rain in the 24 hours before Kalmaegi's landfall, well over its 13.1 centimetre monthly average, weather specialist Charmagne Varilla told AFP. On Tuesday, provincial governor Pamela Baricuatro called the situation "unprecedented" and "devastating". Scientists warn that storms are becoming more powerful due to human-driven climate change. Warmer oceans allow typhoons to strengthen rapidly, and a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, meaning heavier rainfall. In total, nearly 800,000 people were moved from the typhoon's path. — Agencies

Putin orders proposals on possible Russian nuclear test

Defence minister advises Russian president to prepare for "full-scale" nuclear tests

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his top officials on Wednesday to draft proposals for a possible test of nuclear weapons, something Moscow has not done since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. The order — responding to President Donald Trump's announcement last week that the US would resume testing — was a further signal that the two countries with the world's largest nuclear arsenals are rapidly nearing a step that could sharply escalate geopolitical tensions. "I am instructing the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Ministry... the special services and relevant civilian agencies to do everything possible to collect additional information on the

issue, analyse it at the Security Council and make agreed proposals on the possible start of work on the preparation of nuclear weapons tests," Putin said in televised remarks. Russia-US relations have deteriorated sharply in the past few weeks as Trump, frustrated with a lack of progress towards ending the war in Ukraine, has cancelled a planned summit with Putin and imposed sanctions on Russia for the first time since returning to the White House in January. Putin issued his instruction at a meeting of his Security Council, where parliamentary speaker Vyacheslav Volodin departed from the official agenda of transport safety to ask how Moscow would respond to Trump's plans to carry out US nuclear testing for the first time in 33 years. The question, though meant to appear spontaneous, triggered a series of clearly prepared interventions. Defence Minister Andrei Belousov told Putin that recent US remarks and actions meant it was "advisable to prepare for full-scale nuclear tests" immediately. Russia's Arctic testing site at Novaya Zemlya could host such tests at short notice, Belousov added.

Trump says he may help New York's Mamdani 'a little bit'

Florida city "will soon be the refuge for those fleeing communism in New York," says US president

MIAMI: US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that "we want New York to be successful" and he might offer US assistance to Zohran Mamdani, the democratic socialist who was elected as New York City's mayor. "We'll help him, a little bit maybe," Trump said at a speech in Miami a day after the election. In a speech in Miami a day after Mamdani's convincing victory, Trump said: "Let's see how Mamdani does in New York." He further said that the US had lost "sovereignty" after New Yorkers elected leftist Mamdani as their next mayor. "We'll take care of it," Trump said without explaining what he meant, while claiming the country's largest city would become communist. Trump added that the Florida city "will soon be the refuge for those fleeing communism in New York." "The decision facing all Americans could not be more clear: We have a choice between communism and common sense," he said, also casting the choice as between an "economic nightmare" and an "economic miracle." The speech marked the first anniversary of Trump's election victory against Democrat Kamala Harris. "We rescued our economy, regained our liberty, and together we saved our country on that magnificent night 365 days ago," Trump told his audience of supporters. — DNA

US orders 10% flights cut at major US airports

WASHINGTON/CHICAGO: US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said on Wednesday that he would order a 10% cut in flights at 40 major US airports, citing air traffic control safety concerns as a government shutdown hit a record 36th day. The drastic plan sent airlines scrambling to make significant reductions in flights in just 36 hours and passengers flooded airline customer service hotlines with concerns about air travel in the coming days. Duffy said the cuts could be reversed if Democrats agreed to reopen the government. The shutdown, the longest in US history, has forced 13,000 air traffic controllers and 50,000 Transportation Security Administration agents to work without pay. The Trump administration has sought to ramp up pressure on Democrats to end the shutdown and has increasingly raised the specter of dramatic aviation disruptions to force them to vote to reopen the government. Democrats contend Republicans are to blame for refusing to negotiate over key health care subsidies. Tens of thousands of flights have been delayed since the shutdown began because of widespread air traffic control shortages. Airlines say at least 3.2 million travelers have already been impacted by air traffic control shortages. — APP

India's Modi faces bellwether poll in poorest state

"This is the election which will decide whether BJP can form a government on its own," says analyst

NEWS DESK

PATNA: Voting has started in Bihar, India's poorest state, and for many of its 130 million people, one issue overshadows all others: money. That's what Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) hopes to capitalise on, wooing voters with economic incentives in a bid to win full control. A win here, strategists say, could "energise" the BJP's prospects in other key states heading into next year's elections. Hindu-majority Bihar, the country's third most populous state — roughly equal to Mexico — is a bellwether battleground. It remains the only state in the Hindi-speaking north where Modi's Hindu nationalist party has never ruled alone. For housewife Rajkumari Devi, feeding her three children depends on the daily wage her husband earns as a labourer in the Muzaffarpur district. He takes home about 400 to 500 Indian rupees (around \$5) on the days he does find work. "There is no stability," said the 28-year-old, outside her modest one-room home overlooking agricultural land. "There have been times when he has not had work for days — so we stretch the little money we have," she added.

CJCSC meets Sultan, top civil, military leaderships of Brunei

During meetings, both sides discussed evolving global and regional security environment. The Chairman JCSC underscored Pakistan's cordial relations with Brunei Darussalam and expressed his commitment to further strengthen military-to-military ties and defence cooperation



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI, (M) who is on an official visit to Brunei Darussalam, had an audience with Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. The CJSC also held separate meetings with Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Retired) Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Halbi bin Haji Mohd Yusoff, Minister at PM's office and Minister of Defence-II and Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Muhammad Haszaimi bin Bol Hassan, Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) here Thursday. In addition, CJSC also visited KDB DARULAMAN at Muara Naval Base and Defence Academy Royal Brunei Armed Forces, where he delivered a talk on "Pakistan's contributions to regional peace and stability" and interacted with the students of Command and Staff course including officers from 19 foreign countries, it further said. During meetings, both sides discussed evolving global and regional security environment. The Chairman JCSC underscored Pakistan's cordial relations with Brunei Darussalam and expressed his commitment to further strengthen military-to-military ties and defence cooperation. The Sultan and civil-military leadership of Brunei Darussalam appreciated high professional standards of Pakistan Armed Forces and their achievements and sacrifices in fight against terrorism. Upon arrival at Headquarters Royal Brunei Armed Forces, a smartly turned-out military contingent presented 'Guard of Honour' to the CJSC.