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Detailed News On Page-08

Canada, Pakistan explore avenues of cooperation

Detailed News On Page-04



Pakistan adopts smart climate planning: Ahsan

Detailed News On Page-04



PTI boycotts session

Uproar in Senate as 27th Amend bill sails through

PTI, JUI-F defectors vote in favour of revised amendments despite opposition's objection amid noisy protest

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Thursday approved the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill, following changes approved by the National Assembly day earlier, amid noisy protest by the opposition. Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar presented the constitutional amendment bill again today, with the tweaks to the draft earlier approved by the upper house. The amendment bill received the 64 votes (two-thirds majority in the 96-member House) in favour and four against. As the session kicked off with Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani presiding, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Ali Zafar maintained that his party and JUI-F defectors are disqualified under Article 63-A of the Constitution as they, in the previous session claimed on the floor of the house that they had resigned. "If they have indeed resigned and the article applies, I request that the votes of these two members not be counted [during the re-voting]. Otherwise, we will challenge the entire process," he added. Meanwhile, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl's (JUI-F) Senator Kamran Murtaza said that if someone votes against party lines and a resignation is sought from him under Article 63-A, then those who wish to vote against the party should follow proper procedures. Tarar, however, disagreed, saying that the objection of PTI and JUI-F that a member is automatically disqualified under Article 63-A for voting against party lines is incorrect. He explained that the party head can submit a reference to the presiding officer or speaker under the Constitution. "We shouldn't twist the Constitution for political point scoring," he added.

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President gives assent to Bill

FAISAL SHAIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday gave assent to the much-debated 27th Constitutional Amendment after approval from the Parliament. With the president's signature, the amendment has now officially become part of the Constitution. "The Constitution (Twenty-Seventh Amendment) Bill, 2025 is assented to, as advised by the Prime Minister (Shehbaz Sharif), at Para-5 of the Summary," read a notification issued by the President's House. The development came moments after the Senate approved the amendment bill following changes approved by the National Assembly a day earlier, amid noisy protests by the opposition. Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar presented the constitutional amendment bill today, with the tweaks to the draft earlier approved by the upper house. The amendment bill received 64 votes (two-thirds majority in the 96-member House) in favour and four against. Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani announced the result, saying: "So the motion is carried by the votes of not less than two-thirds of

Continued on Page 06

All illegal Afghans to be evicted, says Naqvi

FIJAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi informed the Senate on Wednesday that Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir personally contacted the defence minister of Sri Lanka and assured him of foolproof security for the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team following the Islamabad blast incident. The assurance, he said, helped convince the Sri Lankan side to continue their tour of Pakistan. Naqvi said that the government had moved swiftly after the tragic blast in Islamabad, which claimed several lives. He confirmed that the main perpetrators involved in the attack had been arrested, adding that the suspects were of Afghan origin. "The investigation is progressing rapidly, and more details will be shared soon," he told the Upper House. The interior minister reiterated the government's firm resolve to rid the country of illegal foreigners, particularly Afghan nationals residing without legal documents. "The operation to evict all illegal Afghans from Pakistan will now be expedited," Naqvi said, emphasizing that this measure was essential for national security and public safety. He said that the Islamabad incident had once again exposed the threat posed by illegal elements exploiting Pakistan's hospitality and leniency.

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China to always support Pakistan

DNA

BEIJING: A Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson on Wednesday strongly condemned a suicide bombing that took place near a court in Islamabad, which killed at least 12 people and injured several others. Guo Jiakun during his regular briefing held here expressed China's firm opposition to all forms of terrorism. "China strongly condemns this terrorist attack and expresses deep condolences to the victims and sincere sympathies to the injured and bereaved families," he said. Guo confirmed that, based on current information, no Chinese nationals were harmed in the attack. He stressed that China will continue to firmly support Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism, maintain social stability, and ensure the safety of its people.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif cuts cake on the eve of birthday of His Majesty Charles III, the King of Britain. – DNA

27th Amendment pitfalls

Mansoor Ali Shah, Athar Minallah tender resignations as judges

In his 13-page-long resignation, Justice Shah termed the amendment as "a grave assault on the Constitution of Pakistan", which "dismantles the Supreme Court of Pakistan



ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Senior puisne judge Mansoor Ali Shah and Supreme Court (SC) Justice Athar Minallah have tendered their resignations. In this 13-page resignation letter to the President Asif Ali Zardari, Justice Mansoor termed the newly enacted 27th Constitutional Amendment a serious attack on the Constitution of Pakistan. This development comes after President Zardari assented to the much-touted 27th Constitutional Amendment into law after approval from both houses of the Parliament.

Continued on Page 06

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has approved the appointment of Justice Aminuddin Khan as the first Chief Justice of the newly established Federal Constitutional Court. Chief Justice Yahya Afridi is set to host a farewell reception in honour of Justice Aminuddin Khan, who will retire from the Supreme Court on November 30. However, Justice Aminuddin's departure from

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Punjab orders freezing of banned TLP's assets

Home Department directs commissioners, DCs to implement order immediately

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab government has ordered the freezing of assets and properties owned by the banned Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) across the province, according to a notification issued on Thursday. The directive, issued by the Punjab Home Department, instructed all commissioners and deputy commissioners to take immediate steps to implement the order. Copies of the directive have also been sent to the Board of Revenue, the housing and cooperative secretaries, and other relevant departments to ensure coordinated action. The home department sought a report from the relevant departments after the freezing

of the TLP's assets and properties. The decision was made under the supervision of Punjab Sub-Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Chairman Khawaja Salman Rafique. TLP was declared a proscribed organisation under the Anti-Terrorism Act following violent protests in October. The Punjab government had directed to ensure full enforcement of restrictions placed on the group's operations and finances. Following the imposition of the ban, the provincial government transferred the control of TLP's seminaries to religious scholar Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rahman. An agreement was also reached between the Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Ahl-e-Sunnat Pakistan and

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Briefs

Bangladesh to hold referendum

NEWS DESK

DHAKA: Bangladesh will hold a national referendum on implementing its 'July Charter' for state reform, drafted after last year's deadly student-led uprising, Muhammad Yunus, the head of the country's interim government, said on Thursday. He also reiterated that parliamentary elections will be held in the first half of February and that they would be free and fair. The interim government approved the July National Charter (Constitution Reform) Implementation Order 2025 on Thursday, and it will be implemented depending on the outcome of the referendum. "We have decided that the referendum will be held on the same day as the national parliamentary election – meaning, in the first half of February," Nobel laureate Yunus said in a televised address to the nation.

Turkey refutes Indian media reports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Turkiye on Thursday refuted claims made by Indian media outlets claiming that Ankara had a link to the car blast in Delhi earlier this week. A day prior, the Indian government confirmed that it was treating a car blast that killed 12 people and wounded at least 20 others in Delhi as a "terror incident" and vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice as swiftly as possible. In a statement, Turkiye's Directorate of Communications rejected the allegations and displayed screenshots of social media posts by two Indian outlets, which claimed Ankara had a "role in radicalising sleeper cells against India, [the] Turkish government is providing logistical, diplomatic and financial help to all terrorist groups across the world".

Army Act amended

COAS Asim Munir's tenure extended till 2030

Law minister says CDF's term would be five years from date of appointment



MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir's tenure will restart following his new appointment as Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), read a bill moved in the National Assembly. Speaking on the floor after Defence

Minister Khawaja Asif presented the bill to amend the Army Act, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the CDF's term would be five years from the date of his appointment. He made the remarks during the NA session that passed the bills amending the Army, Navy, and Air Force Acts after the cabinet's endorsement. A new notification will be issued for Field Marshal in his capacity as CDF, as per the proposed changes to the Army Act. On the recommendation of the army chief/CDF, the prime minister would appoint the National Strategic Command (NSC) Commander, who could be reappointed for a term of three years. In line with the proposed changes, the army chief will have the authority to appoint a Vice Chief of Army Staff or Deputy Chief of Army Staff. Additionally, the army chief will oversee the restructuring and integration of all branches of the Pakistan Army as the CDF. The post of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee will be abolished from November 27, the proposed Army Act stated.

27th Amendment triggers legal storm in country

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The country's legal and political landscape has been thrown into fresh turmoil following the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment a move the government hails as a milestone in judicial reform, but which critics see as a grave threat to judicial independence and the supremacy of the Constitution. Adding to the unfolding judicial drama, Chief Justice Yahya Afridi is set to host a farewell reception in honour of Justice Aminuddin Khan, who will retire from the Supreme Court on November 30. However, Justice Aminuddin's departure from the apex court will not mark the end of his judicial career. The government has appointed him as the first Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court, a newly created body under the 27th Amendment – a position that effectively extends his judicial tenure by another three years. While the creation of the Federal Constitutional Court is being celebrated by the government as part of its "judicial modernization" initiative, the move has sparked intense debate within the legal fraternity. Many view it as an attempt to curb the powers of the Supreme Court and to bring the ju-

diary under tighter executive control. The sense of unease has been compounded by the resignations of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah, both of whom have chosen to step down rather than, in their words, "become part of a crippled and managed judiciary." Their decision has sent shockwaves through judicial and political circles alike, reinforcing fears that Pakistan's judiciary is being systematically undermined. The 27th Amendment, passed amid heated debate and protests in Parliament, has already ignited one of the most divisive legal controversies in recent years. While government spokesmen have called it a step toward efficiency and transparency in the justice system, opposition parties and constitutional experts argue that several provisions are not only unconstitutional but also un-Islamic. Among the most contentious clauses is the grant of lifetime immunity to the President, the Field Marshal, and the Service Chiefs, a move that many legal experts describe as a direct violation of the principle of equality before law – a central tenet of both Islamic jurisprudence and Pakistan's constitutional framework. "No law can override the injunctions of Islam as enshrined in the Constitution," remarked a senior constitutional lawyer. "Granting lifetime immunity to any office-holder is

against both the Constitution and the teachings of Islam. It's an affront to the rule of law." Analysts say the immunity clause was inserted as a political compromise, reportedly to secure the support of President Asif Ali Zardari and other key stakeholders for the amendment's passage. The legal community expects that the controversial clauses of the 27th Amendment will soon be challenged in the superior courts, setting the stage for yet another constitutional showdown. Some even predict that the Federal Constitutional Court itself may end up adjudicating challenges to the very law that created it – a scenario that would test the limits of judicial ethics and constitutional logic. Beyond the political implications, the creation of a parallel judicial structure has triggered serious concerns about the fragmentation of judicial authority. Under the amendment, the Federal Constitutional Court will handle all constitutional disputes – a mandate that overlaps significantly with the traditional jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. This overlap, lawyers warn, could create confusion, weaken the authority of the apex court, and deepen divisions within the judiciary. "Parallel systems rarely work," commented a senior advocate of the Supreme Court. "Instead of reforming the judiciary, the 27th Amendment risks politi-

cizing it further. Once politics seeps into judicial appointments, impartial justice becomes impossible." Inside judicial circles, quiet conversations are reportedly taking place about the next phase of leadership transitions. Justice Aminuddin Khan's elevation to head the new constitutional court is expected to trigger reshuffling at the top of Pakistan's judicial hierarchy, possibly influencing future appointments and the balance of power within the judiciary. For now, the nation's attention remains focused on how these unprecedented developments unfold. Will the newly created Federal Constitutional Court enhance judicial efficiency and constitutional clarity, as claimed by the government? Or will it deepen divisions and compromise the independence of the judiciary, as critics fear? One thing is clear: the 27th Amendment has opened a new and uncertain chapter in Pakistan's constitutional history. Its defenders view it as a necessary evolution of the legal system; its opponents, as a dangerous political maneuver to control the courts. As the country braces for what many predict will be a prolonged legal battle, the fate of the amendment – and indeed the future of judicial independence in Pakistan – now rests with the very institution it seeks to redefine: the judiciary itself.

Tessori lauds Red Crescent services

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori Thursday stated that serving humanity is a noble mission, and the services of the Red Crescent are commendable. He expressed these views during a meeting with Chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent, Sindh Branch, Muhammad Rehan Hashmi at the Governor House here. He remarked that the relief efforts of the Red Crescent in the Sindh province's remote areas are a beacon of hope for the people. The meeting involved a detailed discussion on matters pertaining to immediate relief operations during natural disasters, accidents, and emergencies. Muhammad Rehan Hashmi apprised the Governor of Sindh about the ongoing activities, medical services, and volunteer operations of the Red Crescent Sindh. On this occasion, Rehan Hashmi lauded Governor Sindh's welfare initiatives and the ongoing assistance programs for deserving communities. The meeting also reinforced a mutual commitment to strengthen cooperation and work jointly on collaborative welfare projects.—APP

Punjab launches rehabilitation, agri support for flood victims

KHANEWAL: The Punjab government has initiated a comprehensive program to ensure the complete rehabilitation of flood-affected families under the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz As part of the initiative, kitchen gardening seed kits were distributed among flood victims to promote self-sufficiency and food security at the local level. Commissioner Aamir Karim Khan, MPA Akbar Hayat Hanjra, and Deputy Commissioner Dr Salma Suleman distributed vegetable seed kits among flood-affected farmers during a special ceremony in Khanewal. Addressing the gathering, Commissioner Aamir Karim Khan emphasized that "wheat is not just a crop but an integral part of our culture." He added that the Punjab government has fixed the wheat support price at Rs 3,500 per 40 kilograms to ensure fair returns for growers.—APP

KP devises special plan for 4.92m OOSC

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Department of Education has taken an initiative by preparing a special action plan for the province's 4.92 million out-of-school children. As a first step, the department has compiled comprehensive data of children who are not currently enrolled in schools. According to the official document on Thursday, Alternative Learning Pathway Centers will be established to provide educational and training opportunities for these children. In addition, Girls' Community Centers will be set up across various districts to encourage enrollment and focus on girls' education. The document further states that prefabricated schools will be built in colder regions of the province, while existing schools will be upgraded.—APP

Speakers call for expanding Pak-Algeria cooperation

ISSI hosts event commemorating Algeria's 'National Day'

SAIFULLAH ANSAR/DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), organized an event to commemorate Algeria's 'National Day' Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, while speaking on the occasion, said that celebrating Algeria's National Day honors the historic struggle and resilience of the Algerian people. He noted that this commemoration underscores the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Algeria. He recalled Pakistan's full support for Algeria during its liberation struggle and particularly championing their case at the United Nations (UN) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). He highlighted Algeria's principled leadership in Africa, the Middle East, and the Muslim world. He emphasized the significant potential for expanding Pakistan-Algeria cooperation in trade, investment, energy, education, defence, and culture. He expressed his commitment to further strengthen this multifaceted partnership for shared growth, peace, and prosperity. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his remarks, said that Algeria's National Day marks the beginning of Algeria's heroic struggle for independence on 1 November 1954. He paid tribute to the resilience and unity of the Algerian people, whose sacrifices led to their triumph over colonial rule, and noted that the Algerian Revolution also asserted national identity and human dignity. He further said that Pakistan and Algeria share a deep bond of friendship, grounded in shared values, mutual respect, and common aspirations. Both countries have consistently cooperated in international fora such as the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Ambassador Hamid Asghar, in his remarks, highlighted the deep-rooted shared values between Pakistan and Algeria, paying tribute to the courage of the Algerian people during their struggle against French colonial rule. He noted Algeria's socio-economic progress, supported by its rich natural resources, and emphasized the potential for enhanced Pakistan-Algeria cooperation in the energy, IT, industry, and blue



economy sectors. He also commended Algeria's principled stance on Palestine, reaffirming the shared commitment of both countries to justice and solidarity, and expressed confidence in the continued expansion of the Pakistan-Algeria multifaceted partnership. Ms. Amina Khan highlighted that Algeria's National Day reflects the resilience and unity of its people in their struggle for freedom. Ambassador Ibrahim Romani highlighted the deep friendship between Pakistan and Algeria, recalling Pakistan's early support for Algeria's independence at the Bandung Conference and the United Nations. He emphasized their shared values of justice, solidarity, and mutual respect, reflect-

ed in similar positions in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Group of 77 (G77). He underscored the strong and growing Pakistan-Algeria ties across political, economic, and cultural spheres, and encouraged further cooperation, highlighting Algeria's strategic location, low energy costs, and access to African and Arab free trade zones. Ambassador Khalid Hussain Gudaro said that Pakistan and Algeria share a longstanding partnership rooted in mutual respect, historical ties, and shared values. He highlighted the potential to deepen cooperation in diplomacy, trade, defence, and cultural exchanges, and stressed both countries' commitment to strengthening people-to-people contacts, expanding economic collaboration, and enhancing institutional mechanisms such as the Bilateral Political Consultations and Joint Ministerial Commission. He also emphasised promoting cooperation across key sectors to ensure a prosperous, stable, and peaceful future for both nations. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood noted that as Pakistan expands its engagement with Africa, Algeria holds a special strategic importance as the gateway to the continent. He added that Pakistan should further develop its strategic economic partnership with Algeria, building on their long history of cooperation and shared ideals. The event was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, academia, think-tanks, business community, civil society, and the media.

PHA chief review Murree beautification projects

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Horticulture Authority (PHA) Director General, Naheed Gul Baloch on Thursday visited various beautification sites and public parks in Malka-e-Kohsar Murree to review ongoing projects for enhancing the city's natural beauty and improving facilities for tourists. She was accompanied by Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi Director General, Ahmed Hassan Raniha, who briefed her on the progress of beautification and upgradation initiatives being implemented in collaboration with local authorities. During the visit, Naheed Gul Baloch inspected several key locations including Bagh-e-Shaheedan Park, PIA Park, Lower Topa Park, and a local

flower shop, assessing the horticultural arrangements and amenities provided for visitors. She instructed the officials concerned to further enhance floral decoration, increase greenery, and improve the overall aesthetic appeal of Murree's parks and recreational sites "The facilities for tourists must be continuously upgraded, and the quality of beautification projects should reflect the city's stature as a premier hill destination," she emphasized, adding that lush plantations and creative landscaping are essential to preserving Murree's charm. Later, the PHA director general inspected several set-out areas and ongoing beautification projects, providing directives to ensure their timely and quality completion. She also visited the PHA Rawal-

pindi head office in Murree, where a detailed discussion was held on current and upcoming beautification and infrastructure improvement projects across the region. Ahmed Hassan Raniha briefed the DG PHA on the progress of enhancement works at key parks, intersections, and scenic points, noting that special attention is being given to environmental sustainability and tourist convenience. Commending the efforts of PHA Rawalpindi, Naheed Gul Baloch lauded the authority's dedication to maintaining Murree's natural splendor and tourist-friendly environment. She directed officials to make recreational spaces more attractive and accessible, intending to promote eco-tourism and a cleaner, greener Murree.—APP

80pc piling work on Jinnah Park flyover completed

RAWALPINDI: Work on the signal-free corridor project is progressing steadily, with 80 per cent of the piling on Jinnah Park flyover and 10 per cent on the underpass completed. A review meeting chaired by Commissioner Rawalpindi Engineer Aamir Khattak on Thursday was informed that 28 per cent of the piling and 32 per cent of the girder work on the Kachehri Chowk flyover, and 17 per cent of the piling on the Kachehri Chowk underpass had also been completed. Likewise, guide beam work at Iftikhar Janjua Chowk had been finished and drilling was in progress. The meeting was told that construction work at all three intersections — Iftikhar Janjua Chowk, Kachehri Chowk and Jinnah Park — commenced on November 3.—APP

FJWU shines in QS World University Rankings

RAWALPINDI: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) continues to make remarkable strides in the academic world. For the second consecutive year, FJWU has been recognized as the top women's university in Pakistan, securing the 34th position nationwide. On the global stage, the university has achieved an impressive 558th rank out of 1,526 institutions in the prestigious QS World University Rankings: Asia 2026, said a press release issued here Thursday. These outstanding achievements reflect FJWU's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, research innovation, and global competitiveness. The university's mission to empower women through quality education, innovation,

and leadership continues to inspire and set new benchmarks in Pakistan's higher education landscape. FJWU's success in the QS rankings can be attributed to its strong academic reputation among scholars and employers, the remarkable employability of its graduates, an excellent faculty-student ratio that ensures personalized mentorship and student support, a diverse and globally engaged community of international faculty and students, and a high number of citations per faculty that highlight the quality and impact of its research output. Together, these factors demonstrate the university's strength as a center of learning, innovation, and academic excellence. Expressing her pride in

the University's achievement, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza (PoP, T.I.) commended the relentless efforts of the Director QEC, Prof. Dr. Bushra Yasmin, and the entire Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) team for their dedication and excellence in enhancing academic quality and institutional performance. "This recognition is not just an achievement for FJWU but for Pakistan's higher education sector as a whole," said Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza. She further said that the success reaffirmed our collective commitment to empowering women through education, innovation, and leadership, shaping future generations to make a meaningful impact globally.—APP

Steps to vaccinate 8.2m children against Measles-Rubella

KARACHI: Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechohu on Thursday chaired a high level meeting of the Provincial Steering Committee on Measles-Rubella vaccination campaign and reviewed preparations for the drive starting from November 17 to 29, 2025. The campaign aims to vaccinate 8.2 million children with the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine and 8.4 million with Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) across 30 districts of Sindh. The meeting was informed that all districts had received the vaccines before the November 15 deadline, while banners and awareness materials had also been distributed. Over 30,000 frontline workers have been deployed for the campaign, including 6,532 vaccinators, an equal number of team assistants, 393 second-level supervisors, 1,645 first-level supervisors, 5,219 additional team assistants, and 5,219 social mobilizers. Addressing the meeting, Dr. Azra Pechohu directed that all vaccinators must perform their duties diligently and achieve their daily targets without fail, warning that no negligence will be tolerated. She said vaccination has been made legally mandatory, and action will be taken against parents or institutions refusing cooperation. She further stated that licenses of non-cooperative private or public schools would be revoked and such institutions would face closure. The minister was informed that 8.6 million MR and 9.4 million OPV doses have been distributed to divisional stores across Sindh. She directed all DHOs to monitor vaccine usage daily, maintain proper records of utilized or leftover doses, and ensure safe disposal of syringes and medical waste, with a waste management officer appointed in every Union Council. Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, Project Director EPI Dr. Raj Kumar, CEO PPHI Javed Jagirani and District Health Officers (DHOs) from all districts attended the meeting. All the preparations have been finalized for the Measles-Rubella immunization campaign starting in Dera Ismail Khan from November 17, aiming to vaccinate around 300,000 children aged six months to five years. Organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department in collaboration with the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), the campaign will continue until November 29. According to District Health Officer Dr. Syed Muhammad and District EPI Coordinator Dr. Irfan Aziz, special vaccination teams have been deployed, and all staff have been trained to ensure smooth implementation. A district monitoring cell has also been established to supervise progress. The health officials warned that measles is a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease, while rubella can cause serious birth defects if contracted during pregnancy. Parents have been urged to cooperate with vaccination teams and ensure their children receive the measles-rubella vaccine.—DNA

Safe Secure Islamabad initiative launched

ISLAMABAD: The federal government announced the launch of the "Safe Secure Islamabad" initiative to ramp up the security of the federal capital. The announcement comes two days after 12 people were killed and 36 were injured in a suicide blast outside the district and sessions court building in Islamabad's G-11 area. The incident occurred as international events were being hosted in the capital, including the first one-day international (ODI) match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Rawalpindi. The announcement about the new initiative was made by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry while he was addressing a press conference outside Parliament House alongside Islamabad Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon and Inspector General of Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi. He said that as part of the programme, a first-of-its-kind new 'Secure Neighbourhood' survey would be launched that would allow the administration to know who was occupying every house, shop or office in the capital with information about the number of people, their age, their nationality,

whether the place was rented or self-owned and more. The minister said the information would not only help in providing the public with municipal services but would also provide large volumes of data to the government for security purposes. "In the next stage, it will be declared mandatory for all vehicles in the city to have electronic tags. There will be no vehicle in Islamabad without green tags that are cleared regarding the environment, and electronic tags, which we also call M-Tag or e-tags, so every moment of any vehicle in Islamabad can be monitored." The minister said that Islamabad was "very important" as the country's capital. "The administration has more responsibility than the administration of other cities," he said, adding that the police and district administration not only had to serve citizens but also protect foreign diplomats, guests, officials and other important people. Chaudhry said the steps were taken by the interior minister and the ministry under the prime minister's leadership to ensure that the capital looked as secure as it looked beautiful. The state

minister said the "Secure Neighbourhood" project would reach completion in the next three months. He added that public schools, colleges, businesses, traders, bodies and current and past officials would be taken on board as well to disseminate the survey. Chaudhry assured the public that the information would "remain safe and secure with government agencies and the Islamabad administration." Providing more details on the survey, DC Memon said an application was launched by the name of "ICT Household Survey" and anyone living in Islamabad could download it and add details of their residence, residents, servants and ownership status therein. He said teams would begin door-to-door surveys from Monday to add people to the database. Memon added that the data would also pinpoint which houses had information missing about them and the administration would subsequently retrieve it, whether by "force or other means". He said the above was the only way to declare Islamabad safe and secure.—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
Mauritania 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
Cantt 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

Over 200 plot owners get possession in sector I-15

Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and DG NAB Rawalpindi, Islamabad Waqar Ahmed Chohan congratulated the plot owners on the occasion of getting possession of their plots

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has officially begun handing over developed plots in Sector I-15, with more than 200 owners received possession certificates on Thursday. The ceremony was presided over by Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, while DG NAB Rawalpindi/Islamabad Waqar Ahmed Chohan attended as the special guest. The ceremony was also attended by CDA Board Member Admin and Estate Talat Mehmood Gondal, Member Finance Tahir Naeem, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza, Member Planning and Design Dr. Khalid Hafiz, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon along with CDA and NAB officers and plot owners. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and DG NAB Rawalpindi/Islamabad Waqar Ahmed Chohan congratulated the plot owners on the occasion of getting possession of their plots. It is important to note that the process of handing over possession of more than 8,600 developed plots out of a total of 10,200 in Sector I-15 has commenced, with an estimated value exceeding 70 billion rupees. Initially, during the ceremony on Thursday, possession of plots was handed over to more than 200 owners in Sector I-15. Sector I-15 was specifically launched for low-income citizens. Chairman CDA said that the formal process of handing over possession to plot owners has now begun in Sector I-15, where development work, pending for over two decades, has been completed. He said that fulfilling the residential needs in Islamabad is among our top priorities, as per the direction of Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. Chairman CDA mentioned that NAB's full cooperation was instrumental in removing the obstacles hindering the

development of Sector I-15. Addressing the ceremony, he thanked the National Accountability Bureau for its cooperation and stated that the mutual cooperation and collaboration between CDA and NAB has led to a historic achievement in giving the legal rights of the allottees of Sector I-15. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that with NAB's cooperation, CDA is finalizing the process of delivering possession for more than 86,000 plots in Sector I-15 and initially, 200 allottees were given possession certificates today. The remaining allottees will be provided possession certificates at their doorstep. Chairman CDA emphasized that the use of modern technology in collaboration with SUPARCO is being given special importance to eliminate all types of encroachments and addressing land-related issues in Islamabad. DG NAB Rawalpindi/Islamabad Waqar Ahmed Chohan also congratulated all the allottees of Sector I-15 and said that CDA's Estate Wing and NAB have played a positive role in resolving this long-pending matter. He thanked the Chairman CDA for his cooperation in this regard. DG NAB Rawalpindi/Islamabad said that after the verification process, possession letters have been issued to all allottees. He said that all obstacles have been removed due to the excellent cooperation and coordination between the both institutions. He assured that the process of people receiving their rights will continue uninterrupted. DG NAB Rawalpindi/Islamabad announced that NAB Rawalpindi/Islamabad, in collaboration with CDA, is introducing a new system to promote transparency in the housing sector.

Junaid forms committee

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has constituted a high-level, multi-agency committee to identify potential sites for the establishment of new deep-sea ports along Pakistan's extensive coastline, a move aimed at preparing the country for the next century of maritime expansion and economic transformation. In a statement issued on Thursday, the minister said the initiative forms part of his "Hundred Years Vision 2047-2147," unveiled during the inauguration of National Maritime Week in Karachi earlier this month. He announced that he would personally attend the first meeting of the 12-member committee scheduled for next week, marking the beginning of efforts to materialize his long-term vision of developing Port 1, Port 2, and Port 3 at strategic coastal locations. To expedite the process, the committee will meet fortnightly and is tasked with submitting a comprehensive feasibility report, including technical findings, hydrographic maps, satellite data, and investment recommendations to the Ministry of Maritime Affairs within three months. Pakistan's coastline spans over 1,024 kilometers from Sir Creek in Sindh to Jiwani in Balochistan, encompassing an Exclusive Economic Zone of approximately 240,000 square kilometers and a continental shelf of nearly 50,000 square kilometers. With the country's GDP projected to reach \$1 trillion dollars between 2030 and 2035, maritime trade and associated industries are expected to expand dramatically.—APP

First-ever robotic surgery performed at PIMS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has achieved a historic milestone on Thursday by successfully conducting Islamabad's first-ever robotic adrenalectomy surgery, marking a new era of surgical innovation in the country. The groundbreaking procedure, a robotic adrenalectomy, was carried out using the advanced "Toumai" surgical robot, a state-of-the-art system developed in China. The event formed part of a Robotic Surgery Master Class held at PIMS under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Atif Inam Shami, Head of the Department of General Surgery. The surgery team included international robotic experts Prof. Mateen Shareef and Dr. Javed Burki from the United Kingdom, alongside senior PIMS surgeons Prof. Dr. Shamim Khan, Dr. Burhan ul Haq, and Dr. Khalid Saeed. Together, they successfully performed a complex robotic procedure on a female patient, demonstrating the potential of robotic-assisted technology in Pakistan's healthcare sector. Speaking to the media, Prof. Mateen Shareef, Director of Robotic Surgery, said, "This is a historic moment for Islamabad and for Pakistan. Our mission is to make robotic surgery accessible across the country." He said that the government was fully supporting these initiatives, and with this technology, patients would recover faster and with minimal pain. PIMS Executive Director, Prof. Dr. Rana Imran Sikandar, hailed the achievement as a defining moment in Pakistan's healthcare history. "This landmark event reflects our commitment to advancing patient care through cutting-edge technology and global collaboration. "PIMS will continue to serve as a hub for innovation and professional training in the region," he stated. He said, "For the first time in PIMS' history, a robotic surgery has been successfully performed. Complex operations that were technically challenging can now be done with greater safety and accuracy." He added the robotic system minimizes patient discomfort and

ensures faster recovery. He said that doctors from General Surgery and Urology departments collaborated closely in the procedure, and expressed confidence that more such successful operations will follow. Prof. Dr. Atif Inam Shami emphasized that the integration of robotic technology reflects PIMS' commitment to innovation, patient safety, and international collaboration. "This achievement symbolizes Pakistan's entry into a new chapter of modern surgery. Through training, workshops, and partnerships with international experts, we aim to equip our surgeons with world-class skills," he said. The event drew widespread praise from medical professionals and young surgeons, who described it as a transformative leap for Pakistan's healthcare system. With this successful operation, PIMS joins the ranks of advanced medical centers across the world utilizing robotic technology – paving the way for safer, more efficient, and minimally invasive surgeries in the country. Earlier, a workshop was conducted being part of a larger effort by the Department of General Surgery to integrate robotic-assisted techniques into Pakistan's healthcare system, ensuring safer, more precise, and minimally invasive procedures for patients. The summit gathered prominent international experts including Dr. Haris Khawaja (University of Oxford), Dr. Sania Majeed (New Jersey, USA), Prof. Dr. Lavrent Lyani (UAE), Dr. Aldizi (Bahrain), and Prof. Saeed (Tehran, Iran), who presented their latest research and shared insights with Pakistani surgeons. Eminent local specialists such as Prof. Dr. Hanif, Dr. Burhan, and Dr. Adnan also contributed to the academic exchange. Prof. Dr. Rana Imran Sikandar appreciated these initiatives, expressing full institutional support for such educational activities in the future. He emphasized that continuous learning opportunities are vital to nurturing the next generation of Pakistani surgeons. Young participants from across the country praised both the robotic surgery workshop and the bariatric summit, calling them vital platforms for exposure to global best practices in modern surgical science.

100 HEC officers trained under NAHE-CSA collaboration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: For the first time ever, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan successfully concluded a series of capacity-building training for its officers through the Civil Services Academy (CSA), Lahore. Five cohorts of HEC officers, comprising around 100 officers including Director Generals, Directors, and Deputy and Assistant Directors from all HEC offices, have been trained under this pioneering collaboration. This indeed marks a major step towards strengthening governance capacity, leadership effectiveness, and institutional performance in the higher education sector. The initiative – conceptualised by Managing Director National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) Dr. Noor Amna Malik and designed by Deputy Director (NAHE) Ms. Sadia Bukhari after a detailed assessment of competency gaps across various cadres – aimed at developing a progressive and well-equipped workforce, i.e., capable of meeting emerging challenges in governance, policy, and innovation. The training modules were designed and effectively implemented with high-quality learning content, expert facilitation, and strong coordination between NAHE and CSA. The training covered critical themes including governance excellence, ethical leadership, strategic and financial management, policy formulation, project planning, and effective communication, along with modules on emotional intelligence, stress management, and professional ethics. The programme also adopted a blended learning approach under the theme "Classroom and Beyond", combining classroom lectures, case-based discussions, and experiential learning to translate theory into practice. Addressing the closing ceremony of the senior management cohort, Chairman HEC Mr. Nadeem Mahbub appreciated the initiative and commended NAHE for its proactive efforts to enhance the professional capacity of HEC's workforce. He lauded the successful collaboration with CSA as a historic milestone, reflecting HEC's commitment to human capital development and institutional excellence. He emphasised that such structured, competency-based training programmes are vital to improving service delivery, governance, and policy implementation in the higher education sector.—DNA

AIOU organizes annual RDC to strengthen academic collaboration

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) held its annual Regional Directors Conference (RDC), focusing to offer advanced digital services to other universities, strengthening academic collaboration, resolving students issues on regional level among other key initiatives. The conference was organized under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, where heads of 53 regional campuses from across the country participated, said a press release on Thursday. Dr. Nasir Mahmood announced that the university would soon launch computer classes in more than two dozen of its regional campus to provide students in remote areas access to modern IT education. He stated that AIOU's fees were lower compared to other universities and designed to facilitate maximum students. The Vice Chancellor further said that AIOU was at the moment ready to offer advanced digital services to other universities, including core courses for BS programs, CMS, LMS and an integrated digital platform.—APP

Several studies negate narratives of forced conversions in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: While the freedom to practice a religion of one's choice is guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan and enshrined in the principles of Islam, allegations of forced conversions to Islam have not been substantiated with credible evidence. This consensus emerged at the conclusion of a roundtable discussion on the "Dynamics of Faith Conversion in Pakistan," organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad. The event brought together researchers and scholars from sociology, anthropology, religious studies, and interfaith relations. Six research studies presented during the session provided empirical evidence from Sindh and South Punjab, regions where allegations of forced conversions are most frequent. Dr. Qudsia Firdous of Riphah International University shared findings from her doctoral research, which involved an extensive study of Hindu-Muslim relations in Bahawalpur and Yazman. The perspective she developed after five years of fieldwork involving visits to mandirs, participation in Hindu festivals, and extensive interaction with the community was that both communities live together with "a remarkable degree of harmony." Her survey of 100 respondents revealed no instances of forced conversions in the study area. An overwhelming majority of the respondents confirmed religious freedom to contradict the popular narrative of systematic coercion and oppression. Farrah Kashif, representing an NGO that recently published a report alleging forced conversion through marriages in Punjab and Sindh, presented findings based on observations of 15 experts and three survivors. She stated that force was pervasively employed in faith conversions; however, she conceded that often it was not in the typical sense, rather consent was compromised through inducement or duress. Wajid Mansoor, a doctoral researcher at the University of Karachi, termed the narrative regarding faith conversions as propaganda-driven. "The public narrative developed through media does not represent the ground realities," he said. Based on 42 interviews with a cross-section of converts, clerics, and community leaders from Sindh, he identified several social factors that motivated conversions among sched-

uled-caste Hindus. He denied coming across any forced marriage during his field research. Dr. Ghulam Hussain shared findings from research involving data on 6,055 neo-converts to Islam and 110 interviews of converts, their fam-

political motives. Dr. Taimia Sabiha of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, also agreed with most researchers while presenting a thesis by Sana Haroon that she had supervised. Describing the conversion patterns

ily members, representatives of Hindu panchayats, clerics, lawyers, and law enforcement agencies. After over a decade in field research as an anthropologist, he categorically dismissed claims of forced conversions in Sindh. "These conversions are either willful or caused by several push factors which characterize their former religions," he emphasized. He noted that conversion of men, women, and families from one faith to another, including faiths other than Islam, has continued in Sindh for centuries, and should not be used for

of women to Islam through empirical evidence from Punjab and Sindh, she explained that none of the interviewees had converted overnight. "The process always takes months, even years, of contemplation and search to find the purpose of life," she noted. Hamdan Ali, from a religious seminary in Sindh where conversions to Islam frequently occur, said clerics take every possible measure to ensure consent. "We involve families, local Hindu leaders, law enforcement agencies.—DNA

Briefs

QESCO to provide 2 MW electricity to hospital

GWADAR: The Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) is all set to provide 2 MW electricity to Pak-China Friendship Hospital (PCFH) Gwadar. The construction of power transmission lines and electricity related infrastructure was completed in the first week of November, 2025. The provision of 2 MW electricity will enable Pak-China Friendship Hospital to operate all its health apparatus and medical departments at optimum level. Talking to Gwadar Pro, a PCFH official said that power transmission lines have been laid down from the main grid station to dedicated feeder to make sure uninterrupted power supply to the hospital. "The absence of electricity, so far to some extent hospital's power needs were being fulfilled through a diesel generator that operational cost stands at Rs2 million in a month. Owing to unavailability of power, he said, heavy medical machineries installed in the hospital is out of function. Pak-China Friendship Hospital (PCFH) Gwadar has been providing the best free medical facilities to more than 2,12,000 poor patients of Gwadar as well as various parts of Balochistan especially women and children in both OPD and Emergency sections since its operation last year in June 2024.—APP

Three standing committees submit reports to Senate

ISLAMABAD: Three reports were presented in the Senate on Thursday, covering issues of public importance, food security, and health sector financing. Senator Danesh Kumar on Thursday presented before the House the report of the Committee on a point of public importance raised by Senator Mohsin Aziz on July 15, 2025. The report, submitted on behalf of the committee's chairman, pertained to the closure of the Utility Stores Corporation of Pakistan. Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan, Chairman of the Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research, presented the committee's report on the National Agri-trade and Food Safety Authority Bill, 2025. The proposed legislation seeks to establish a regulatory authority.—APP

Pakistani civil servant Zile Huma honoured

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani civil servant Zile Huma has been named among "Kindness and Leadership: 50 Leading Lights of Asia Pacific 2025", a recognition by 'Women of the Future' announced on World Kindness Day, celebrated globally on November 13. Huma has made significant contributions in the areas of climate change, human rights, and higher education during her twelve-year public service career, said a press release on Thursday. "Previously, she has been recognized for her volunteer work to develop World First Oxford COVID-19 Tracker along students and researchers of University of Oxford, UK during the pandemic.—APP

Canada, Pak explore climate, economic cooperation

The Minister also briefed the High Commissioner on Pakistan's initiative to establish Green Clusters to promote innovation, youth entrepreneurship, and green startups

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Dr. Musadik Malik, met with the High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Tarik Ali Khan, to discuss ongoing collaboration and future avenues of partnership between Pakistan and Canada. High Commissioner Tarik Ali Khan conveyed condolences over the recent tragic attack on Cadet College Wana, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and expressed Canada's hope for peace and stability in the region. He also thanked the Minister for his support in facilitating the import of Canadian Canola Oil into Pakistan. Discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including community welfare, climate-adaptive agriculture, and sustainable economic growth. The High Commissioner noted that the Canadian Commercial Commission could support Pakistan through the provision of Canadian goods and services under government-to-government (G2G) arrangements. He shared that Canada is advancing innovations in climate-adaptive agriculture and expressed interest in partnering with Pakistan



to promote sustainable practices and technology exchange. Dr. Musadik Malik commended Canada's leadership in the global climate discourse, noting its balanced approach to managing

the hydrocarbon market alongside carbon sequestration and clean energy initiatives. He remarked that Canada's experience offers valuable insights for Pakistan's transition toward a green and

resilient economy. The Minister also briefed the High Commissioner on Pakistan's initiative to establish Green Clusters to promote innovation, youth entrepreneurship, and green startups.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continued dialogue and structured cooperation in advancing shared goals of climate resilience, clean energy, and sustainable development.

Major constitutional reform to strengthen defence structure

ISLAMABAD: The recently approved constitutional amendment marks a major shift in Pakistan's defence framework by consolidating top military posts under a single command. The reform aims to modernize the armed forces, improve coordination among services, boost morale and reinforce national security in response to complex regional and internal threats. The amendment establishes the post of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), to be held by the serving Chief of Army Staff, replacing the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. The move centralizes command of the Army, Navy, and Air Force under one constitutional authority, a model adopted by several leading military powers to ensure unified decision-making and faster strategic responses. President of Pakistan Business Network Omar Butt said the reform was long overdue, given Pakistan's tense regional environment and persistent insurgencies. He noted that evolving threats require quicker decisions, stronger inter-service coordination, and greater focus on defence readiness and budget priorities. Omar Butt said the unified command would help reduce bureaucratic overlap and improve crisis management. The legislation also introduces the position of Commander of the National Strategic Command, to be appointed by the Prime Minister on the CDF's recommendation. This office will oversee Pakistan's nuclear and strategic assets, consolidating civilian and military oversight of deterrence policy. He termed the amendment essential for long-term defence modernization and strategic integration. Defence analysts agree that the unified chain of command could enhance training, resource allocation, and technology upgrades across services. The new model is expected to align procurement and planning under a single vision, potentially improving defence efficiency despite fiscal constraints. Observers say the reform could also support local defence industries through more coordinated modernization initiatives. However, some policy experts caution that such concentration of authority must be balanced with transparent civilian oversight to ensure institutional accountability. The government plans to implement the structural changes within the current fiscal year. The next challenge will be translating the new command model into measurable operational gains and lasting strategic stability across Pakistan's defence establishment.—DNA

China aid provides solar system

ISLAMABAD: The Ghaus Bahar Public Library in Ormara, Gwadar, has received a solar power system under the China Aid - For Shared Future initiative to ensure sustainable energy for the facility, which serves as a major learning hub for local students and teachers. Ormara Tehsilard Noor Khan received the consignment from Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Hamood-ur-Rehman, according to Gwadar Pro. The shipment, bearing the China Aid insignia, includes solar panels, inverter, batteries and wiring components. Installation work will begin soon to make the system fully operational. Located along the Makran Coast between Gwadar and Karachi, Ormara is one of the historic towns in Balochistan. The solar system is expected to provide the library with uninterrupted electricity, improving study conditions and enabling extended reading hours for both

male and female students. The Ghaus Bahar Public Library recently underwent renovation and reorganization through the combined efforts of the local administration and community volunteers. Once almost an abandoned building, it has been restored into an active public space promoting reading and research. The provincial government, in coordination with the Gwadar district administration, has intensified efforts to promote literacy by constructing and renovating schools and libraries. Last week, the Gunz Mubarak Qazi Library near Jiwani was inaugurated by MPA Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch and Deputy Commissioner Hamood-ur-Rehman. Earlier in June, the Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi Digital Library was launched in Gwadar, now recognized as one of Pakistan's leading digital libraries.—APP

Pakistan embraces Data, AI for inclusive growth

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) successfully concluded the two-day DataFest 2025 here the other day, a vibrant national event showcasing cutting-edge data innovations, artificial intelligence (AI) applications, and youth-driven creativity aimed at advancing evidence-based policy-making and sustainable national growth. Held under the theme "From Numbers to Lives - Unlocking Tomorrow with AI", the festival brought together policymakers, data scientists, academia, development partners, and students from across the country. The venue remained lively with exhibitions and live demonstrations featuring data-powered dashboards, interactive visualisation tools, and AI-driven applications from both public and private sectors. A major highlight of the event was

the launch of the GIS Dashboard and Pakistan Spatial Insight Dashboard, inaugurated by Secretary, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Awais Manzoor Sumra, marking a milestone in Pakistan's transition toward data-driven governance. The Secretary visited thematic stalls, reviewed real-time performance-monitoring tools, and appreciated the integration of analytics that promote transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decisions. During the festival, the PBS signed multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with a range of academic and institutional partners - including the AJK Planning & Development Department, Lahore Leads University, Air University, National University of Pakistan, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar, Al-Mustafa Trust Hospital.—DNA

Pakistan adopts climate smart planning: Ahsan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said Pakistan had transitioned from a reactive climate response to a proactive climate-smart planning framework, aimed at tackling the pressing environmental and developmental challenges confronting the country. "Our government's commitment is clear. We have moved from reactive climate response to proactive climate smart planning," he said while addressing an event here. The minister said the impacts of climate change had compelled policymakers worldwide to rethink how societies build, plan and live. "Every flood, every heat-wave and every urban shock

reminds us that the durability of our growth depends on the sustainability of our foundations," he remarked. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan, being among the most climate-vulnerable countries, could no longer afford to rely on reactive measures. "In 2022, catastrophic floods caused losses of over \$30 billion, and again in 2025, major flooding inflicted widespread destruction. However, our preparedness and lessons learned from 2022 helped us avert much larger losses this time," he added. He stressed that climate change was no longer a future concern but a present reality that demanded institutional and policy action on permanent foundations. "Unfortunately, we are champions of more talk and less action. Now we must reverse this - less talk, more

action," he added. The minister said that political instability had remained the biggest hurdle in implementing long-term policies, adding "No country in the world has prospered amidst uncertainty and disorder. If we want Pakistan to progress, we must ensure stability in our policies and governance." Referring to the economic recovery, Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan had narrowly avoided internal default in April 2022, when the Finance Division was unable to issue a monthly budget due to depleted reserves. He lauded the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for taking difficult decisions that stabilized the economy. "Despite painful adjustments, the people endured because they knew the hardship was not of their making but necessary for national

recovery," he maintained. He pointed out that international financial institutions had recognized Pakistan's turnaround. "Fitch, Moody's, and Standard & Poor's - none of which are government entities - have upgraded Pakistan's ratings. Inflation has dropped from over 38 percent to 4.5 percent, the policy rate has reduced from 23 percent to 11 percent, and the stock market has nearly doubled," he highlighted. "Pakistan is now ready to take flight, but this time we must ensure that the flight is sustainable and not crash again," the minister emphasized, adding that the country's youth deserved a stable and prosperous future based on consistent economic policies. He said sustainable growth now hinged on integrating climate-smart practices into development.

IRSA releases 110,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 110,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 50,700 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1530.98 feet which was 128.98 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 27,100 cusecs and 70,000 cusecs, respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1226.60 feet, which was 176.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 5,300 cusecs and 22,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 75,300, 46,400, 35,600, and 7,800 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 7,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 4,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

FJWU shines in QS World varsity Rankings

RAWALPINDI: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) continues to make remarkable strides in the academic world. For the second consecutive year, FJWU has been recognized as the top women's university in Pakistan, securing the 34th position nationwide. On the global stage, the university has achieved an impressive 558th rank out of 1,526 institutions in the prestigious QS World University Rankings: Asia 2026, said a press release issued here Thursday.

These outstanding achievements reflect FJWU's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, research innovation, and global competitiveness. The university's mission to empower women through quality education, innovation, and leadership continues to inspire and set new benchmarks in Pakistan's higher education landscape. FJWU's success in the QS rankings can be attributed to its strong academic reputation among scholars and employers, the remarkable employability of its graduates, an excellent faculty-student ratio that ensures personalized mentorship and student support, a diverse and globally engaged community of international faculty and students, and a high number of citations per faculty that highlight the quality and impact of its research output.—APP

Foreign delegations depart

ISLAMABAD: Delegations from various countries have begun departing for their home nations following the successful conclusion of the two-day Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC), chaired by Senate Chairman Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani from 11-12 November. Senior officials from the Senate of Pakistan were present at Islamabad International Airport to see off the visiting delegates. The Turkish delegation, led by Member of Parliament Ali Sahin, expressed deep appreciation for the Senate of Pakistan, its Chairman, and the people of Pakistan for their exceptional hospitality, describing Pakistan as his "second home." The Moroccan delegation, led by Deputy Chairman of the House of Councillors, Abdul Rahman Oukifa, congratulated Chairman Gilani on the successful organisation of the conference, while Uzbekistan's Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Assembly, Sadiq Safov, commended his leadership and vision. The Speaker of Barbados, Arthur Eugene Holder, also lauded Chairman Gilani's foresight and thanked Pakistan for the warm welcome extended to all participants. Jacques Marion, Regional Adviser for The Washington Times, expressed good wishes for Pakistan upon his departure. Other departing delegations included representatives from the Maldives, led by Speaker Abdul Raheem Abdullah; the Philippines, headed by former President and Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo; and Malaysia, whose Deputy President of the Senate, Dato' Seri Nur Jazlan bin Mohamed, praised Chairman Gilani's leadership in promoting parliamentary diplomacy. Azerbaijan's Deputy Speaker of the Milli Majlis, Ali Ahmadov, hailed the initiative as a vital step in fostering inter-parliamentary cooperation, while Liberia's Speaker of the House of Representatives, Richard Nagbe Koon, described the conference as a timely effort to strengthen global parliamentary engagement. Delegations from Saudi Arabia, Belarus, and Somalia also appreciated Chairman Gilani's vision for advancing peace, mutual development, and inter-parliamentary understanding, extending their best wishes to Pakistan. Foreign delegates unanimously described the ISC as an effective platform for promoting dialogue, cooperation, and shared efforts toward peace and sustainable development.—DNA

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EU and China tango Mohamed Chebaro

THE worsening US-EU relations witnessed in 2025 have led many to believe that European-Chinese ties could flourish to redress certain geostrategic and economic imbalances. But a close look at history, as well as the recent political, social and economic postures of both sides, reveals that such a strategic shift is near-impossible due to the prominence achieved by Beijing and the systemic handicaps plaguing the EU that split its China relations into piecemeal chunks. A report published by the Atlantic Council this week, which aims to explore how Europe is waking up to the China challenge, explains the shortfalls that make a China-EU rapprochement a long shot. The EU apparatus makes policymaking on China a tedious and complex process that, even if goodwill and trust were to prevail on both sides, could frustrate any efforts toward integration. The report explains how EU policymaking involves a multilayered process in which institutions and member states pursue overlapping and sometimes conflicting interests. At the EU level, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council and the European External Action Service play distinct roles in shaping policy. Meanwhile, member states work to develop their own national approaches that influence EU-level decision-making. The result, according to the Atlantic Council, is a complex and often opaque interplay of actors, issues and interests that rarely align and could interfere with each other when it comes to shaping the bloc's approach to China. The EU apparatus makes policymaking on China tedious and complex and it could frustrate any integration efforts. The weight and action of this machinery can best be seen through the poor results that the 25th EU-China Summit yielded in the summer. At a summit that many believed could help Europe set the stage to leverage more cooperation with China as a counterweight to US President Donald Trump's aggressive posture against the bloc, the EU stayed true to its concerns about China. It evoked Beijing's export surplus flooding Europe's markets with cheap goods, as well as China providing support for Russia in its aggression against Ukraine. However, all this was brushed aside by the Chinese leadership, which denied any imbalances existed or that things had reached an inflection point, as the EU suggested. President Xi Jinping pointed out that "there are no fundamental conflicts of interest or geopolitical contradictions" between the two sides and urged the EU to "properly handle differences and frictions." He even went as far as calling for the European side to keep its trade and investment markets open and to refrain from using restrictive economic and trade tools, in a tone suggesting he was ordering rather than hoping. Those words are testament to the fact the Chinese know what they need and



that Beijing is in a position to dictate. Meanwhile, the EU speaks with many voices, reflecting nation states' individual interests. Even different regions within Europe pursue different priorities, from trade and manufacturing goals to climate policies and/or geopolitical positioning. The EU project is clearly behind the times, not only as a result of the Trump-led America's diverging interests leaving it exposed as an ally that has long been overreliant for its security and nuclear umbrella on the US, but also as a bloc that is lagging technologically too. Take the technological sphere, in which China has clearly moved from being an imitator to an innovator. It is ahead of the EU in many areas seen as critical for future economic growth, as well as in areas held dear by Europe as it seeks to transition its societies and economies to net-zero emissions. Xi's words are testament to the fact the Chinese know what they need and that Beijing is in a position to dictate. Above all, the Chinese model that fuses military and civilian use in terms of knowledge and research has caught Europe out. China's military sector has been overhauled and modernized at speed, benefiting from and harnessing civilian technological advances. European private-public sector partnerships remain a costly and untested apparatus for defense procurement. Just look at the EU special fund to upgrade its members' military that was agreed this year to meet present and future challenges from the Ukraine war and an ever-encroaching Russia. The jury is still out on how efficiently the €800 billion (\$926 billion) pledged will be spent on procurement from within EU nations, or whether it will be diverted to buy off the shelf from the US. For years, the EU opened its doors, societies and systems for China to acquire defense-related knowledge. This appears to have been used to help build an increasingly assertive China that transfers its knowledge and dual-use materials to Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine. Beijing has also openly used the influence it derived from its trade and investment prowess to promote its model of governance, with some success in the Global South and even in parts of Europe itself. Meanwhile, the EU's divergent national interests and economic dependencies weigh it down, as the individual political orientations among member states continue to add layers of complexity, hindering a collective approach on China that could keep Beijing in check. In the eyes of many EU nations, China could demonstrate that it is committed to cooperation and projecting itself as a provider of solutions and supporter of peace and stability in a turbulent world. Such language is often used by China when it seeks positive cooperation, but it rarely uses its weight to sincerely vie for peace. And, yes, China's geostrategic priorities might lie elsewhere. The EU, despite its consensus-based politics, remains a bloc that is ripe for the picking, but Beijing continues to fail to win over Europe and its large middle-class consumer market. Short of that happening, China is likely to continue to dictate and the EU to reluctantly indulge. Or EU-China relations will remain a necessary tango, but they will forever have a less-than-compatible partnership in a changing world in which Europe is lagging behind.

The Living Image of Iqbal's Shaheen

Muhammad Asif



The 1965 war stands as a shining testament to this spirit. Despite being vastly outnumbered by its adversary, the Pakistan Air Force displayed extraordinary courage and professionalism, earning admiration around the world. Its pilots not only defended the skies but also redefined the very meaning of air power through faith and heroism. Squadron Leader M. M. Alam became a symbol of unmatched valor when he shot down five enemy aircraft in less than a minute a feat that astonished the world and perfectly mirrored Iqbal's Shaheen...

THE Pakistan Air Force (PAF) is, in essence, the living embodiment of Allama Muhammad Iqbal's concept of the Shaheen (Eagle). The Shaheen envisioned by Iqbal symbolizes self-respect, courage, spiritual strength, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. It is not merely a bird but a metaphor for human potential one who soars beyond material temptations and lives for higher ideals. The PAF reflects this very spirit in its discipline, faith, and unshakable resolve, proving to the world that true power comes from belief, determination, and moral strength rather than mere numbers or weaponry. When Pakistan emerged as an independent state in 1947, it faced immense challenges in organizing its defense institutions. With scarce resources, a lack of equipment, and limited trained personnel, the newly established Pakistan Air Force started from humble beginnings. Yet, its officers and airmen, inspired by Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi (selfhood) and spiritual independence, demonstrated that when faith and vision unite, even the impossible becomes possible. Like Iqbal's Shaheen, who flies high above worldly pleasures and fears, PAF's spirit was built on self-confidence, patriotism, and a burning passion for the defense of the homeland. The 1965 war stands as a shining testament to this spirit. Despite being vastly outnumbered by its adversary, the Pakistan Air Force displayed extraordinary courage and professionalism, earning admiration around the world. Its pilots not only defended the skies but also redefined the very meaning of air power through faith and heroism. Squadron Leader M. M. Alam became a symbol of unmatched valor when he shot down five en-

emy aircraft in less than a minute a feat that astonished the world and perfectly mirrored Iqbal's Shaheen, who conquers challenges through faith and willpower. The training philosophy of the Pakistan Air Force also reflects Iqbal's ideals. PAF training institutions do not merely teach flying; they cultivate discipline, honesty, and a deep love for the nation. Every cadet is taught that he flies not for personal gain but for a sacred cause the protection and dignity of his homeland. Here, faith and morality go hand in hand with technical mastery. This integration of spirituality, intellect, and skill makes each pilot a true Shaheen, one who rises above fear and mediocrity to achieve excellence in both thought and action. In embracing modern science and technology, the PAF has also given practical shape to Iqbal's philosophy of uniting faith with knowledge. Institutions such as Air University, PAF Academy Risalpur, and Fazaia Degree Colleges represent this synthesis of intellect and spirit. The officers trained here are not just pilots but thinkers' men who understand that true flight is not only of the body but of the mind and soul. Today, Pakistan Air Force's achievements in technological advancement and self-reliance such as the successful development of the JF-17 Thunder demonstrate that the Shaheen's philosophy is not confined to poetry but is a living, practical force. These milestones prove that a nation which believes in its own strength and vision can stand tall among the greatest powers of the world. Iqbal's Shaheen is not dependent on others; he builds his own wings and creates his own destiny. The PAF's role, however, is not limited to defense. It also represents the moral and human-

itarian spirit of the nation. Whether in times of war, natural disaster, or international humanitarian crises, the Air Force has always stood in service to humanity. This commitment goes beyond duty it reflects Iqbal's message that nations are not sustained by weapons but by faith, character, and selfless service. If we examine the traits of Iqbal's Shaheen courage, dignity, sacrifice, independence, and action we find them all vividly embodied in the men and women of the Pakistan Air Force. Their eyes reflect determination, their demeanor speaks of discipline, and their hearts beat with love for the homeland. In them lives the spirit of the Shaheen one who soars fearlessly into the unknown, guided by conviction and duty. Iqbal called upon the Muslim Ummah to awaken from its slumber and rediscover its inner strength. His Shaheen symbolized a rejuvenated Muslim identity spiritually alive and intellectually free. The Pakistan Air Force, through its service and achievements, has breathed life into that vision. Every time a PAF pilot takes flight, it is not just a jet that ascends into the sky it is the realization of Iqbal's dream, the embodiment of his message, and the continuation of his mission. The Pakistan Air Force is not merely a defense institution; it is a living reflection of Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi and Shaheen. It stands as proof that when faith, knowledge, and action unite, no force on earth can subdue a nation. As Pakistan's Shaheens soar across the blue skies, they proclaim to the world that Iqbal's dream is alive that the Shaheen of faith, courage, and vision still lives on, guarding the skies of a free and proud nation.

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Iron Brothers: The CPEC Corridor to a Shared Pakistan-China Future

Khalid Mahmood

Critics, particularly from rival nations, argue that CPEC represents a tool of Chinese influence or that Pakistan's debt obligations could become burdensome. Some analyses describe the partnership as an effort by both countries to control regional narratives and conduct psychological diplomacy. However, within Pakistan, the general perception remains that the alliance with China is a strategic necessity — one that guarantees economic security, technological progress, and regional stability in an increasingly competitive world.

DAILY life in Pakistan remains normal and vibrant. Business activities, cultural gatherings, and international events such as cricket matches, global conferences, and trade exhibitions continue to take place across the country. In cities like Islamabad, daily life reflects stability and a strong sense of continuity, even though social media often exaggerates challenges and projects a distorted image of the nation. Pakistan's foreign relations are shaped by complex regional dynamics. The country frequently finds itself at odds with Western powers and its eastern neighbor, India. Despite these pressures, Pakistan's strategic and economic future is deeply tied to its long-standing partnership with China — a relationship that has endured for over five decades. This alliance has evolved from political and military cooperation into a strong economic partnership, symbolized by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC, the flagship project of China's global Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), represents a major transformation in Pakistan's development strategy. Valued at approximately \$62 billion over 15 years, CPEC is a comprehensive infrastructure

program aimed at modernizing Pakistan's transportation networks, boosting energy production, and creating industrial zones to enhance trade and investment. For China, it offers a vital trade route to the Arabian Sea through Gwadar Port; for Pakistan, it serves as a gateway to economic growth and modernization. This collaboration underscores the depth of Pakistan's commitment to its alliance with China. The Pakistani leadership, both civilian and military, has pledged to protect CPEC "at all costs," recognizing its central role in national stability and prosperity. Pakistan views the project as a lifeline that can address chronic issues such as unemployment, energy shortages, and infrastructure gaps. In turn, China regards Pakistan as a key strategic partner in safeguarding regional connectivity and ensuring the success of its Belt and Road vision. The relationship between the two nations extends beyond economics; it is a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. Both governments coordinate closely to promote a unified narrative about CPEC, counter misinformation, and defend the project against international criticism — especially from Western and Indian media outlets. This shared stance reflects

their mutual interest in maintaining geopolitical balance in South Asia and projecting strength through cooperation. Critics, particularly from rival nations, argue that CPEC represents a tool of Chinese influence or that Pakistan's debt obligations could become burdensome. Some analyses describe the partnership as an effort by both countries to control regional narratives and conduct psychological diplomacy. However, within Pakistan, the general perception remains that the alliance with China is a strategic necessity — one that guarantees economic security, technological progress, and regional stability in an increasingly competitive world. In this context, it becomes the duty of Pakistan's friends and allies, especially China, to stand by the nation through both challenges and triumphs. The Pakistan-China partnership is more than a diplomatic arrangement; it is a long-term vision rooted in mutual trust, shared development, and collective resilience. As the saying goes, "Seeing is believing" — those who visit Pakistan and witness its progress firsthand understand that the spirit of cooperation between the two countries continues to shape a promising future for the region.

Briefs

Uproar in Senate as 27th Amend bill sails through

FROM PAGE 01
He further explained the process, saying that the presiding officer has two days to examine a written reference submitted by the party head and forward it to the Election Commission. The party head must also conduct a hearing with the defector for voting against party directives, as sometimes instructions are not properly communicated. The matter is then sent to the Election Commission, where a formal hearing is conducted. The member concerned can appeal a desating decision in the Supreme Court. "Until the process is formally completed in black and white, the member remains in office," Tarar added. He also noted that a senator who resigns must submit it in writing to the Senate chairman and satisfy him. The Senate chairman clarified that he has not yet received any resignation. A day earlier, the National Assembly passed the amendment bill that seeks to change the judicial structure and military command, with 234 votes in favour and four against amid opposition's walkout. It included eight amendments – not part of the Senate-approved previous version – aimed at clarifying the chief justice's position. The amended bill fine-tunes the structure of the newly established Federal Constitutional Court (FCC), clarifies the titles and ranking of the country's top judges, and drops several clauses from the Senate-approved draft that had sought to alter oath-related provisions for various constitutional offices.

Mansoor Ali Shah, Athar Minallah tender...

FROM PAGE 01
In his 13-page-long resignation, Justice Shah termed the amendment as "a grave assault on the Constitution of Pakistan", which "dismantles the Supreme Court of Pakistan, subjugates the judiciary to executive control, and strikes at the very heart of our constitutional democracy". Both the judges have forwarded their resignations – copies of which are available with Geo News – to President Asif Ali Zardari following the enactment of the much-touted 27th Constitutional Amendment. In his 13-page-long resignation, Justice Shah termed the amendment as "a grave assault on the Constitution of Pakistan", which "dismantles the Supreme Court of Pakistan, subjugates the judiciary to executive control, and strikes at the very heart of our constitutional democracy". "By fracturing the unity of the nation's apex court, it has crippled judicial independence and integrity, pushing the country back by decades," he wrote. "As history bears witness, such a disfigurement of the constitutional order is unsustainable and will, in time, be reversed – but not before leaving deep institutional scars." He declared that he could not continue in a court "stripped of its constitutional authority" following the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment. He noted that serving in what he described as a "truncated and diminished court" would be equivalent to "silent acquiescence in a constitutional wrong." Justice Shah wrote that the amendment, which establishes a Federal Constitutional Court above the Supreme Court, was enacted "without debate or consultation" and aimed to "place the judiciary under executive influence." He expressed dismay at what he described as the abdication of leadership by the current Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, saying that instead of defending judicial independence, he had "chosen personal continuity over institutional integrity." He said both the government and the judicial leadership lacked "moral and constitutional authority" to alter the judicial structure while their own legitimacy was under challenge.

UEFA confirms Cardiff opener and Wembley final for Euro 2028

Cardiff to Host Euro 2028 Opener as UEFA Confirms Venues Across UK and Ireland; Wembley to Stage Semi-Finals and Final in Historic Tournament Bringing £3.6 Billion Economic Boost

LONDON: Cardiff will host the opening match of the 2028 UEFA European Championship, while Wembley Stadium in London will stage the semi-finals and final, UEFA confirmed on Wednesday. The tournament – co-hosted by England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland – will feature 24 teams competing across nine venues in eight cities: Cardiff, Birmingham, Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, and London (Wembley). Northern Ireland, initially part of the hosting lineup, was excluded after Belfast's Casement Park was removed from the list due to insufficient funding. The opening match will take place at the National Stadium of Wales (Principality Stadium) on Friday, June 9, marking a landmark moment for Welsh football as the venue adopts its international hosting name for the event. Round of 16 fixtures will be distributed across all host venues, excluding Wembley. Host nations that qualify automatically will have their group-stage matches played on home soil. Each of the four host nations will be placed in separate qualifying groups. Additionally, two places will be reserved for the high-ranked teams that fail to qualify through the standard route. Football Association of Wales Chief Executive Noel Mooney expressed his delight at the announcement, calling it a monumental occasion for Welsh football. "This will be the first time that The Red Wall – our passionate Wales fans – will experience a major international tournament on home soil," said Mooney.



He added that the event would unite communities, inspire future generations, and celebrate Welsh culture on a global stage. "It's a truly historic occasion that will unite communities, inspire future generations, and showcase the very best of Welsh foot-

ball and culture to the world," he stated. An independent assessment projects that UEFA Euro 2028 will deliver around £3.6 billion in social and economic benefits across the UK and Ireland between 2028 and 2031. Meanwhile, a qualifying match

is scheduled to take place in Belfast on December 6, 2026, maintaining the city's involvement in the broader Euro 2028 journey. 17th Abu Dhabi World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship gets underway with amateur competitions. – **Agencies**

37 dead after bus plunges into ravine in southern Peru

LIMA: At least 37 people were killed and 24 injured in southern Peru on Wednesday when a double-decker bus plunged into a ravine after colliding with a pickup truck, officials said. The accident in Arequipa is one of the worst in recent years in the South American nation, where road fatalities are frequent. It occurred at dawn along a stretch of the Panamericana Sur highway that connects Peru with Chile. "We have a figure of 37 fatalities...in addition to 24 injured," Walther Oporto, the regional health manager of Arequipa, told AFP. The death toll could rise as some people were seriously injured in the crash, he said by telephone. The double-decker bus, operated by the Llamosas company, had departed on Tuesday night from Chala, a town in Caraveli province, and was

headed for Arequipa, Peru's second-largest city. It was carrying more than 60 passengers, including children and elderly people. The vehicle fell into a ravine approximately 200 meters (650 feet) deep after colliding head-on with the pickup on a bend, according to local media reports citing firefighters. The bus rolled down the ravine and ended up on a riverbank. Fire department spokesman Jack Paez said the rocky terrain was hampering rescue efforts involving about 30 police officers and firefighters. "This accident...has brought grief to many families," he told TV Peru. A priest arrived at the scene and prayed over the bodies lined up on the riverbank, according to images from the prosecutor's office. "I ask for justice, that the full weight of the law be applied to the driver of the truck" thought to have

caused the accident, a grieving relative who lost his father and brother told local media. President Jose Jeri, in a message on X, extended condolences to those affected. The truck's driver, who survived, was detained after testing possible for alcohol, police chief Olger Benavides told reporters. The bus driver was killed, the Llamosas transport company said. Deadly traffic accidents are a common occurrence in Peru due to speeding, drunk driving, poor road conditions, lack of signage and weak enforcement by authorities. The country's mountainous topography can also make driving conditions perilous. In February 2018, near the site of Wednesday's accident, 44 people were killed after a bus plunged into the river below. Last year, 3,173 deaths were recorded on Peru's roads. – **Agencies**

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander leads Thunder to dominant win over Lakers

OKLAHOMA CITY: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 30 points and dished out nine assists as the Oklahoma City Thunder cruised to a commanding 121-92 home victory over the Los Angeles Lakers in an NBA clash at Paycom Center on Wednesday. Despite playing the second night of a back-to-back, the Thunder showed no signs of fatigue, quickly seizing control of the game with a 23-7 run in the opening minutes. Oklahoma City extended its lead to 32 points by mid-game and peaked at a 37-point advantage in the third quarter, allowing most starters, except Ajay Mitchell, to rest in the fourth. The win marked the Thunder's 12th victory in 13 games to start the season and their fourth consecutive triumph, following a 126-102 win over the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday night. Oklahoma City's defense was exceptional, forcing 20 turnovers and dominating the paint with a 48-30 advantage. The team shot an efficient 50% from the field, while Isaiah Joe contributed 21 points off the bench, including four three-pointers. The Lakers struggled offensively, shooting a season-low 40.3%. Star player Luka Doncic scored 19 points but went 7-of-20 from the field, including 1-of-7 from beyond the arc, and sat out the fourth quarter as the game was well in hand. – **APP**

Pakistan outclass Bangladesh in hockey match

DNA

DHAKA: Pakistan made a flying start to their three-match hockey series against Bangladesh, part of the World Cup qualifying round being held in Dhaka, by outclassing the hosts 8-2 in the opening encounter. Pakistan displayed dominant form throughout the match, with Ahmed Nadeem and Afraz scoring two goals each. Captain Imad Butt, Ghazanfar Ali, Rana Waheed Ashraf, and Hannan Shahid contributed one goal apiece to seal the emphatic victory. For Bangladesh, Huzayfa and Amirul Islam managed to score one goal each. Despite their efforts, the home side struggled to match Pakistan's pace and coordination. President of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti and Secretary General Olympian Rana Mujahid Ali Khan congratulated the national team on their impressive win, expressing confidence that the players would continue their winning momentum in the upcoming matches. The second match of the Pakistan-Bangladesh series will be played on November 14, while the final encounter is scheduled for November 16 in Dhaka.

Tri-nation series to begin from Nov 18

ISLAMABAD: The PCB confirms the revised schedule of tri-nation series involving hosts Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, with the opening match taking place on November 18. All seven T20I matches including the final will now take place at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi, said a press release. The first ball of all matches will be bowled at 6pm local time. The opening game of the tri-series will be played between Pakistan and Zimbabwe on Tuesday, November 18. Each team will feature in four matches, with the top two sides qualifying for the final scheduled on Saturday, November 29. – **APP**

Belarus women to take on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece in football friendlies

The Belarusian side will open their schedule against Bosnia and Herzegovina in Zenica on 26 November

MINSK: The Belarusian women's national football team will play two friendlies in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of November, BelTA has learned. The Belarusian side will open their schedule against Bosnia and Herzegovina in Zenica on 26 November, before taking on Greece on 29 November. Coach of the Belarusian team Vyacheslav Hryharaw has selected a group of 23 players for the training camp: Goalkeepers: Ekaterina Miklashevich (FC Minsk), Natalia Voskobovich (ZFK Zenit Saint Petersburg, Russia), Maria Svidunovich (Ryazan-VDV, Russia). Defenders: Daria Gorshkova, Zarina Kapustina, Olga Kapysya (all from FC Dinamo BGUFK, Minsk), Arina Sitnikova, Yulia Slesarchik (both WFC Nike Lusso, Georgia), Ksenia Kubichnaya (FC Minsk), Anna Kozuyupa (WFC Lokomotiv Moscow). Midfielders: Anastasia Shlapakova (ZFK Dynamo Moscow), Valeriya Belaya (FC Minsk), Anastasia Linnik (WFC Lokomotiv Moscow), Karina Olkhovik (Fenerbahce S.K., Türkiye), Melana Surortseva (Puskas Akademia FC, Hungary), Alina Cherlenok (FC Dinamo BGUFK, Minsk), Anastasia Mager (Zvezda-2005 Perm, Russia), Lizaveta Pinchuk (FC Dnepr Mogilev). Forwards: Viktoriya Valyuk Shuppo (FC Minsk), Anastasia Shuppo (FC Minsk), Anna Sinyavskaya (FC Dinamo BGUFK, Minsk), Karolina Zhitko (WFC Rubin Kazan, Russia), Nadezhda Voskobovich (WFC Krylia Sovetov Samara, Russia). – **Agencies**

United Nations food agencies' report warns of deepening hunger crisis

"Conflict remains the single biggest driver of hunger," said Dongyu Qu, FAO Director-General. "But climate shocks and economic instability are compounding the crisis, leaving millions with no safety net"

UNITED NATIONS: Two UN agencies have warned of a major hunger emergency, with acute food insecurity set to worsen in 16 countries and territories between now and May 2026, putting millions of lives at risk. A report released by the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) on Tuesday identifies six countries that are at the highest risk of famine or catastrophic hunger: Sudan, Palestine, South Sudan, Mali, Haiti, and Yemen. In these areas, some communities are projected to reach famine or near-famine conditions. Other countries of very high concern include

the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria, and Afghanistan. Additional hotspots include Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, and the situation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Acute food insecurity means families cannot meet their basic food needs and often resort to desperate measures, such as skipping meals or selling essential possessions. At Phase 4 (Emergency) and Phase 5 (Catastrophe/Famine), hunger becomes life-threatening. "Famine is not inevitable," said Cindy McCain, WFP Executive Director. "We have the tools and the knowledge to prevent it, but we need the resources

and the political will to act now." Children are especially vulnerable. Malnutrition weakens immunity, making them more susceptible to disease and death. The report warns that delayed action will cost lives and increase humanitarian costs. The report highlights four main drivers: – Conflict and violence: The leading cause in 14 of the 16 hotspots; – Economic shocks: Fragile economies, high debt, and soaring food prices; – Climate extremes: Floods, droughts, and cyclones linked to La Nina conditions; and, – Reduced humanitarian aid: Funding shortfalls have forced ration cuts and limited malnutrition treatment. "Conflict remains the single biggest driv-

er of hunger," said Dongyu Qu, FAO Director-General. "But climate shocks and economic instability are compounding the crisis, leaving millions with no safety net." FAO and WFP call for urgent action to prevent famine: – Humanitarian assistance to save lives and livelihoods; – Anticipatory action—early interventions before crises escalate; and, – Investment in resilience to tackle root causes, not just symptoms. The agencies stress that the international community faces a narrowing window to act. Failure to respond will deepen hunger, destabilize regions, and lead to preventable deaths. – **Agencies**

President gives assent to Bill

FROM PAGE 01
the total membership of the Senate, and consequently, the bill stands passed." The much-touted bill was initially presented in the upper house of parliament on Monday and got a nod on the same day. It was then referred to the NA, which approved it with some amendments. Therefore, the legislation was again presented in the Senate today to approve the latest changes.

Punjab orders freezing of banned TLP's assets

FROM PAGE 01
the Punjab government to transfer, in phases, administrative control of 177 seminaries and 330 mosques previously associated with the outlawed TLP. The News reported. Sahibzada Abdul Mustafa Hazarvi, Nazim-e-Aala of the board, formally assures the provincial government that Tanzeem-ul-Madaris will take charge of the identified institutions and abide by the conditions laid down by Punjab. The memorandum also committed that all affiliated seminaries and mosques uphold national security, state stability and communal peace, and to "distance themselves from all forms of mischief or violence".

All illegal Afghans to be evicted, says Naqvi

FROM PAGE 01
The government, he stressed, would not allow anyone to use Pakistani soil for terrorism or subversive activities. Naqvi also paid tribute to the security agencies for their prompt action in tracing and arresting the culprits behind the attack, assuring the nation that no one involved in terrorism would be spared. He added that the federal and provincial law enforcement agencies were working in close coordination to ensure peace and stability across the country. "The safety of our citizens and guests is our top priority," the minister concluded.

Justice Aminuddin to head the FCC

FROM PAGE 01
the apex court will not mark the end of his judicial career after this appointment.

Medal Standings released for ongoing Islamic Solidarity Games

ISLAMABAD: The latest medal standings have been released for the ongoing Islamic Solidarity Games 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, showcasing impressive performances from participating nations. Türkiye continues to dominate the event, securing the top position with a total of 91 medals including 51 gold, 24 silver, and 16 bronze reflecting its sporting supremacy at the Games. Uzbekistan ranks second with 46 medals (2 gold, 15 silver, 17 bronze), while Egypt stands third with 27 medals (3 gold, 10 silver, 6 bronze). Kazakhstan has also displayed commendable performance with 34 medals, including 9 gold, 12 silver, and 13 bronze. Representing Pakistan, a 54-member contingent is participating in various disciplines and has so far won two bronze medals, placing the country 28th overall. Pakistani athletes continue to show determination and promise, with hopes for additional medals in upcoming events. Iran has secured 31 medals (7 gold, 8 silver, 16 bronze), while the host nation, Saudi Arabia, has claimed 21 medals (5 gold, 1 silver, 15 bronze), demonstrating strong performances across multiple sports. Indonesia follows with 23 medals, and Azerbaijan has earned 34 medals, further intensifying the competition. – **APP**

Briefs

PSX stays
bullish, gains
2,474 more
points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday witnessed a strong bullish trend, gaining 2,473.55 points, a positive change of 1.56 percent, closing at 160,657.50 points compared to 158,183.95 points on the previous day. A total of 797.17 million shares valuing Rs35.12 billion were traded in the ready market compared to 757.24 million shares worth Rs33.41 billion a day earlier. The market capitalization increased to Rs18.29 trillion from Rs18.07 trillion previously. Out of 477 companies active in the session, 285 closed higher, 142 declined, and 50 remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were Bank Makramah with 112.16 million shares at Rs5.59, followed by Dost Steels Ltd. with 48.73 million shares at Rs8.17, and F. Nat. Equities with 40.35 million shares at Rs19.63 per share. The top gainers were Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited, which increased by Rs546.00 to close at Rs28,999.00, and ZIL Limited, rising by Rs53.24 to close at Rs585.64. On the other hand, the major losers were PIA Holding Company LimitedB, which declined by Rs80.91 to settle at Rs24,452.05, and Gillette Pakistan Limited, decreasing by Rs50.04 to close at Rs450.39.—APP

Gold price
increases by
Rs 8,300 per
tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24-karat gold increased by Rs8,300 on Thursday and was traded at Rs443,062 per tola compared to Rs434,762 on the last trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs7,116 to Rs379,854 from Rs372,738, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold went up by Rs6,524 to Rs348,212 from Rs341,688. In the international market, gold prices increased by \$83 to \$4,207 as against \$4,124. Likewise, the silver prices also witnessed an upward trend as the per tola rate of 24-karat silver rose by Rs228 to Rs5,662 from Rs5,434, and the 10-gram silver price increased by Rs196 to Rs4,854 from Rs4,658. International silver also increased by \$2.28, reaching \$54 from \$51.72, the association added.—APP

Riyadh's
"Global Harmony 2"
shines spotlight on Bangladeshi culture

ISLAMABAD: The "Global Harmony 2" festival in Riyadh is celebrating the vibrant spirit of Bangladesh this week, drawing thousands of visitors to Suwaidi Park Organized by the Ministry of Media in partnership with the General Entertainment Authority, the event is part of Saudi Arabia's Quality of Life Program under Vision 2030, promoting cultural diversity and community engagement, according to SPA. The ongoing "Global Harmony 2" initiative aims to showcase world cultures through a series of themed celebrations in the capital. The current spotlight on Bangladesh offers residents and visitors a glimpse into the country's traditions, art, and everyday life. Members of the Bangladeshi community across Saudi Arabia have joined hands to represent their culture through live performances, crafts, and interactive displays. The second day of the festival featured a range of performances, from traditional folk music and dance to modern artistic displays. Local and Bangladeshi artists shared the stage with influencers and entertainers, creating an immersive cultural experience for the audience. The day began with a lively circus act, followed by a DJ session and dance performances inspired by Bangladeshi heritage.—APP

ICCI help desk to resolve diaspora business issues

The ICCI President emphasized that overseas Pakistanis are the true economic ambassadors of the nation who contribute billions of dollars annually through remittances.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark initiative to empower overseas Pakistanis and strengthen trade and investment linkages, the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has announced to establish a dedicated Help Desk for Overseas Pakistanis within its premises. The Help Desk will serve as a one-window facilitation center to address the issues faced by the Pakistani diaspora and promote their participation in business activities both locally and internationally. The announcement was made by ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood during a meeting with Engineer Muhammad Javed, Coordinator of the Pakistan Business Professional Council (PBPC), Abu Dhabi, UAE, at the Chamber House. During the meeting, both sides agreed to collaborate for the facilitation and welfare of overseas Pakistanis, particularly for the protection of their properties in Pakistan through legal support. The ICCI and PBPC also decided to work jointly to advocate for systemic reforms to ensure smooth engagement of overseas com-



munities with Pakistan's business ecosystem. Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mehmood lauded Engineer Muhammad Javed for his long-standing contributions toward promoting Pakistan-UAE trade relations and his unwavering efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation. He appreciated his

commitment to facilitating ICCI in organizing networking and B2B meetings in the UAE to expand business opportunities. The ICCI President emphasized that overseas Pakistanis are the true economic ambassadors of the nation who contribute billions of dollars annually through remittances. He

further shared that ICCI plans to organize an International Industrial Exhibition in the near future to showcase Pakistani products and provide an opportunity for overseas entrepreneurs to display their goods and services. The initiative, he said, would create mutually beneficial linkages between

local and international business communities, thereby promoting exports, joint ventures, and foreign investment partnerships. On his part, Engineer Muhammad Javed appreciated ICCI's visionary initiative for growth of business and assured PBPC's fullest cooperation in ensuring strong participation of UAE-based entrepreneurs in the upcoming exhibition. He commended ICCI's commitment to bridging Pakistan's domestic industry with overseas investors, saying it would pave the way for sustainable economic growth. He also urged the authorities in Pakistan to consider issuing Diplomatic Passports to Presidents of Chambers of Commerce and Bar Councils because in this way they will be able to get visa-on-arrival, thereby enable to extend prompt legal and business support to the Pakistani diaspora abroad. It is pertinent to mention that Engineer Muhammad Javed, who has been residing in the UAE for over four decades, is also associated with the World Asian Workers Organization (WAWO), a platform recognized for its remarkable social services and community welfare initiatives.

France commemorates victims of deadly Paris attacks 10 years on

PARIS: France paid an emotional tribute on Thursday to 130 people killed 10 years ago during a rampage by Daesh gunmen and suicide bombers targeting cafes, restaurants and the Bataclan concert hall. The attacks were the deadliest on French soil since World War Two, scarring the national psyche and prompting emergency security measures, many of which are now embedded in law. The assault on November 13, 2015, began with suicide bomb blasts that killed one person, bus driver Manuel Dias, outside the Stade de France sports stadium and continued with gunmen opening fire at five other locations in central Paris. "Since that November 13, there is an emptiness that cannot be filled," Dias' daughter Sophie said at the ceremony, her voice trembling with tears as she recalled the family's endless phone calls through the night, trying to reach her father, before they were told he had been the attackers' first victim. "May we raise awareness among younger generations, pass on the values of our republic, and remind them of all those innocent lives lost, like my dad, who left far too soon, for no reason at all," she said. President Emmanuel Macron was among officials who paid their respects to Dias and the other victims with a minute of silence and the laying of wreaths before the Stade de France. Throughout the day Macron, survivors and relatives of victims will honor those killed and wounded at each of the sites of the attacks. Victims' associations say two survivors of the attacks later committed suicide, bringing the total death toll to 132. Historian Denis Peschanski said what made the November 13 attacks — which targeted places where people were out and about having fun — unique "was that everyone was a potential victim." Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo told RTL radio: "The terrorists wanted to attack this culture that is ours — this culture of joy, celebration, diversity, sharing, and music." A decade on, the threat of such attacks in France has mutated "An attack like the one we unfortunately experienced ten years ago, on November 13, is less likely. The weakening of the Daesh makes it much less probable," Interior Minister Laurent Nunez told BFM TV. "However, the threat remains high ... with individuals present on national territory who radicalize very quickly and plot violent actions." Officials will later pay tribute to the 90 people killed at the Bataclan. Sebastian Lascoux remembered being there 10 years ago listening to the Eagles of Death Metal rock band and how people "ended up all squashed together and collapsed as one." "And then (there was) the smell of blood," said Lascoux, now aged 46. One of his friends was shot dead trying to shield another member of their party. Lascoux still suffers from post-traumatic stress and cannot be in crowded places or enclosed spaces, even cinemas. Loud pops remind him of gunshots.—DNA

Germany agrees to keep military service voluntary

BERLIN: Germany's coalition government has agreed a new voluntary military service model, politicians said Thursday, after weeks of wrangling over whether there should be a compulsory element. Under the plan, all 18-year-old men will from next year have to fill in a questionnaire on whether they would want to serve and undergo an armed forces physical test. No one will be compelled to join the Bundeswehr, however, said Defense Minister Boris Pistorius. He has advocated instead a campaign to make military service more attractive to draw more male and female recruits. Chancellor Friedrich Merz has made bolstering Germany's ill-equipped military a major priority, citing a hostile Russia and doubts about future US security commitment to Europe. He has moved to sharply increase spending on the military and vowed to turn the Bundeswehr into "the strongest conventional army in Europe." The cabinet approved a revamped military service model in August, spearheaded by Pistorius of the center-left SPD. But members of Merz's conservative CDU/CSU then called for a compulsory element in the form of a "draft lottery," to be applied if there were not enough volunteers. The lottery idea has been scrapped for now, part of a deal reached late Wednesday, said Jens Spahn, leader of the CDU/CSU parliamentary faction "If voluntary service is ultimately not enough, then compulsory service will also be necessary," Spahn said, adding however that that would require further legislation. Matthias Miersch, the SPD's parliamentary group leader, said he was certain the Bundeswehr could find enough volunteers, calling the new model "an offer" to young men and women, "not an obligation." Pistorius said compulsory service would be a "last resort" and the focus would be on "designing an attractive service.—APP

Paramilitary force pushes east in new escalation of Sudan's war

KHARTOUM: The paramilitary force battling the army in Sudan's civil war is shifting its focus eastward after consolidating its grip over Darfur last month, reigniting violence and launching drone attacks across the country's oil-producing southern areas. Escalating drone strikes and new deployments of troops and weapons by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the army suggest both sides are now centering their efforts on Kordofan, a region comprised of three states that serves as a buffer between the RSF's western Darfur strongholds and the army-held states in the east. The RSF accepted a ceasefire proposal by the United States last week after an international outcry over accounts that it had killed large groups of civilians as it overran Al-Fashir, the army's last significant holdout in Darfur. The army has not agreed to the ceasefire, which could provide a window for more deliveries of desperately needed humanitarian aid after 21-2 years of conflict, and fighting has not abated. The RSF started moving on Kordofan at the same time as it took Al-Fashir late last month, seizing the town of Bara in North Kordofan state, a crucial strategic link between Darfur and central Sudan. The army had recaptured the town just two months earlier. According to Amy Pope, head of the International Organization for Migration, up to 50,000 people have been displaced from Kordofan since then. Echoing reports from Al-Fashir, where tens of thousands were also displaced but many more are unaccounted for, survivors from Bara, who gave only their first names for fear of retribution against their families, described revenge attacks and summary executions against those accused of supporting the army. "They said you celebrated with the army ... we have to kill you," said one escapee, Khalil, speaking to Reuters with his arm in a sling in army-controlled Omdurman, part of Sudan's capital. He said he had sat in a row with eight other men, two of whom were killed, as an RSF soldier fired on them. Another man, Ismail, described hiding inside a house as men were shot in the street, until he was able to pay a fighter to escort him and his family out of the city. A third man, Mohamed, said that when RSF troops arrived at his house he could hear his father fighting back and being fatally shot outside the door. Bands of RSF fighters entered the house, beat him and others, and demanded money and gold, he said. He left the city on foot, hiding from fighters and vehicles. Emergency Lawyers, a Sudanese activist group, said hundreds were killed in Bara. Reuters could not independently verify the accounts of the violence. Asked for comment, the RSF said the army had blocked every attempt for peace. "Any place where the army is present is a legitimate target and we will attack in any area in Kordofan, Khartoum, or Port Sudan," an RSF leader said. The RSF did not address a request for comment on the accounts of killings in Bara. The RSF says reports of widespread abuses in Al-Fashir and elsewhere are exaggerated and that it is investigating any that may have happened. Fighting may now turn to North Kordofan's capital, El Obeid, one of Sudan's largest cities. Two eyewitnesses told Reuters they saw the army and allied forces amassing troops and equipment in the city earlier this week, while the RSF was deployed to the east. The town of Babanusa in West Kordofan state, home to a major army base, is also surrounded by RSF soldiers, residents told Reuters. Civilians mostly fled the city during earlier fighting. In South Kordofan, the RSF and allied fighters in the SPLM-N armed group are surrounding the army in the cities of Kadugli and nearby Al-Dalanj and fighting has escalated, according to an SPLM-N source.—APP

Neurosciences Hospital to launch AI-based services

DHAKA: The National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital (NINS) is set to introduce artificial intelligence (AI)-based medical services for stroke patients soon. "We will soon launch AI-based treatment for stroke patients. In this method, we will connect a special device to the CT scan machine, linked to a central server. When a patient undergoes a CT scan, the device will automatically display the extent of brain stroke. The patient's data will go to the server, be processed by AI, and the system will then determine the appropriate course of treatment," Professor Dr Kazi Gias Uddin Ahmed, Director of NINS, told BSS in an interview. He said about 95 percent of neurological investigation facilities are now available in Bangladesh. "We will now conduct these investigations using AI-assisted software. For stroke patients, there is a quick procedure called mechanical thrombectomy (MT), which we have already introduced at our hospital. Through this, it is possible to remove blood clots easily. The advancement lies in identifying which specific part of the brain will yield the best results if the clot is removed from there. AI will also help measure the 'core volume'-the amount of clotted blood. For this, we are integrating the required programme into the CT scan machine," he said. When asked why the number of neurological patients is increasing in Bangladesh, the NINS Director replied, "The main reason is stroke. The key risk factors are high blood pressure, dia-

betes, and cholesterol. Our diet often contains excessive fat, known as trans fat, which raises cholesterol levels—especially the bad kind, or low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol." He added, "In urban life, most people no longer sleep or rest properly as they used to. Overuse of mobile phones and other devices has made people addicted. Many stay awake at night working. When sleep patterns are disrupted, it affects the hypothalamus in the brain, which controls all centers and hormonal systems. Damage to it can cause high blood pressure, diabetes, and other complications that increase the risk of stroke. With advanced investigations, we are now seeing stroke even among young people, often due to blood vessel problems." When asked whether Bangladesh needs more specialized hospitals for neurological patients, Prof Gias said, "I believe such hospitals should be established in divisional cities like Chattogram, Rajshahi, and Khulna, and in major district towns. This would benefit many people. Also, if medical colleges across the country open specialized neurology units, the pressure on Dhaka will decrease." On the need for neurology units at district hospitals, he said, "Yes, the time has come. If a district hospital can perform a CT scan and has either a neurologist or radiologist, stroke patients can receive proper treatment immediately. If advanced stroke care can be provided locally, patients won't always need to go to major medical centers." Prof Gias continued, "In other coun-

tries, stroke patients receive emergency care through ambulance-based systems. These ambulances are equipped with mobile CT scan machines—known as mobile stroke units. CT scans are performed inside the ambulance, reports are sent to doctors online. Based on that, patients receive immediate injections or treatment. As a result, patients get timely care, which prevents disability or paralysis. But if treatment is delayed, strokes can cause permanent damage." He emphasized, "Our goal is to ensure stroke patients receive the required injection within the recommended time. But the main challenge in our country is that most patients don't recognize stroke symptoms promptly. By the time they do, three and a half to four hours have often passed—too late for effective treatment. Even those who do recognize symptoms face delays due to Dhaka's traffic and difficulty finding transportation. If patients could reach hospitals on time, proper treatment would be possible. But unlike abroad, we lack quick transport systems like mobile stroke units or special ambulances. To improve stroke care, we must enhance our transport, traffic management, and road systems simultaneously." When asked whether there are enough doctors for neurological treatment, he said, "The current number of doctors is adequate to provide care. However, for neurosurgery, we need to increase the number of operation theaters, anesthesiology staff. Once we expand these resources, many of our obstacles will be resolved.—DNA

Australia to step up sanctions against Afghan Taliban

LONDON: Australia's new sanctions proposals against the Afghan Taliban are an "important step toward accountability" for the regime in Kabul, Human Rights Watch has said. Amendments proposed to Canberra's sanctions regime will allow Australia to target Taliban officials more directly, including through travel bans. HRW said the changes to the Autonomous Sanctions Regulations would affect those involved in the oppression of females and minorities, as well as those "undermining good governance and the rule of law" in the country. "It's crucial for the Australian government to take action against Taliban leaders responsible for the assault on women and girls' rights and other egregious abuses in Afghanistan," said Daniela Gavshon, HRW's Australia director. "The amended sanctions regulations will allow Australia to join with other countries already taking steps to oppose the Taliban's widespread and systematic oppression." The Taliban have been internationally condemned since retaking power in Afghanistan in August 2021 for their oppression of females, minorities and political opponents.—APP

UN Security Council to discuss Yemen crisis

DUBAI: The UN Security Council will hold closed-door consultations on Yemen on Thursday, focusing on the arbitrary detention of UN personnel by the Houthis. The closed session comes after 59 UN staff remain were detained following accusations by Houthi leader Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi that UN personnel and humanitarian agencies were spying for Israel and the US, claims the UN has denied. The detentions and raids on UN premises have raised serious concerns about the safety of UN operations and humanitarian access in Houthi-controlled areas. The meeting will be briefed by UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya. Grundberg has conducted extensive diplomatic efforts to secure the immediate release of detained personnel, meeting officials in Oman, Bahrain, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, as well as Houthi negotiators and representatives of the Yemeni government. His discussions have emphasized that arbitrary detentions undermine UN aid delivery and political mediation efforts.—APP

SECP, PBS sign MoU to enhance data sharing, collaboration

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) The signing took place at DataFest 2025, an event organized by PBS at the Pak-China Center in Islamabad, said a release issued here on Thursday. The MoU aims to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations through information exchange, capacity building, and data sharing. This agreement establishes a framework to facilitate the automated exchange of information, ensuring access to verified, first-hand data for analytical, statistical, and research purposes. This collaboration is designed to enhance evidence-based policy planning and decision-making while significantly improving the quality and timeliness of data used in national economic assessments. Under the MoU, the parties will endeavour to share information and knowledge and explore possibilities for exchanging mutually agreed data sets. This will be achieved through digital platforms, including APIs, as well as traditional methods. All information shared under this agreement will support the execution of their respective mandates in accordance with applicable laws.—APP

Briefs

Turkiye
says Gaza
stabilisation
force must
guarantee
lasting
ceasefire

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Turkiye's main expectation from a planned International Stabilisation Force in Gaza is for it to provide guarantees that the fragile ceasefire will last, its Defence Ministry said. Nato member Turkiye has been one of the most vocal critics of Israel's devastating two-year assault on Gaza, calling it a genocide. It has emerged as a critical player and mediator in ceasefire efforts, voicing a desire to join the stabilisation force despite Israel's repeated objections. At a briefing in Ankara, the ministry also said Turkiye believed the US-led Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC) must ensure unhindered humanitarian aid deliveries into Gaza in line with international law. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday he was optimistic that the UN Security Council would finalise a resolution on Gaza that would back an international security force. "We feel optimistic that it's going to happen," Rubio told reporters after G7 foreign ministers met in Canada. "I think we're making good progress on the language of the resolution, and hopefully we'll have action on it very soon."

New Epstein
emails claim
Trump 'knew
about the girls'

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: US lawmakers have released more than 20,000 pages of documents from the estate of the disgraced financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, including some that mention President Donald Trump. Democrats on the House Oversight Committee published three email exchanges, including correspondence between Epstein, who died in 2019 in prison, and his long-time associate Ghislaine Maxwell, who is currently serving a 20-year prison sentence for sex trafficking. They also released emails between Epstein and the author Michael Wolff, who has written numerous books about Trump. Within hours, House Republicans released a massive tranche of documents to counter what they said was a Democratic effort to "cherry-pick" documents. They also said it was an attempt to "create a fake narrative to slander President Trump". White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the emails were "selectively leaked" by House Democrats to "liberal media to create a fake narrative to smear President Trump".

Pakistan, Bangladesh vow to
boost maritime cooperation

During the visit, Naval Chief called on Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan and Principal Staff Officer Armed Forces Division Lieutenant General S M Kamrul Hassan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf concluded his official visit to Bangladesh with a series of high-level interactions with senior military leadership. The visit of CNS was planned concurrent to the port visit of PNS SAIF at Chattogram. During the visit, Naval Chief called on Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan and Principal Staff Officer Armed Forces Division Lieutenant General S M Kamrul Hassan. During the meetings discussions on matters of mutual professional interest, regional maritime security and avenues to strengthen defence cooperation between the two countries were held. The interactions underscored the need to strengthen the bilateral relations and highlighted the shared commitment towards promoting peace and stability in the region. The Naval Chief also visited National Defence College (NDC), Bangladesh where he interacted with the President NDC and faculty members. During the visit, a detailed briefing was given highlighting the mandate and important programs of NDC, Bangladesh. While in Chattogram, Commander Chattogram (COMCHIT), Commander Bangladesh Navy Fleet (COMBAN) and Area Superintendent Dockyard (ASD) made calls on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf. Naval Chief also visited Bangladesh Na-



val Academy (BNA) where he interacted with the Commandant and faculty members. He appreciated the high professional standards of BNA and emphasized the importance of academic excellence, collaborative prospects of naval training and need of advanced training for naval forces in the evolving maritime domain.

Onboard PNS SAIF at Chattogram, a reception was held, attended by CNS Bangladesh Navy who was warmly received by CNS Admiral Naveed Ashraf along with Pakistan's High Commissioner Imran Haider. The gathering included diplomats, senior military officials, scholars, journalists and business

leaders reinforcing the commitment of peaceful cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean Region. This milestone visit symbolises a renewed chapter in fostering mutual respect, bilateral naval collaboration and contribute to strengthening maritime security cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Safe City cameras
stolen in Karachi

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: A non-functional distribution box of Safe City cameras installed near a residential apartment in Karachi's posh Clifton area has reportedly been stolen, it emerged on Thursday. "This was a non-energised/non-operational pole site near Sea Rock Apartments at Seaview, where the theft of a distribution box was reported to local police on November 6," South Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Syed Asad Raza told Dawn. Quoting a staff member from a nearby hotel, the South police chief said, "A vehicle with a crane was witnessed working on the pole hours before the theft was reported. 'Since then, a few switches and the battery are missing,'" the DIG added. The officer said the distribution box was installed at an "extreme height", adding that it would not have been possible for one person to steal it. He noted that the cameras were also not functional. The location of Sea Rock Apartments in Clifton. — screengrab via Google Maps DIG Raza observed that the locality was a "completely blacked out area" and there were neither street lights nor any CCTVs installed by private restaurants. "Only a single camera installed at Sea Rock Apartments is available, which offers a limited coverage of the parking area," he said, adding that the police had written letters to the Cantonment Board Clifton (CBC) and the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) to install street lights in the area to no avail. According to DIG Raza, there was no alarm system installed at the "non-operational" pole, which made it difficult to ascertain when the distribution box was removed.

Tarar praises
Sri Lanka's
unwavering stand

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar has lauded the Sri Lanka Cricket Board's decision to proceed with its scheduled tour of Pakistan, calling it a strong gesture of friendship and confidence. Speaking to Pakistan Television about the Sri Lanka Cricket Board's decision to continue the Pakistan tour, Tarar noted that Sri Lanka, having endured the scourge of terrorism in the past, has shown resilience in overcoming its challenges. He said the country's decision to stand by Pakistan has given us great hope. — APP

IMF board meets
on December 8 to
approve \$1.2 billion

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has scheduled an Executive Board meeting for December 8 to approve the disbursement of \$1.2 billion to Pakistan under two concurrent programmes, with funds expected to land on December 9. The tranche comprises \$1 billion under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and \$200 million under the \$1.4 billion Resilience and Sustainability Fund (RSF). The release follows a Staff-Level Agreement (SLA) reached on October 14 covering the EFF's second review and the RSF's first review. Upon approval, total disbursements under the two arrangements will rise to about \$3.3 billion. An IMF team led by Iva Petrova held discussions in Karachi and Islamabad from September 24 to October 8, and in Washington, DC, to conclude the SLA. The Fund cited strong programme implementation and priorities that include sustaining the fiscal effort while supporting flood-affected households, keeping inflation durably within the State Bank of Pakistan's target range, restoring the energy sector's viability, and advancing structural reforms.

The IMF also said the RSF-backed climate agenda is progressing, noting that recent floods highlight the need for consistent, comprehensive reforms to reduce climate risk. Ahead of the Board meeting, the IMF is pressing Pakistan to publish, and act on its Governance and Corruption Diagnostic (GCD) report. Recommendations include making the Special Investment Facilitation Council fully transparent, creating a central registry of state-owned land and holding entities, conducting performance assessments of judges, publishing asset declarations of bureaucrats, and removing the Finance Secretary from the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) board. While the Finance Ministry cannot legally block publication, it has repeatedly delayed releasing the report, which was originally due by the end of July and has since seen multiple extensions. The report must be published ahead of the Board meeting that will determine the \$1.2 billion disbursement. Upon approval, the disbursement will bolster external buffers while supporting the programme priorities outlined in the SLA, fiscal discipline, inflation management within the SBP target range, restoring energy-sector viability, advancing structural reforms, and progress on the RSF-backed climate agenda.

Trump signs bill to end record-breaking US shutdown

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump signed a bill Wednesday to end the longest government shutdown in US history — 43 days that paralyzed Washington and left hundreds of thousands of workers unpaid while Republicans and Democrats played a high-stakes blame game. The Republican-led House of Representatives voted largely along party lines to approve a Senate-passed package that will reopen federal departments and agencies, as many Democrats fume over what they see as a capitulation by party leaders. Trump lashed out at Democrats as he put his signature to the bill later in the Oval Office, urging Americans to remember the chaos when voting in hotly contested US midterm elections in a year's time. "Today we are sending a clear message that we will never give in to extortion," said Trump, surrounded by gleeful Republican lawmakers including House Speaker

Mike Johnson. Johnson had earlier pointed the finger at the minority party in a withering floor speech before the vote. "They knew that it would cause pain, and they did it anyway," he said. "The whole exercise was pointless. It was wrong and it was cruel." The package funds military construction, veterans' affairs, the Department of Agriculture and Congress itself through next fall, and the rest of government through the end of January. Around 670,000 furloughed civil servants will report back to work, and a similar number who were kept at their posts with no compensation — including more than 60,000 air traffic controllers and airport security staff — will get back pay. The deal also restores federal workers fired by Trump during the shutdown, while air travel that has been disrupted across the country will gradually return to normal. — Agencies

PTA starts
VPN
licensing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Thursday commenced the licensing of Virtual Private Network (VPN) service providers under the reinstated Class Value Added Services (CVAS-Data) regime. In December last year, the PTA had devised a new strategy to register VPNs after its previous efforts to ensure compliance, such as warning to ban unregistered VPNs, failed to yield the desired results. It said it had resumed granting Class Licence for Data services to service providers in Pakistan.

In a press release issued today, the telecom regulator said licensing under the CVAS-Data regime "aims to streamline the provision of secure and lawful VPN services in Pakistan while ensuring compliance with national regulations and data security standards". The PTA said it has granted class licences to several companies, including Alpha 3 Cubic Pvt Ltd (Steer Lucid), Zettabyte Pvt Ltd (Crest VPN), Nexilium Tech SMC-Pvt Ltd (Kestrel VPN), UKI Conic Solutions SMC-Pvt Ltd (QuiXure VPN), and Vision Tech 360 Pvt Ltd (Kryptonym VPN).

Gaddafi son
freed after
Lebanon
kidnap

DNA

LONDON: Hannibal Gaddafi, the youngest son of the deposed Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, has been released by Lebanon after nearly 10 years in detention without trial. The Lebanese authorities seized Mr Gaddafi, now 49, in 2015, accusing him of concealing information about the fate of a Lebanese Shia cleric who disappeared in Libya in 1978, when he was just two. Human rights groups had denounced the accusations. His lawyer told the AFP news agency his \$900,000 (£682,938) bail had been paid. Laurent Bayon said: "It's the end of a nightmare for him that lasted 10 years." In October, a judge set a \$11m bail against Gaddafi's release but this was reduced last week after an appeal by his defence team, according to AFP. Mr Bayon said his client would leave Lebanon for a "confidential" destination. "If Gaddafi was able to be arbitrarily detained in Lebanon for 10 years, it's because the justice system was not independent," Bayon said, according to AFP. In 2015, Mr Gaddafi was briefly abducted by an armed group in Lebanon before being freed. He was later detained by Lebanese authorities. After his father was overthrown by rebels and killed in 2011, he fled to Syria and then had lived under house arrest in Oman with his wife Aline Skaf. Before the fall of his father's regime Mr Gaddafi was known for his lavish lifestyle.

Terror incidents linked
to neighboring countries,
Naqvi tells UK officials

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on Thursday that terrorist incidents in Pakistan were linked to "neighbouring countries". He made the remarks while meeting with the director general of the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA), Graeme Biggar, according to a handout issued by the interior ministry. "Links of all terrorist incidents come from neighbouring countries," Naqvi was quoted as saying. He said that, adding that there was no other example in the world for Pakistan's determination against terrorism. He said that modern forensics and training could further enhance the capabilities of law enforcement agencies, adding that effective measures were being taken to stop illegal immigration. The statement further said that Naqvi and the NCA official held detailed discussions on enhancing cooperation in the areas of counterterrorism, narcotics, human trafficking, forensics, immigration and police training. The participants of the meeting agreed to enhance mutual cooperation in training courses for officers of various agencies,

including the Anti-Narcotics Force and National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency. They also agreed to have effective coordination in combating online harassment of children, the statement said. Five memoranda of understanding (MoUs) on cooperation in extradition and other areas between Britain and Pakistan are to be finalised soon, the ministry said. Meanwhile, the NCA chief condemned the suicide attack in Islamabad on Tuesday and expressed grief over the lives lost in the incident. "We are cooperating with the government of Pakistan in various fields," he said, while appreciating Pakistan's efforts in combating the drug trade. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, the national coordinator of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nacta), the director general of the NCCIA, the additional home secretary, the Islamabad chief commissioner and the inspector general of the Islamabad police were also present on the occasion. The meeting comes after a suicide blast occurred outside a district court in Islamabad's G-11, the first such incident in the federal capital in nearly three years, and an attack on the Cadet College in Wana that was successfully thwarted.

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