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China to always stand by Pakistan at any difficult time: envoy

Detailed News On Page-08

US President reverses stance on email issue

Detailed News On Page-08



No ISIS commander killed in Punjab

Detailed News On Page-08



Crimes against humanity

Hasina sentenced to death over brutal protests crackdown

The extraordinary verdict—unprecedented in the country’s political history—relates to last year’s violent crackdown on student-led protests, during which UN estimates suggest as many as 1,400 people were killed, most of them shot by security forces

DHAKA / DNA

BDHAKA: Bangladesh has been thrust into fresh turmoil after a special war-crimes-style tribunal on Monday found former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced her to death in absentia. The extraordinary verdict—unprecedented in the country’s political history—relates to last year’s violent crackdown on student-led protests, during which UN estimates suggest as many as 1,400 people were killed, most of them shot by security forces. The tribunal ruled that Hasina, who was then serving her fourth consecutive term as prime minister, ordered and oversaw the use of excessive force to quell the demonstrations that had engulfed the country for weeks. Prosecutors argued that the deadly suppression amounted to state-directed mass violence against civilians. Hasina, however, has rejected the proceedings outright. Speaking to the BBC last week from New Delhi, where she has been living in exile since being ousted from power, she dismissed the trial as a “kangaroo court” and accused Bangladesh’s interim authorities of conducting a politically motivated vendetta. The former premier fled to India shortly after losing control of the government amid intense public anger and a military-backed transition. Her trial proceeded without her presence, a move critics say undermines the legitimacy of the verdict. Still, the ruling now puts New Delhi in a delicate position, with Bangladesh expected to formally request her extradition.



Bangladesh demands India extradite Hasina

DNA

DHAKA: Bangladesh on Monday demanded India extradite ousted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, hours after she was sentenced to hang for crimes against humanity. Hasina’s autocratic rule was backed by New Delhi, and the 78-year-old fled to India after her ouster in a mass uprising in August 2024, fraying relations between the two neighbours. On Monday a court in Dhaka sentenced Hasina as well as former interior minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to death in absentia, after being found guilty of crimes against humanity over a deadly crackdown against last year’s student-led uprising. The former minister’s whereabouts are not known, but Bangladesh says he is also in India. “We urge the government of India to immediately extradite the two convicts to the Bangladeshi authorities,” Dhaka’s foreign ministry said in a statement, saying it was “an obligatory responsibility for India”. Bangladesh warned that “granting asylum to these convicts... would be extremely unfriendly and an affront to justice.” India’s foreign ministry said that it had “noted the verdict” of Hasina. “India remains committed to the best interests of

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Briefs

ECP schedules by-election for Senate seat

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday announced the schedule for the by-election on the Senate seat left vacant after the death of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Irfan Siddiqui. The seasoned politician died on November 10, shortly after the upper house of Parliament passed the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which reforms the judicial hierarchy and clarifies the titles and ranking of top judges and military leaders. Candidates may submit nomination papers from November 20 to 21 to the Returning Officer, while scrutiny will be completed by November 25, the commission stated. The ECP has set November 29 as the last date for filing appeals against the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers.

‘FIA, NCCIA ‘corrupt institutions’

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Senator Palwasha Khan on Monday declared the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) “corrupt institutions”, urging that land allotment cases be referred to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The PPP lawmaker made these remarks during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Privileges, chaired by Senator Waqar Mehd. During the briefing, CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa informed the committee that the authority had its records scanned through the Punjab Land Revenue Authority and was pursuing all court cases professionally.

New envoys present credentials to President



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Timothy Kane, High Commissioner designate of Australia; H.E. Munsoo Kurrimbaccus, High Commissioner designate of Mauritius; H.E. Maja Mortensen, Ambassador designate of Denmark; and H.E. Salem Al Babaw Al Zaabi, Ambassador designate of the United Arab Emirates, presenting their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – DNA

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Four newly designated envoys presented their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari at a ceremony held today at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Those who presented their credentials included Mr. Tim Kane, High Commissioner-designate of Australia; Mr. Munsoo Kurrimbaccus, High Commissioner-designate of Mauritius; Mrs. Maja Mortensen, Ambassador-designate of Denmark and Mr. Salem Mohammed Salem Al Babaw Al Zaabi, Ambassador-des-

ignate of the United Arab Emirates. Upon arrival at the Presidency, the envoys were presented Guard of Honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Armed Forces. The President congratulated them on their appointment and expressed confidence that their tenures would further strengthen Pakistan’s bilateral relations with the four countries. While talking to the High Commissioner-designate of Australia, President highlighted Pakistan’s friendly relations with

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PM unfurls upgraded Shalimar train service

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Monday that the digitisation of Pakistan Railways and the provision of modern facilities would play a key role in strengthening the national economy. He added that the federal government, in collaboration with the Sindh government, would modernise the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) and upgrade all railway stations across the province and the country. The premier expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the new Shalimar Express and the newly upgraded waiting areas and lounges at Karachi Cantt Railway Station during his visit to Karachi. The prime minister visited the upgraded waiting area, CIP lounge, dining hall and computerised ticketing system, accompanied by federal ministers, senior railway officials and the railways police chief.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates New Shalimar Express in Karachi on 17 November 2025. – DNA

PPP triumphs

Faisal becomes new AJK PM as assembly ousts Anwarul Haq

36 lawmakers support no-confidence motion; assembly sees fourth premier of current term

STAFF REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Monday voted to remove Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq from his post, replacing him with Pakistan Peoples Party’s (PPP) Raja Faisal Rathore. The no-confidence motion was supported by 36 lawmakers, including those from the PPP and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. Two members opposed the motion. Overall, Rathore is the 16th AJK PM and the fourth of the current assembly. Those who have served in the top post during the incumbent assembly’s tenure, apart from Haq, include Abdul Qayyum Khan and Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan. Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar presided over Monday’s session, attended by lawmakers of the PPP, PML-N, and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, including Leader of the Opposition, Khawaja Farooq Ahmad. Strict security measures were put in place at the Assembly Secretariat, Ministers’ Block, and Prime Minister’s Secretariat.

Speaking on the floor of the assembly, PM Haq said that no single individual could be held solely responsible for the “destruction of the constitution and administrative system,” noting that members of his cabinet also share responsibility for governance outcomes. Haq said he was placing his remarks on record, expressing gratitude to the assembly that “gave him political life.” He said that no formula for the division of Kashmir could succeed under his leadership and described signing off on ending reserved seats for refugees as “political death.” The political system could only survive, he said, if the region’s borders are protected. “Without Pakistan’s armed forces, nothing will remain.” On recent political developments, Haq said that he would have supported Rathore for the prime minister’s post had the elections been held. “I was once asked to dissolve the assembly by February 15 this year, but I refused to do so,” he added. The PPP had moved to consolidate its government in the autonomous region shortly after

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Pakistan, Iran pledge to cement bilateral relations

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Moscow to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government

FAISAL SHEIKH

MOSCOW: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar departed for Moscow on Monday to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting. The high-level gathering will bring together heads of government from SCO member states to discuss regional connectivity, economic cooperation, and collective security priorities. Meanwhile, Pakistan and Iran held the 13th Round of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) in Islamabad on 17 November 2025, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening cooperation across multiple sectors.

The talks were led by Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch from Pakistan and Iran’s Deputy Minister for Political Affairs, Majid Takht-Ravanchi. Senior officials from both sides participated in the wide-ranging consultations, which reviewed progress on decisions made during the previous round. Both delegations agreed to enhance and diversify bilateral trade, expand collaboration in the energy sector, improve transport connectivity, and promote education and people-to-people exchanges. The two sides also exchanged views on key regional and global developments. The consultations underscored the importance of regularly convening institutional mechanisms such as

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FCC: it’s time to get down to business

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI



WITH the establishment of the Constitutional Court (FCC), Pakistan has entered a new phase of judicial evolution. The political leadership proudly calls it a major reform designed to ease the burden on the Supreme Court and ensure swift adjudication of constitutional matters. But now that the court is operational, the real test begins: will justice finally be delivered, or will it merely be repackaged under a new title? For decades, Pakistan has suffered from an overburdened judiciary, chronic delays, and widespread violations of human rights. Tens of thousands of constitutional petitions remain pending. Citizens continue to suffer humiliating experiences in lower courts where cases drag on for years and where, in many instances, justice has to be “purchased” rather than secured. With the FCC now functional, the nation expects more than ceremonial inaugurations and official fanfare. It expects real results. The state of Pakistan’s lower judiciary remains a matter of deep concern. Litigants often queue outside courtrooms for years, spending their life savings to prove what should have been resolved within months. Court staff, lawyers, and at times

even judges become part of an environment where influence, money, and political connections can alter the course of justice. This is not merely judicial weakness; it is judicial paralysis. The establishment of the FCC offers an opportunity to begin cleaning up this system, but the responsibility does not rest on one institution alone. Reforms in civil and criminal procedure, digitization of case management, transparent monitoring systems, and strict accountability of judicial officers are urgently needed. Unless the lower judiciary is repaired and strengthened, no top-tier court—regardless of its mandate—can deliver justice at the grassroots level. One of the most pressing issues surrounding the newly formed Constitutional Court is the perception of its independence. Questions began to arise even before its first significant judgment. Critics argue that the selection of judges appears to follow a familiar pattern of appointments of like-minded individuals who may be inclined toward predictable outcomes. Whether or not these concerns are justified, the danger lies in the perception itself. For the highest constitutional court in the country, even a hint of partiality undermines credibility. If the public believes that judgments are influenced by political will, institutional pressure, or internal alignment, the FCC’s verdicts will inevitably lose their moral authority. Justice, after all, must not only be done; it must be seen to be done. The government and the Judicial Commission must ensure that the FCC reflects diversity in legal thought. Future appointments should include judges known for their independence, courage, and integrity, those who

command respect across the political spectrum. Ironically, the political parties now expressing reservations about the FCC are the very architects of the system. They drafted and supported the amendment, voted on it in Parliament, defended it in public, and called it a historic milestone. If they are genuinely committed to constitutionalism, they must also be prepared to accept the decisions of the very court they helped create even when the axe falls on them. Selective acceptance of judicial verdicts has long damaged Pakistan’s institutional stability, where parties praise courts when decisions favor them and condemn the same courts when judgments go against their interests. This cycle of hypocrisy must end. While political leaders spent days debating the 27th Amendment and restructuring the judicial hierarchy, they remained largely silent on Pakistan’s biggest menace: corruption. If the nation is to progress, corruption must be confronted with iron resolve. Politicians frequently cite the example of China, where corrupt officials face severe penalties, even the death penalty. Yet, when it comes to Pakistan, no political party has dared to introduce similar tough legislation. If our leaders truly desire a corruption-free Pakistan, why not propose harsher punishments for plunderers of national wealth? Why not push for an amendment suggesting capital punishment for those who rob billions from the exchequer? The silence in this regard is both striking and revealing. Another deeply troubling issue is the deteriorating law-and-order situation, which continues to scare away foreign investors. Diplomats in Islamabad share candid feedback: their investors ask two

straightforward questions about Pakistan whether the judiciary is independent and whether the investment environment is secure. When diplomats describe the actual situation on the ground, including political interference, delays in legal processes, corruption, and insecurity, the response from investors is almost always the same: they decline to come. No constitutional amendment, economic conference, or investment package can yield meaningful results unless Pakistan provides predictability, stability, and transparent dispute resolution. If investors cannot trust the courts, they cannot trust the country and without investor confidence, economic revival remains a distant dream. The creation of the Constitutional Court gives Pakistan an opportunity to redefine justice. But institutions alone cannot transform a system deeply mired in corruption, manipulation, and inefficiency. Real change requires independent judges at every level, transparency in appointments, digitization of procedures, strict accountability for corrupt judicial officers, and long-overdue reforms that protect citizens and investors alike. Legislation against corruption must move beyond rhetoric and become a national priority. The FCC will be judged not by its architecture, composition, or inaugurations, but by the fairness, quality, and speed of its decisions. Pakistan now stands at a critical crossroads. The Constitutional Court can become a catalyst for genuine judicial reform or it can become yet another institution overshadowed by suspicion and political manipulation. The choice, ultimately, belongs to the nation and its leaders.

KP govt orders timely salary deductions

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department has issued strict directions to ensure timely deduction from Account-I for salary and Raast payments, after it was observed that salaries for October were disbursed from the provincial non-food account without prior intimation, causing the account balance to turn negative. According to the circular, issued by the Budget Officer, departments have been reminded that monthly salary bills must be signed on the last working day of the month and paid on the next working day, as per Federal Treasury Rules. The Finance Department has now ordered that salaries, allowances, and pensions will only be disbursed on the first working day of each month after the confirmation of the federal tranche in the provincial Account-I, in order to maintain the required cash balance.—APP

Curfew imposed in Tirah, North Waziristan

PESHAWAR: The authorities concerned have imposed a complete curfew in the Khyber district's Tirah Valley, including Maidan, Dotai, and adjoining areas, starting Monday, November 17. The curfew will remain effective from 6 a.m. until evening. District authorities have instructed residents to avoid unnecessary travel and movement, stating that the decision was taken due to the prevailing security situation in the region. Officials added that preventing illegal drug-related activities is also a key objective of the curfew. In North Waziristan, a strict two-day ban on all public movement has also been imposed. All major and minor roads will remain closed during this period. Only security forces and authorized personnel will be allowed to move within the restricted zones. The administration has warned that any violation of the curfew will result in strict disciplinary action. Essential services and emergency response teams will remain available to assist citizens when needed.—APP

Punjab launches measles, Rubella vaccination

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Monday launched measles and rubella vaccination campaign for children. Punjab Minister for Health and Population Khawaja Imran Nazir inaugurated the campaign at Children's Complex here. The campaign would continue from November 17 to 29. The minister said that Punjab CM wanted to see children healthy. He said that along with measles vaccine polio vaccine drops would also be administered to children in 11 selected districts. He said that 17 million children would receive measles and rubella vaccination while 5.5 million children in selected districts would receive oral polio vaccine. Khawaja Imran Nazir said that all vaccines used in Punjab's EPI program were 100 per cent safe and used world wide. He said: "Our healthcare staff is our pride and we won't tolerate any disrespect to them."—APP

Lebanon envoy calls for enhanced bilateral trade ties

RCCI President Usman Shaukat expressed appreciation for the Ambassador's visit and reaffirmed RCCI's commitment to fostering stronger ties with Lebanon's business community

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Ambassador of Lebanon to Pakistan, Abdulaziz Issa, paid an official visit to the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), where he held a detailed meeting with RCCI President Usman Shaukat. Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, and members of the Executive Committee were also present. During the meeting, both sides explored avenues to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation, with a particular focus on enhancing trade, promoting tourism, and boosting business-to-business linkages. Key areas of discussion including, Diversification of bilateral trade, leveraging Pakistan's strengths in textiles, rice, and pharmaceuticals, and opportunities in Lebanon's agricultural products and tourism services, Promotion of medical and religious tourism between the two countries and Exchange of trade delegations to explore new market opportunities and Visa facilitation to support business and people-to-people connections. Ambassador Issa



noted that Pakistan and Lebanon hold significant potential for expanding bilateral trade and emphasized the need to formalize cooperation through existing frameworks such as the Joint Economic Commission. Both sides also recognized IT, renewable energy, and

export-led manufacturing as promising sectors for future collaboration. RCCI President Usman Shaukat expressed appreciation for the Ambassador's visit and reaffirmed RCCI's commitment to fostering stronger ties with Lebanon's business community.

Motorbikes, three-wheelers sale increases 30.38 percent: PAMA

ISLAMABAD: The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers in the country has witnessed an increase of 30.38 per cent during the first four months of the current financial year (2025-26) as compared to sales of the corresponding months of the last year. During the months under review, as many as 597,025 motorbikes and three-wheelers were sold against the sale of 457,880 units in July-October (2024-25), according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA). The sale of Honda motorcycles surged by 31.26 per cent from 386,170 units to 506,889 units, whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles also rose by 43.13 per cent from 7,780 units to 11,136 units during the months under review. The sales of United Auto motorcycles witnessed an increase of 27.59 per cent from 44,294 units to 56,519 units, while the sales of Road Prince motorbikes also surged to 8,945 units from 6,220 units. The sale of Yamaha motorbikes came down to 1,221 units from 1,602 units, witnessing a decrease of 23.78 per cent. Meanwhile, the sale of United Auto three-wheelers increased from 263 units to 520 units, while the sale of Qingqi three-wheelers also increased by 11.82 per cent from 3,188 units to 3,565 units.—APP

Pak joins inaugural World Cervical Cancer Elimination Day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan joins the world in marking the inaugural World Cervical Cancer Elimination Day, a global health milestone designated by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly. The day builds on the historic pledge of 17th November 2020, when 194 nations committed to the WHO's Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer, said a press release on Monday. Earlier this year, the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI), with support from Gavi and civil-society partners such as the Dopasi Foundation, launched Pakistan's first HPV vaccination campaign. More than 13 million girls aged 9-14 in Punjab, Sindh, Islamabad, and Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) received the free vaccine in schools and health facilities. From 1 January 2026, the HPV vaccine will be formally integrated into Pakistan's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), ensuring routine protection for all eligible girls. To observe the importance of this global day and reinforce public awareness on prevention, the Dopasi Foundation also organized a cervical cancer awareness walk in the federal capital, engaging commu-

ties, youth and health workers to highlight the urgency of early protection and sustained action. Cervical cancer remains a pressing public-health issue in Pakistan, with over 5,000 new cases and about 3,000 deaths each year. As the world observed this first-ever elimination day, Pakistan's swift, coordinated action — through mass vaccination, public-engagement campaigns and community-based activities — shows how strong partnerships, trained health workers and clear messaging can turn a global goal into a tangible reality.—APP

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PPunajab CM stresses strict adherence to traffic laws

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has called for responsible behavior on roads and strict adherence to traffic laws to prevent accidents. In her message on the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, she said that thousands of families lose loved ones each year due to road mishaps, leaving behind immense grief. The CM urged citizens to prioritize their own safety and that of others, avoid using mobile phones while driving, observe speed limits, respect pedestrians, and drive with utmost care at all times. Highlighting government initiatives, CM Maryam Nawaz said Punjab is

taking comprehensive measures to enhance road safety, including stricter fines for traffic violators, vehicle fitness inspections, and enforcement of modern traffic management systems across districts. She noted that Punjab Safe City Authority (PSCA) initiatives are playing a key role in improving public safety. "If everyone acts responsibly on the roads, accidents will decrease and the citizens of Pakistan will remain safe," she added. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif congratulated the Pakistan national cricket team on their clean sweep victory in the One-Day International (ODI) series against Sri Lanka, praising the players' exceptional skill and determination throughout the series. In her message, the CM also commended the visiting Sri Lankan team for their sportsmanship and spirited play, which won the hearts of the Pakistani nation. She expressed confidence that the national team will continue to deliver outstanding performances in future matches, reflecting the high expectations of cricket fans across the country. CM Maryam Nawaz lauded the teamwork and dedication displayed by Pakistani players, emphasizing that such achievements bring pride and joy to the nation.—APP

HBL, SUPARCO initiate first disbursements under climate-smart agri finance

ISLAMABAD: HBL Microfinance Bank (HBL MfB), in partnership with the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), has commenced disbursements under Pakistan's first climate-smart agri-finance, by using satellite data intelligence. The initiative represents a major milestone in the country's journey toward sustainable, technology-driven agriculture, said a news release. This pilot, previously announced as a pioneering collaboration between HBL MfB and SUPARCO, uses satellite data intelligence, crop monitoring, and remote-sensing analytics to assess crop health, support risk management, and enable more accurate, and timely agri-credit decisions. With the first loan now disbursed, the partnership moves from planning to impactful execution. Speaking on occasion, Amir Khan President and CEO HBL Microfinance Bank said "Agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan's economy, yet highly vulnerable to climate shocks. By integrating satellite intelligence into agri-financing, we are equipping farmers with the tools to withstand climate risks, improve productivity, and contribute to national food security. Furthermore, it also strengthens risk manage-

ment for the banking sector financing agriculture. This partnership reflects our commitment to delivering innovative, inclusive, and climate-resilient financial solutions, and we look forward to scaling it up very soon." Through SUPARCO's remote-sensing capabilities and HBL MfB's extensive on ground presence, farmers will receive more accurate assessments of land use, crop patterns, and vegetation stress. The partnership enables HBL MfB to extend financing that is smarter, faster, and better aligned with farmers' real conditions on ground. Zafar Iqbal, Member (SAR), SUPARCO, remarked "This collaboration showcases how Pakistan's space technology can directly support economic development. By applying satellite analytics to agriculture, we are strengthening livelihoods and contributing to national climate resilience." With agriculture employing nearly half of the country's workforce and contributing significantly to GDP, the shift toward data-driven, climate-smart financing models is critical. This collaboration between HBL Microfinance Bank and SUPARCO will serve as a blueprint for scaling satellite-enabled agri credit across the country.—DNA

Kundi assures minority delegation of Christmas event

DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday assured a representative delegation of the minority community that a Christmas Day event would be arranged at the Governor House Peshawar. The delegation, led by Jamil Bhatti and including Lubna Taj, Farah Shahid, and others, met the Governor to discuss their concerns. During the meeting, the delegation requested the hosting of a Christmas programme at the Governor House and highlighted issues faced by the minority community, particularly in the sectors of education and health. Governor Kundi reaffirmed that the government was taking concrete steps to safeguard the rights of minorities and address their challenges.

He said the minority community plays an important role in national development and that all necessary measures would be taken to resolve their issues. He added that minorities form a proud part of society and their rights would be protected at every level. Meanwhile, a delegation from AquaTech Fisheries, led by Chairman Ahmad Husain, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, to discuss initiatives aimed at strengthening the province's fisheries and aquaculture sector. The team highlighted key opportunities to enhance the fisheries value chain, generate employment, boost local production, and expand exports. They also sought the Governor's support and coordination with relevant departments to facilitate these initiatives.

Governor welcomed the initiative and assured his full cooperation in promoting the growth of fisheries and aquaculture across the province. Similarly, Syed Waheed-Ul-Husain, Controller of Examinations at IM Sciences Peshawar called on Governor Kundi, to discuss academic challenges faced by Pakistani students studying in foreign universities. The discussion focused on the evolving academic landscape, quality assurance, credit recognition, and support mechanisms to help students navigate international education systems. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, emphasized the importance of addressing these academic challenges, providing proper guidance, and strengthening support systems to ensure students' success abroad.

Unity, culture & celebration shine at F-9 park

ISLAMABAD: Uraan Pakistan Family Festival at F-9 Park, organized by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, brought together large crowds in a spirited celebration of unity and joy, reflecting the government's people-focused vision under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. According to official sources, Pakistan's remarkable victory in the Ma'araka-e-Haq lifted national morale, and the same spirit added energy and excitement to the festival atmosphere. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi played a pivotal role in the successful organization of the festival, with the Interior Ministry ensuring comprehensive security arrangements throughout the event. The district administration, along with other supporting departments, also contributed significantly, enabling the festival to conclude safely and seamlessly. A large number of women, chil-

dren, youth, and senior citizens thronged the festival on Sunday, creating a vibrant and inclusive gathering. Residents of the twin cities, enjoyed the lively yet peaceful atmosphere throughout the event. Prior to the festival's commencement, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar visited F-9 Park, and reviewed the various arrangements. The minister inspected stalls, stage areas, and family zones established for recreational activities during a public event. He reviewed the arrangements on-site and issued necessary instructions to the concerned officials to ensure smooth management. Speaking on the occasion, the minister emphasized that providing healthy recreational opportunities for citizens remains a key government priority. He noted that such events not only offer leisure and entertainment but also play an

important role in fostering social harmony and community engagement. Defying security concerns, a large public turnout at the Uraan Pakistan Family Festival reflected citizens' determination to revive positive activities and maintain normalcy in daily life. The festival featured performances by renowned singers including Atif Aslam, Farhan Saeed, Nimra Mehra, Jabar Abbas, and Zuneib Zahid, who received an overwhelming response from the audience. Adding vibrancy to the evening, Shafaat Ali and Sofia Ahmed hosted the stage with their lively presentation, further enhancing the festive atmosphere. Beyond entertainment, the event carried a strong message: despite challenges, the people of Pakistan remain undeterred and eager to embrace cultural and national activities that promote unity and optimism.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria
National Day

Nov 04/Italy
Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation
Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia
National Day

Nov 11/Poland
Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan
Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium
Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil
Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
National Day

Nov 18/Oman
National Day

Nov 18/Morocco
Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh
Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon
Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname
National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania
National Day

Nov 28/Albania
Flags Day

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DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
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Shifa International 4603666

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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ISLAMABAD: Tourists enjoying ride on the mini train while exploring the park at the picnic and tourist spot near Lake View.

Musadik for evidence-based policies to protect most vulnerable

“The report exposes a deeply uncomfortable truth about basic public services,” he said. “We have never truly asked why access to safe water remains so difficult. Clean water, education, and safe housing are not amenities but fundamental rights

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr Musadik Malik, on Monday emphasised the importance of evidence-based policymaking to strengthen resilience in the country’s most vulnerable communities. Speaking at the Population Council’s launch of the District Vulnerability Index of Pakistan, Dr Malik highlighted the country’s widening inequalities in access to safe water, education, and secure housing, calling for urgent national attention “The report exposes a deeply uncomfortable truth about basic public services,” he said. “We have never truly asked why access to safe water remains so difficult. Clean water, education, and safe housing are not amenities but fundamental rights.” Linking Pakistan’s social disparities to rapid population growth, Dr Malik argued that stabilising demographic pressures is essential

for securing a better future for the coming generations. He warned that unchecked population growth exacerbates environmental degradation, strains public services, and deepens inequality. “Sustainable development requires effective population management, responsible family planning, and a national shift towards long-term resilience,” he said, adding that high fertility rates increase health risks for mothers and children, place heavy pressure on national resources, and limit opportunities for employment and social mobility. Improving urban services, he noted, is impossible without addressing population-driven stress on infrastructure. The District Vulnerability Index, developed by the Population Council, measures the exposure of districts across Pakistan to social, economic, and environmental risks. Even better-performing districts, the report notes, reveal systemic weaknesses nationwide. Nearly

10 million people reside in Pakistan’s most severely affected districts—primarily in Balochistan and the former FATA region—where population pressures and climate-induced vulnerabilities intersect. More than two million children in these areas face an “uncertain educational future” due to inadequate schools, poor infrastructure, and persistent socio-economic hardship. Around 65 per cent of residents live in temporary or makeshift shelters, reflecting chronic poverty and mounting climate stresses. Dr Malik reiterated that justice cannot be delivered if citizens continue to struggle for fundamental necessities. The Population Council stated that the new index aims to guide policymakers, provincial governments, and development partners in targeting resources to communities most in need, particularly as climate change intensifies existing inequalities.—DNA

Mashhod leads Pak at Helm for 1.6b commonwealth youth

ISLAMABAD: Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme, steers Pakistan at the forefront of global youth empowerment at the 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Task Force Meeting held at the International Youth Centre, Kuala Lumpur. Participating virtually while the Pakistani delegation attended in person, he addressed representatives from 56 Commonwealth countries, highlighting Pakistan’s initiatives in education, employment, entrepreneurship, climate action, and youth inclusion. “The youth are not just beneficiaries of policies they are partners in shaping the future,” Rana Mashhood said, underlining Pakistan’s commitment to turning international commitments into practical measurable action. He praised the Commonwealth Secretariat for its ongoing efforts in youth development and referred to the recent 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in London, which strengthened the vision of “Aiming Higher Delivering More for Young People in

the Commonwealth. As Co-Chair of the CYMTF, he emphasized the Task Force’s role in transforming Marlborough House Commitments, CYMM decisions, and CHOGM youth resolutions into tangible results. Highlighting the “Commonwealth Year of Youth” 2023 2024, he stressed that investment in young people is the foundation of sustainable development. Rana Mashhood outlined Pakistan’s key initiatives under the Prime Minister’s Youth Programme, focusing on education, skill development, entrepreneurship, environmental protection, and social inclusion. He also highlighted Commonwealth priorities such as closing the digital divide, ensuring equal access to technology, strengthening youth participation in governance, and promoting climate action led by youth. The minister called for the professionalisation of youth work and expansion of non formal learning opportunities, while emphasizing stronger regional cooperation with SAARC, ASEAN, CARICOM, the African Union, and the

Pacific Community to amplify youth development outcomes. Referring to the successful CAYA Youth Summit Islamabad 2025, he noted that participation from 12 countries produced significant outcomes, including the establishment of the National Youth Council, the launch of the CAYA Secretariat in Pakistan, and the approval of the Islamabad Youth Declaration. On the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Strategic Plan 2025 2030, he stressed that the Commonwealth Youth Programme must remain the central hub for youth led initiatives. He added that PMYP representatives MNA Amna Batool and Dr. Muhammad Ali would further elaborate on Pakistan’s youth agenda during the meeting. Concluding his address, Rana Mashhood reaffirmed Pakistan’s pledge to create meaningful opportunities for 1.6 billion Commonwealth youth, declaring that the country is committed to working with all member states to build a peaceful prosperous and youth empowered Commonwealth.—APP

Pakistani scientist gets dual role as scientist, cultural envoy

ISLAMABAD: When Dr. Zulqarnain Baloch first arrived in China from Pakistan over a decade ago, he never imagined his academic pursuits would lead to building a life deeply rooted in the red soil of Yunnan, a southwestern province in China. Today, as a professor and master’s supervisor at the Faculty of Life Science and Technology, Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST), his story stands as a powerful example of how perseverance and openness can reshape a person’s destiny, and how one individual, guided by passion and resilience, can turn unfamiliar soil into a place where both personal dreams and shared hopes take root, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Monday.His academic journey in China began in 2012 when he embarked on his Ph.D. studies at KUST. His research, which focuses on HPV molecular epidemiology, has taken him across Yunnan’s diverse landscape, working with

ten different ethnic groups. The scientific mission had profound social implications - his team provided more than 25,000 free HPV genotyping tests on women from underprivileged minority communities, generating critical data that would inform public health strategies across the province. Academic recognition followed his substantial contributions. The Yunnan Provincial Government honored him with the Outstanding Ph.D. Thesis Award of 2017, while KUST presented him with their Graduate Outstanding Thesis award in the same year and the Excellent International Graduate gold medal in 2016. The university also named him a “Cultural Exchange Ambassador”, acknowledging his talent and efforts for bringing people together across cultures. The warmth he experienced extended far beyond the laboratory walls. He recalls early days when language barriers made him hesitant to venture out, until a taxi ride changed

his perspective. His Italian friend introduced him as “my Pakistani friend,” prompting the driver to immediately respond, “This is our friend!” That simple declaration revealed the genuine affection Chinese people hold for Pakistanis, making him feel truly welcome. This sense of belonging grew stronger through years of collaboration with Chinese colleagues in what he describes as “clean, modern laboratories” where knowledge flowed freely across cultural lines. The supportive research environment helped him produce quality publications while forming lasting bonds with local researchers. Life took another meaningful turn in 2019 when he married a Yunnan native. Now a father of 2 kids, he reflects on how his wife’s independence and competence have created space for his academic pursuits. “Her strength allows me to focus deeply on my research,” he notes, appreciating the partnership that supports both family life and professional ambitions.—APP

ATC issues arrest warrants of CDA chief, Commissioner Islamabad

RAWALPINDI: During the hearing of the case related to the November protest registered at Sadiqabad Police Station in the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Rawalpindi, the court took stern action against the continuous absence of accused Aleema Khanum by reissuing non-bailable warrants against her for the second time. The court also summoned Aleema Khanum’s property records from the Punjab Board of Revenue According to the details, the report, which has been submitted in the court here on Monday, revealed that 338 kanals (42 acres approx) of land is registered in Aleema Khanum’s name across four districts. Additionally, directives were issued to freeze her 15 more bank accounts. Three accused appeared in person and seven through their pleaders, while the prosecution witnesses and team were fully present in the court during the case hearing presided by ATC Judge Amdad Shah. The court summoned details of Alima Khanum’s properties to take further action against her, so that if the absence continues, she can be declared a proclaimed offender and her properties can be confiscated. According to the Board of Revenue report, the properties registered in Aleema Khanum’s name include 51 kanals and 16 marlas in Bhakkar, 1 kanal and 4 marlas in Lahore, and 1 kanal and 1 marla (Mauza Nurpur Kamboh, Tehsil Lahore Cantonment), 64 kanals and 14 marlas in Mauza Sultan, Tehsil Raiwind, 217 kanals and 5 marlas in Mianwali, and 4 kanals and 13 marlas in Sheikhupura. The court issued directives to freeze 7 more accounts of her in Allied Bank Limited and 15 accounts of United Bank Limited under financial measures, making the total to 37 frozen accounts. The absence of the reply by the CDA Chairman and the Commissioner Islamabad, even after a reminder issued first and then a contempt of court notice, was reported to the court. With no response from both sides’ representatives, the court issued non-bailable warrants against them and directed the IG Islamabad to execute them immediately. Moreover, one surety related to vehicles appeared in the court, while non-bailable warrants have been reissued against the two other sureties who have not yet been arrested. The court adjourned the hearing until November 20.—DNA

Federal Constitutional Court suspends SHC ruling on Karachi Public Parks

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court has suspended a Sindh High Court’s ruling that barred the use of public parks in Karachi for commercial and sports-related activities. The order was issued while hearing an appeal filed by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) against the earlier judgment. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan took up the case on Monday. During the proceedings, KMC’s counsel argued that the matter pertained to the administrative and legal authority of the corporation. He informed the court that KMC, through a formal resolution, had approved the use of nine public parks in Karachi for sports activities. According to the counsel, the Sindh High Court’s judgment—issued on August 26, 2025—declared KMC’s decision null and void without granting the corporation its right to a fair hearing under Article 10-A of the Constitution.—APP

CDNS accomplish Rs 550b savings inflows by Nov 15th

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has attained a target of Rs 550 billion in savings inflows of the annual target for the current fiscal year, from July 1 to November 15th, 2025-26, 2025 The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) , has set a savings inflows target of Rs 1.3 trillion for the current Fiscal Year, 2025-26. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 50 billion in investments in Islamic Investment for the Current Fiscal Year 2025-26, which will lead to the growth of the Islamic economy in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP on Monday. The senior official of CDNS said that the National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1650 billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the country’s saving culture. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs170 billion in investments in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year, which will lead to the growth of this sector. Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and exceeded 100 per cent of the annual target in the last fiscal year 2023-24, from July 1 to June 30. National Savings has set an annual target of Rs1.7 trillion for the year 2023-24; it is encouraging that this year, “We surpassed 100 per cent of the annual target.” The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the previous fiscal year 2022-23, he said. He said it was Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote a savings culture in the country, he said, adding that given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS, and new reforms and innovations were being introduced.APP

3 motorway POs martyred in M-5 crash

ISLAMABAD: Three Motorway Police officers were martyred on Monday when a speeding passenger bus rrammed into a patrolling vehicle on the M-5 Motorway near Uch Sharif According to the spokesperson for the Motorway Police, the patrolling mobile was struck from the rear, killing all three officials on the spot. Rescue teams, along with the Sector Commander and DSP Motorways, immediately reached the site and shifted the bodies to a nearby hospital. The martyred officers were identified as Sub-Inspector Muhammad Mushtaq, Assistant Sub-Inspector Nasir Abbas and Constable Usama.

Inspector General Motorway Police B.A. Nasir expressed profound grief over the tragic loss of lives, extending heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. He prayed for the elevation of the martyrs’ ranks and paid tribute to their service, noting that they laid down their lives in the line of duty. He said the families of the martyrs would be fully supported and assured that their sacrifices would always be remembered.—APP

FCC rejects request for stay without counsel

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court has rejected a plea for an immediate stay order in a constitutional petition filed by employees of the Punjab Revenue Department seeking regularisation of their services. The court directed the petitioners to engage legal counsel before further proceedings. A two-member bench comprising Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice KK Agha heard the case on Monday. The petitioners appeared in person and submitted that they had challenged the acceptance of an appeal filed by the Punjab Revenue Department. Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, addressing the petitioners, remarked that they must appoint an appropriate lawyer, as the court could not hear the case without legal representation. The petitioners requested interim protection, arguing that without a stay order, their gate entry to the department could be blocked. At this, Justice Rizvi cautioned the petitioner, stating, “Do not try to be over-smart; more than just gate entry can be stopped. First, hire a lawyer; otherwise, we will dismiss the petition right now.” The petitioner assured the court that he was willing to hire counsel but still sought interim relief.—APP

SC expresses displeasure over narcotics control authorities

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned the hearing on a bail plea filed by a courier company manager in a narcotics case, while directing the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) to submit the accused’s CCTV footage in court The two-member bench, led by Justice Mandokhel, questioned how drugs were reaching urban areas and why they were not being intercepted at the border. He remarked that the issue was not limited to a few kilograms, but narcotics were entering the country in tons. The court adjourned further hearing on the manager’s bail plea and instructed the ANF to present the accused’s CCTV footage before the bench in the next session.APP

COURT NOTICE

IN THE COURT SHAMAS AHMEDJUDGE CIVIL/Family COURT RAWALPINDI

Suit For Dissolution Marriage on the basis of Khullah Azst. Shbana D/o Abdul Aziz Versus Abdul Karim Notice to Abdul Karim s/o Abdul Raheem R/o Mohallah Shah Chan Charagh Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 20-11-2025 at 9 am avoid ex-parte proceeding.

Briefs

IGP orders stronger patrols, zero tolerance

ISLAMABAD: Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired an important meeting with all Station House Officers (SHOs) of the federal capital, directing them to ensure immediate resolution of public issues and adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward negligence. A police official told APP on Monday that the IGP Rizvi instructed all SHOs to make public service their core priority and ensure visible police presence across their areas, especially during late-night patrols.

He directed officers to utilize their manpower effectively for security, investigation, and patrolling duties in an organized and professional manner. "Police presence must be clearly felt within every police station's jurisdiction," IGP Rizvi emphasized. The IGP Rizvi further stressed that emergency response must be swift and effective, while the administrative affairs of police stations should be handled with full professionalism. He ordered strict legal action against land grabbers, drug dealers, aerial firing, and the display of illegal weapons. He also directed SHOs to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and court absconders. The IGP Rizvi said a comprehensive and coordinated strategy should be adopted to curb crime across the federal capital and that all officers must work with complete harmony and discipline. "Protecting the lives and property of citizens and maintaining law and order remains our foremost priority," IGP Rizvi said, adding that no negligence will be tolerated in the performance

of duty.—APP

Traffic advisory issued for Tri-Nations series, Red Zone gates closed

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Monday issued a special traffic advisory for the ongoing Tri-Nations Cricket Series, announcing temporary closures at key Red Zone entry points due to team movements and enhanced security arrangements. An ITP official told APP that the Serena Gate in the Red Zone will remain closed during team movement. In a separate advisory, the spokesperson said the NADRA Gate will also remain closed for all types of traffic. Similarly, the Express Entry Gate has been closed as part of the enhanced security plan. The official added that citizens wishing to enter the Red Zone may use Margalla Road and Marriott Road as alternative routes. For commuters heading toward Club Road, access is available via 7th Avenue or Embassy Road, connecting through Srinagar Highway. The spokesperson said citizens can obtain real-time updates through ITP's helpline 1915, FM 92.4, and official social media platforms, adding that cooperation and patience from the public will help maintain smooth traffic flow during the scheduled movements.—APP

Drug trafficking

Criminal networks adopting E-commerce models: UNODC

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) held a special session on "Dark Web and E-Commerce in Pakistan: Emerging Tactics of Drug Trafficking and Law Enforcement Responses," organized by the IRS Cyber Security Program led by Ms. Alina Fayaz. The discussion brought together diplomats, government representatives, and international experts to examine rapidly evolving digital threats. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, opened the session by noting that while online platforms offer significant opportunities, their ease of access also exposes young people to criminal activities, including the online purchase and sale of drugs. He stressed the urgent need to strengthen state capacities, train cyber domain specialists, and upgrade investigative agencies such as the FIA. He also underlined the importance of inter-agency collaboration and knowledge-sharing to counter increasingly sophisticated digital drug-trafficking techniques. Troels Vester, UNODC Country Representative, highlighted the Dark Web's growing role as a sophisticated enabler of cybercrime, providing anonymity for a widening range of illicit activities. He noted that messaging applications are being misused for drug distribution and that criminal networks are adopting e-commerce-style operating models, making trafficking more organized and harder for authorities to detect. He warned that Pakistan's online drug markets are expanding rapidly, with sellers using encrypted channels and digital payments to evade law enforcement. These developments, he emphasized, demand a coordinated, technology-driven, and well-resourced response. Oliver Gadney, Programme Coordinator GPML at UNODC Headquarters, shared insights into technological tools, investigative methodologies, and global best practices for countering dark-net-based crime. He highlighted grow-



ing challenges in tracing online trafficking networks and stressed the need for strong inter-agency cooperation, including efforts to disrupt the financial foundations of such criminal enterprises. He further noted that law enforcement must continually adapt to fast-evolving digital ecosystems while maintaining compassion toward individuals struggling with drug use. Amb. Mansoor Khan, former Chair of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND),

pointed out that Afghanistan and Pakistan remain among the largest producers and transit routes for opiates fueling regional drug flows. He warned that educational institutions are increasingly vulnerable, with students becoming major targets for distribution networks. Citing alarming figures, he noted that nearly 70% of Pakistan's drug users are under 30, driven by stress, peer pressure, and accessibility. He added that despite the ANF's dedicated efforts, sophis-

ticated digital networks and established maritime, land, and air routes continue to enable trafficking. Concluding the session, Amb. Saleem stressed that a holistic approach—combining stronger border controls, enhanced monitoring mechanisms, promoting awareness and coordinated institutional responses is essential to effectively counter emerging digital and transnational drug-trafficking threats.

China leads Pak's FDI revival in the opening 4 months

ISLAMABAD: China has once again emerged as Pakistan's largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), steering the country's foreign investment recovery in the opening months of FY 2026. Gwadar Pro quoting the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday stated, Beijing contributed a net \$38.2 million in October alone. With Pakistan's total net FDI clocking in at \$178.9 million during the month, China accounted for more than one-fifth of the total. From July to October 2025, the first four months of FY 2026, China remained the backbone of Pakistan's foreign investment portfolio. Chinese investors injected a net \$226.7 million, making up 30.4% of the country's total net FDI of \$747.7 million over the period. Sector-wise data shows significant inflows into key segments of the economy. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply remained the top performer, attracting net FDI of \$311.3 million, largely reflecting ongoing infrastructure and energy commitments. The construction sector received \$50.1 million, highlighting renewed momentum in development activity, while wholesale and retail trade, including motor vehicle repairs, secured \$18.4 million. Meanwhile, financial and insurance activities drew a substantial \$246.1 million, showing sustained interest in Pakistan's financial services landscape.—APP

PPP to celebrate Foundation Day at district level on Nov 30

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will celebrate its Foundation Day by holding different events at the district level across the country on November 30. On the special directives of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Secretary General Humayun Khan, programs and events marking the party's Foundation Day will be organized in all districts nationwide. Humayun Khan directed all district-level office bearers to finalize arrangements for the celebrations in their respective areas. He emphasized that the Foundation Day events should highlight the Pakistan Peoples Party's struggle spanning more than five decades, showcasing its political journey, sacrifices and services for democracy.—APP

Pak Sustainability Summit to focus on climate smart housing

ISLAMABAD – The Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan), in collaboration with a wide network of leading public and private sector institutions, will host the 2nd Pakistan Sustainability Summit 2025 on December 3 at the Best Western Premier Hotel in Islamabad. The national summit is expected to attract more than 300 experts and stakeholders along with over 10,000 visitors to its sustainability expo, focusing on the theme "Sustainable Housing for Economic Resilience & Climate-Smart Living." The event takes place at a time when Pakistan confronts a widening housing deficit exceeding 400,000 units annually, a rapidly growing urban population, and escalating climate-induced risks. Nearly 40 percent of urban residents lack access to adequate housing and essential services, highlighting the urgent need to reform how Pakistan builds, plans, and manages its cities. Speaking to a group of media professionals on Sunday afternoon, well-known environmentalist and climate advocacy expert, Executive Director Devcom-Pakistan Munir Ahmed said: "While the construction and real estate sectors remain critical for national GDP and employment, they also account for substantial natural resource consumption and large volumes of carbon emissions. This duality places Pakistan at a crossroads where economic development must be reconciled with climate resilience, environmental responsibility, and long-term energy security. Sustainable housing offers a transformative pathway to achieving this balance. By promoting green construction, energy-efficient design, and climate-smart infrastructure, Pakistan can strengthen economic stability, reduce environmental degradation, support green job creation, and enhance quality of life. These efforts directly contribute to several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Collectively, they support a more resilient, inclusive, and low-carbon development trajectory under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).—DNA

Minister visits Islamia hospital to inaugurate elevator facility

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for the Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Monday said that Pakistan offered countless opportunities for investment, and in the coming years, a significant increase was expected in joint ventures, foreign investment, and new MoUs. He was speaking to the media persons at the inauguration ceremony of the elevator facility at the Islamia Hospital here. He said that global development had been achieved through foreign investment and technology transfer, and Pakistan was

also following the same model to move towards economic stability. The minister expressed hope that Pakistan's international image would further improve in the coming years. Discussing the country's defence strategy and military leadership, he said that strong coordination in the field of national security was indispensable, and the current leadership was taking a positive steps in the direction, which would further strengthen the protection of national interests. Speaking on the government-opposition relationship, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said that political differences aside, both the government and the opposition must sit together to resolve issues in the national interest. He appreciated the facilitation efforts of the Speaker, National Assembly and said that political stability was essential for promoting investment. Highlighting welfare and social services, he said that Anjuman Islamia Chiniot had rendered remarkable services in the medical field. Over the past years, millions of patients had been treated through eye care medical camps, while special camps were also set up to provide medical services in flood-affected areas, he added. The minister said that facilities at the hospital and dispensary were being further expanded so that the public receive better healthcare at their doorstep. The minister also inaugurated a stretcher lift for patients at the hospital.



ISLAMABAD: Photojournalist of Online International News Network Sultan Bashir takes best coverage award from Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Farah Naz Akbar, during the closing ceremony of annual Lok Mela at Lok Versa

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US-Saudi ties are the cornerstone of Trump’s Mideast policy

WHEN Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman visits the White House to meet with US President Donald Trump this week, there will be no shortage of issues for the two leaders to discuss. Follow-up on the robust bilateral cooperation frameworks in economics and technology, including artificial intelligence – outlined during Trump’s visit to the Kingdom in May – is sure to be on the agenda, as are still-unresolved thorny regional security issues, such as Iran, Israel-Palestine and the continued threat presented by the Houthis in Yemen. A top priority for Saudi Arabia will be some sort of security guarantee or defense pact from the US – something Riyadh has been seeking for several years. In March 2023, following Saudi Arabia and Iran’s renewal of diplomatic ties in a deal announced by China in Beijing, top Saudi officials ramped up their long-standing efforts to secure a defense pact with the Biden administration. It showed just how skeptical Saudi Arabia still was about Tehran’s intentions, particularly given the threats presented by Iran’s network of partners like the Houthis, Hezbollah and various militias in Syria and Iraq in the so-called Axis of Resistance at the time. But that was then and this is now. The regional landscape has changed considerably. Iran suffered devastating blows to its military capacities and nuclear program in the 12-day war in June that Israel prosecuted with an assist from the US. In 2024, Iran saw its decades-long investments in Lebanon’s Hezbollah and the Assad regime in Syria collapse, undercutting Tehran’s regional strategy and bringing it to its weakest and most vulnerable point in decades. But while Iran may be down, it certainly is not out. It still retains significant capacity to wage regional attacks both directly and through its own partners across the region, which is a main reason why Saudi Arabia continues to seek a US security pact. Another reason is Israel’s strike targeting Hamas leaders in Doha, Qatar, in September. This attack sent shockwaves across the region – particularly among US allies in the Gulf. The fact that the Trump administration was either unwilling or incapable of stopping the strike added more skepticism to the security umbrella the US was providing to regional partners. Regional states sprang into action. Qatar hosted an extraordinary summit of leaders from across the Arab and Muslim worlds – notably including Iran – to express solidarity with Qatar and condemn the Israeli strike. But ultimately, the summit’s communique was heavy on rhetoric and light on action. What they did do was agree to reinforce intelligence sharing and plans for joint defense, including ballistic missile early warning systems, signaling a step toward greater interoperability and integration of

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defenses – something that the US has been encouraging for years. Saudi Arabia also signed a mutual defense agreement with Pakistan – another sign that countries in the region are looking to diversify their security ties to address emerging threats. But perhaps the most consequential outcome of the Israeli strike was the Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal in early October. The Trump administration moved quickly to reassure Qatar of its security relationship, and it also used its displeasure with Israel’s strike against Qatar as leverage to get Benjamin Netanyahu to finally agree to the deal. Trump even got Netanyahu to apologize to Qatar for the strike. Part of America’s reassurance to Qatar came in the form of an executive order providing a security guarantee in late September. “The United States shall regard any armed attack on the territory, sovereignty or critical infrastructure of the state of Qatar as a threat to the peace and security of the United States,” the order stated. It is committed to taking “all lawful and appropriate measures – including diplomatic, economic and, if necessary, military – to defend the interests of the United States and of the state of Qatar and to restore peace and stability.” While an executive order like this is an important statement, it is not generally viewed as having the same weight and importance as a security guarantee provided in a formal treaty that requires congressional approval. But the fact that the Trump administration moved rapidly to offer this reassurance to Qatar was a sign that it understood just how much Israel’s military strike had undermined confidence in America’s security umbrella. Therefore, the crown prince’s visit to Washington offers an opportunity for the two countries to deepen ties across multiple fronts. The main purpose of this visit is to continue building on the deals agreed upon across multiple fronts during Trump’s May visit to Saudi Arabia. However, no cooperation framework will be effective without providing Saudi Arabia – and the broader region – with a solid security foundation. Here, the security guarantee Trump issued to Qatar could serve as a template for what Saudi Arabia and the US will do in the coming weeks. Despite growing concerns about America’s reliability and stability in recent years, the US remains Saudi Arabia’s preferred strategic partner. It has the strongest and most capable military in the world and an unrivalled network of security partners in the Middle East that can serve as a force multiplier in Saudi Arabia’s defense, just as it did in 1990-1991, when Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, invaded Kuwait. Other global competitors, like China or Russia, do not come close to the commitments America has made and the capabilities it continues to bring to the region to enhance security, despite recent skepticism and doubt. The first nine months of the second Trump administration have been marked by considerable uncertainty from the US on many fronts, particularly in domestic policy issues. But one region of the world that President Trump has prioritized in both word and action is the Middle East, where many big policy questions like Iran and Israel-Palestine remain unresolved. The US-Saudi bilateral relationship has become a cornerstone of Trump’s overall Middle East policy, which is why we can expect continued steps to deepen those ties.

Takaichi Invents a China Crisis

Qamar Bashir



Globally, the United States is watching nervously. Washington values Tokyo as its most reliable ally in the Pacific, but historically the U.S. has maintained strategic ambiguity over Taiwan. Japan’s embedding of Taiwan into its own survival equation complicates that U.S. position—and may lead to Tokyo being the flash-point for U.S.–China escalation. Beijing certainly interprets it that way: “Japan is taking up the role of dragging the United States into confrontation,” the Xinhua commentary stated. Should this drift continue, the region faces multiple fault-lines

FROM the moment Sanae Takaichi stood in parliament and declared that a possible Chinese attack on Taiwan could be a “survival-threatening situation” for Japan, the tectonic plates of East Asian security shifted. Her words this November did more than stir diplomatic tempest: they signalled a decisive step away from Japan’s longstanding post-war pacifism and into a far more volatile era of militarised logic. The phrase “survival-threatening situation” refers to the controversial 2015 security legislation under Shinzo Abe that permitted Japan’s Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) to act when Japan’s survival was directly endangered—even if Japan itself was not under attack. Takaichi, widely regarded as Abe’s political heir, now seeks to wrench that framework into a domain far riskier than its original intent. In the parliamentary session on 7 November, Takaichi tied Taiwan explicitly into that formula: if China moved by warships or other force to bring Taiwan under its control, that would, in her view, meet the threshold for Japan’s intervention. Japan’s Security Council would thereby be triggered. Until then, Tokyo had maintained the diplomatic stance of “strategic ambiguity.” But instead of nuance, a red line was drawn. Beijing’s response was immediate—and fierce. China’s foreign ministry called the remarks “crude interference” in its internal affairs, asked Japan to retract the comments or “bear all consequences,” and even issued a travel caution for Chinese citizens heading to Japan. Meanwhile, the Japanese public is sharply divided: according to a recent poll by Kyodo News, 48.8 % said Japan should exercise collective self-defence in the event of a China–Taiwan conflict, while 44.2 % opposed such action. Notably, 60.4 % supported Takaichi’s drive to raise Japan’s defence spending to 2 % of GDP ahead of schedule. The ripple effects extend far beyond Tokyo and Beijing. Already, the Senkaku Islands (known in China as the Diaoyu) are once again flashing as potential flash-points. On 16 November a Chinese Coast Guard formation sailed through the waters near the islands, citing a “rights enforcement patrol.” The timing was no accident: the patrol followed Takaichi’s remarks by days and underlines Beijing’s willingness to translate diplomatic anger into maritime pressure. What is unfolding is a brave-yet-reckless recalibration of Japan’s role. On one hand, Takaichi is tackling the

undeniable fact that Japan’s western flank now faces a giant neighbour gathering forces, asserting its claims, and threatening to change the status quo. Taiwan lies just 110 km from Japan’s Yonaguni island. A Chinese move across the Taiwan Strait would have direct implications for Japanese sea lines of communication and defence. On the other hand, by linking Japan’s survival to Taiwan’s fate, she is converting long-dormant capabilities into forward-leaning military logic—well beyond the classic self-defence posture. It is true that under her leadership Japan is moving on several vectors immediately. Within weeks of taking office she has floated raising defence spending, relaxing arms anti-export controls, and revisiting Japan’s long-sacrosanct “three non-nuclear principles.” The contours of Japan’s strategic transformation are visible: from self-defence to power projection. There is, however, a danger of mis-calculation. The architecture of Japan–China relations is still underpinned by four political documents and the one-China policy. Takaichi’s invocation of Taiwan as an existential threat, in Beijing’s eyes, tears at those threads. The Xinhua commentary argued that this was not prudent defence policy but “militaristic adventurism” masquerading as legitimacy. “Plainly not a country with close ties to Japan,” the commentary said of Taiwan—and therefore not eligible under Japan’s survival threshold. Domestically, Japanese society is wrestling with the new narrative. Many recall that when Japan permitted limited collective self-defence in 2015, public protest rose at the idea of rewriting Article 9 which renounces war. A decade later, the argument is no longer about whether Japan can defend itself—it is whether Japan should prepare to intervene aggressively alongside the U.S. or even independently in a Taiwan contingency. The traditional myth of “Japan as pacifist by default” is fading. Globally, the United States is watching nervously. Washington values Tokyo as its most reliable ally in the Pacific, but historically the U.S. has maintained strategic ambiguity over Taiwan. Japan’s embedding of Taiwan into its own survival equation complicates that U.S. position—and may lead to Tokyo being the flash-point for U.S.–China escalation. Beijing certainly interprets it that way: “Japan is taking up the role of dragging the United States into confrontation,” the Xinhua commentary stated. Should this drift continue, the region faces multiple fault-lines. First, Japan may formalise new policy

that treats Taiwanese contingencies as threats to its own survival, with equal standing to attack on Japan’s home islands. Second, Japan may transform its Self-Defence Forces into an expeditionary capability suited for overseas intervention—not only in support of allies, but under Japan’s own mandate. Third, diplomatic and economic fallout with China would accelerate. Already tourism from China to Japan is threatened; trade ties and investment flows could follow. Yet there remains an alternative route: a recalibration rather than escalation. Domestic push-back and regional concerns may force Tokyo to clarify its position and restrain from pushing the Taiwan threshold too far. The United States may pull Tokyo back into alignment on ambiguity. But whether that happens is uncertain—and delayed action risks slipping Japan into a once-avoided diplomacy of force. The irony is sharp: Japan, whose devastation at Hiroshima and Nagasaki shaped a post-war constitution grounded in pacifism and relief by American defence guarantee, now appears poised to raise its military profile not simply for defence, but for intervention. The shadow of its prior militarism, which invaded – and colonised – other nations, looms large. The question Japan must answer is whether its patriotic defence is a shield or a spear. In the end, Takaichi’s gambit is a crossing of the Rubicon. By pulling Taiwan inside her “survival-threatening situation” framework, she has torn away the last veil of ambiguity. Japan has claimed the right to act—not in defence of its own soil—but in defence of a regional ally whose fate it now says is its own. That claim may win some admiration in Tokyo; in Beijing it is seen as provocation. And in the wider region it raises a chilling possibility: that the next crisis will not be Taiwan’s alone—but Japan’s too. If this moment is mishandled, we may witness not just a rhetorical shift, but a strategic pivot—and the region may find itself drawn into a wider conflict far sooner than anyone anticipated. Japan might believe it is merely upgrading its defences; in reality it could be lifting the stage curtain on a return to great-power warfare.

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The Power Struggle in Afghanistan and India’s Expanding Role

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



History offers a vivid example of Afghan disunity: a time when several influential Afghan chieftains gathered in Makkah. Standing before the House of God, they pledged to renounce internecine conflict for the sake of their homeland. Yet, upon returning to Afghanistan, that solemn vow proved no more than a line drawn in sand...

ORDER within any household endures only when an elder or guardian assumes responsibility for its affairs, guiding family members with wisdom, discipline, and authority. When every individual begins to act as the head and makes independent decisions, the household inevitably descends into disorder, for no structure can survive when leadership is scattered. This domestic metaphor aptly mirrors the present state of Afghanistan, where the absence of an uncontested central authority has led each province, tribe, and faction to carve out its own path. It is a land that has long struggled to establish a fixed centre of gravity, rarely succeeding – and today’s era is no exception. The Taliban government, once confident in its claim of absolute control over Afghanistan, now appears entangled in a web of internal discord and rising resistance. What had been presented as a unified Islamic order has gradually transformed into a fractured administration grappling to retain its authority amid widening rifts. Since their return to power in August 2021, the Taliban strove to project an image of unity and religious legitimacy. Yet beneath this surface lay deep fissures between the religious leadership and various factions, where tribal loyalties often overshadowed ideological cohesion. The depth of these disagreements can be gauged from the growing number of field commanders in the northern and western regions who no longer heed directives from Kabul. The re-emergence of local militias is once again pushing Afghanistan towards a fragmented map, imperiling even the limited order the Taliban had attempted to impose. History offers a vivid example of Afghan disunity: a time when several influential Afghan chieftains gathered in Makkah. Standing before the House of God, they pledged to renounce internecine conflict for the sake of their homeland. Yet, upon returning to Afghanistan, that solemn vow proved no more than a line drawn in sand; old animosities flared anew, and even the sanctity of the sacred precinct could not override tribal attachments. Another historical truth stands alongside it: whenever a foreign power invades Afghanistan, these divided tribes suddenly unite. Relations with Pakistan also assume an unusual warmth during such periods. But the moment the external threat diminishes, old divisions reappear. Chief

tasks re-establish their own camps, alliances shatter, and order dissolves once more. For Pakistan, Afghanistan’s internal fissures carry grave strategic implications. Islamabad had hoped that the Taliban’s return would prevent Afghan soil from being used against Pakistan and would open the door to lasting peace between the two neighbours. Yet the persistence of safe havens for anti-Pakistan militants eroded these expectations. Despite repeated assurances from Kabul, cross-border attacks continued, destabilising Pakistan’s western frontier. Pakistan made it unequivocally clear that Afghan territory must not be used for terrorism against it. However, the Taliban leadership – whether by design or due to lack of capacity – failed to bring all groups under its control. Certain elements, emboldened by the weakness of the central command, continued to maintain links with anti-Pakistan militant outfits, which India covertly aided. After India’s embarrassments in May at the hands of Pakistan, New Delhi expanded its proxy networks in Afghanistan, fanning every tribal discord and exploiting groups that did not even fall under Taliban authority. Pakistan’s repatriation of illegal Afghan residents also became a catalyst for Indian manipulation; it fuelled discontent, became a tool for propaganda, and was used to craft a Pakistan-hostile narrative within Afghanistan. India’s strategy appears twofold; to keep Afghanistan unstable enough that Pakistan’s strategic focus remains divided, and simultaneously to rebuild its old influence under the garb of humanitarian engagement. Renewed contact with former Northern Alliance elements and the patronage of exiled groups reflect this ambition. For decades, Afghanistan has been a chessboard for major powers, where actors have played their concealed games in the name of stability. Amid this environment, Pakistan has gradually adopted a more mature approach. Recognising that its own security cannot rest solely on Kabul’s assurances, Islamabad has recalibrated its internal, diplomatic, and strategic policies. Border monitoring has been tightened; fencing and surveillance systems strengthened; and movement regulations made stricter. Civil and military intelligence coordination has improved, enabling timely action against infiltrating elements. On the diplomatic front, Pakistan has sought to

develop a regional framework with China, Iran, Russia, and Central Asian states to curb Afghanistan’s fragmentation and restrict India’s unilateral designs. Politically, Pakistan maintains that Afghanistan’s stability cannot be secured by the dominance of a single faction; it requires dialogue among all ethnic and religious groups. The Taliban’s reluctance in this regard has isolated them at home and abroad, and Pakistan continues to draw their attention to this reality. A striking contradiction exists in Afghanistan’s responses to its neighbours. Iran, too, repatriated illegal Afghan residents, yet Kabul did not react with the hostility it displayed toward Pakistan. This disparity reveals how external actors deliberately inflame anti-Pakistan sentiment within Afghanistan while preventing similar reactions against Iran. Whenever Pakistan and Afghanistan’s mutual well-wishers attempted to guide the Taliban delegation toward constructive engagement in long negotiations held in Doha and Istanbul, Indian proxies in Kabul sought to sabotage the process. India’s opportunism may cause temporary discomfort, but it also exposes its underlying regional insecurity. Pakistan, by contrast, has learned that enduring peace arises not from volatility, but from restraint, dialogue, and cooperation. Today, Afghanistan still resembles a household without an active, authoritative head – where every member considers himself the master of decisions. Its instability has never remained confined within its borders. Those who attempt to exploit this chaos often find themselves ensnared by it. For Pakistan, wisdom lies in maintaining firmness with foresight, caution with clarity, and strength through regional cooperation. Only through such balance can Pakistan safeguard its frontiers and help steer the region toward a safer, more stable future. History teaches a consistent lesson; until Afghanistan develops a central authority capable of enforcing order across the country, the prospect of lasting peace in the region will remain slim. Until then, Pakistan must navigate this shifting landscape with vigilance, resolve, and continuous diplomacy – in a setting where unity emerges only under external pressure, and dissipates as soon as peace returns.

Briefs

Hasina
sentenced
to death
over brutal
protests
crackdown

FROM PAGE 01
Officials and analysts in India say such a move is highly improbable. India has long been one of Hasina's strongest international backers, and Delhi is unlikely to hand over a former ally—especially when the case is already provoking sharp debate about judicial fairness and political retaliation. Meanwhile, security has been heightened across Bangladesh as authorities brace for possible unrest. Additional paramilitary units have been deployed in Dhaka and other major cities following reports of spontaneous protests beginning early this morning. Supporters of Hasina's Awami League have called the verdict a "judicial coup," while human rights groups warn that the tense atmosphere could spark further clashes. The interim government has urged calm and defended the tribunal's independence, saying the ruling reflects "the will of the Bangladeshi people for accountability." But with emotions running high and the country still recovering from last year's deadly unrest, the sentencing of one of Bangladesh's most influential political figures sets the stage for renewed confrontation—both at home and across its borders.

New envoys
present
credentials
to President

FROM PAGE 01
the country, emphasising enhanced trade and investment cooperation, agriculture and particularly in the education sector with a sizeable community of Pakistani students in Australia. He noted the importance of people-to-people linkages, with a shared passion for sports and appreciated the role of the Pakistani diaspora in promoting goodwill between the two nations. During his meeting with the High Commissioner-designate of Mauritius, the President termed the long-standing bonds of friendship, underpinned by deep cultural affinity and shared Commonwealth heritage, as pivotal. The President underscored the importance of further strengthening bilateral ties, especially in trade, investment, agriculture, defence cooperation and interparliamentary linkages. In his interaction with the Ambassador-designate of Denmark, the President discussed the fraternal relations with Denmark and appreciated the close coordination between the two countries at the UN Security Council. He underscored the potential for enhanced cooperation in trade, agriculture, dairy products, technology and infrastructure development. He appreciated Denmark's support for Pakistan's green transition and climate resilience agenda. In his conversation with the Ambassador-designate of the United Arab Emirates, the President reaffirmed Pakistan's solidarity with the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates, with Pakistan being the first country to recognize the UAE in 1971. He said the historic ties anchored in common faith, mutual trust and shared aspirations for regional peace and prosperity are the hall marks of this fraternal relationship. President Zardari emphasised the need to enhance bilateral trade, security and defence cooperation and underscored the role played by the Pakistani diaspora as a bridge between the two states. The President extended his best wishes to all four envoys for a productive tenure, expressing hope that their efforts would lead to stronger bilateral and multilateral partnerships for mutual benefit and prosperity.

Jannik Sinner retains
ATP Finals crown after
beating Carlos Alcaraz

Alcaraz posed a serious challenge in the title match despite Sinner's dominant indoor form

TURIN: Italy's Jannik Sinner successfully defended his ATP Finals title on Sunday, electrifying the crowd with a hard-fought 7-6(4), 7-5 victory over world number one Carlos Alcaraz in a high-quality finale at the season-ending championships. Backed by a passionate home crowd at the Inalpi Arena, Sinner collapsed to the court after breaking Alcaraz in the final game, before sprinting towards his box to celebrate amid loud chants of "Ole, Ole, Ole, Sinner, Sinner." "Finishing in front of the Italian public was incredible — maybe even better than last year," Sinner said. "Thank you very much for the support. It felt like being on a football pitch." Throughout a season dominated by the Sinner-Alcaraz rivalry, their meeting in the championship match felt inevitable. Both players arrived unbeaten in Turin, setting the stage for one last showdown in 2025. Alcaraz applied early pressure and created the only break point of the first set, but Sinner held strong. He edged the tiebreak with bold shot-making, sending the arena into a frenzy. Though Alcaraz will finish the year as world number one — having swept his three round-robin matches — Sinner claimed the final word of the season, capping off the finest year of his career.



The 24-year-old reached all four Grand Slam finals in 2025, winning the Australian Open and Wimbledon. Alcaraz, meanwhile, captured Roland Garros and the US Open, defeating Sinner in both finals.

"Hopefully you're ready for next year," Alcaraz joked afterwards. "Because I will be ready." Alcaraz posed a serious challenge in the title match despite Sinner's dominant indoor form. The Spaniard broke Sin-

ner in the opening game of the second set as the Italian hit two double faults, but Sinner recovered quickly to level at 3-3.

The tension briefly eased when a medical emergency in the stands caused a 10-minute stoppage at 2-2 in the first set, with both players sharing a light conversation over the net. Once play resumed, Sinner held with an emphatic volley and an ace. Alcaraz later required a medical timeout at 5-4 in the first set before earning a break point at 6-5, but Sinner survived once again. He then dazzled in the tiebreak, finishing it with a stunning lob combination that brought the crowd to its feet. Despite Alcaraz's early second-set advantage, Sinner regained control and delivered the decisive blow by breaking serve at 6-5 to seal the title. Sinner entered the match on a 30-match indoor hard-court winning streak dating back to his loss to Novak Djokovic in the 2023 Turin final — the last time he had dropped a set at the ATP Finals. Appearing in his third straight title match at the event, he overcame a difficult recent record against Alcaraz, having lost four of their five meetings this year. His victory in Turin earned him a record \$5.07 million in prize money and secured his status as the stand-out performer of the 2025 season. — APP

Pakistan earn praise after stunning
ODI sweep versus Sri Lanka

ISLAMABAD: Tributes poured in on Sunday after Pakistan's emphatic ODI series sweep against visiting Sri Lanka, with national leaders and cricket officials praising the team's performance and the spirit of the competition. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a post on X, congratulated the team. He said the national side had shown "a wonderful display of cricket's unifying spirit." Sharif added that he "congratulates our national team on winning the ODI series against Sri Lanka" and also praised Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi and his team "for their great efforts." He went

on to thank the visitors, noting that "the Sri Lankan players and management once again reflected the enduring friendship between our two nations." PCB's Naqvi also hailed the achievement in a separate post. He said, "Well done boys, congratulations to all the players on a brilliant clean sweep in the ODI series against Sri Lanka, after winning the T20I series as well. 'Back-to-back dominant performances, proud of our players, coaches and management for their hard work and spirit.'" He urged fans to continue supporting the team, saying, "Please trust and believe in these boys, they are giving

their all for the country." The PCB chair also singled out Haris Rauf, noting, "Special congratulations to Haris Rauf on being awarded Man of the Series, outstanding bowling throughout." The cricket czar concluded by celebrating the moment for Pakistan cricket and its supporters: "A great moment for Pakistan cricket and our fans." Fakhar Zaman and wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan's fifties after a disciplined bowling performance helped Pakistan beat Sri Lanka in the third one-day international (ODI) on Sunday at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium to sweep the three-match series.

Chasing 212, Pakistan crossed the finish line in 44.4 overs with six wickets in hand, winning the series 3-0. The experienced duo of Babar Azam and Fakhar then steadied the innings, forging a 74-run second-wicket partnership that helped Pakistan reach 82-2 in 15.2 overs. Fakhar continued his fine form, scoring 55 off 45 balls, including eight boundaries, to record his 19th ODI fifty before being dismissed by Jeffrey Vandersay. Mohammad Rizwan joined Babar Azam to accelerate the scoring, guiding Pakistan past 100 in the 20th over with 112 runs still needed from 30 overs. — APP

Iran girls kick down social
barriers with karate

As more women turn to karate, the sport has become a symbol of Iran's changing society

TEHRAN: As the referee's whistle signalled the start of the match, two five-year-old Iranian girls faced off, delivering a closely watched karate bout to a captivated audience — a sign of the changing attitude toward martial arts in the Islamic Republic in recent years. The two young opponents, clad in crisp white karategi with coloured belts and protective headgear, circled each other on the tatami, the floor covering used for practising Japanese martial arts. Their movements were sharp and deliberate, each kick and block executed with precision and control to the cheers of an all-female audience. At the final whistle, three minutes later, the two opponents shook hands and embraced. The match was part of an annual regional tournament that saw 230 participants of all ages gathered in Tehran, lining up in formation before the competition began. That AFP was accorded rare access to film and photograph a competition for women and girls was itself a sign of greater official openness. "This sport is anything but violent" because it "promotes discipline," said Samaneh Parsa, a 44-year-old mother who has been practising karate for five years with her daughter Helma and son Ilya. — Agencies

3 India-born pitchers
lead Mumbai to
series victory over
Karachi Monarchs

DUBAI: The Mumbai Cobras beat the Karachi Monarchs 9-2 on Sunday to secure the first regular season series in Baseball United's history. Akshay More, the first-ever professional Indian starting pitcher had a dream debut, pitching three solid innings and allowing only one hit. More also struck out three batters. Saurabh Gaikwad, who relieved his countryman on the mound, worked for 0.2 innings, with both outs as strikeouts. Tushar Lalwani, born in Mumbai, worked the last two innings of the game flawlessly, allowing only one hit and striking out one. Brantley Bell went two-for-four with a double, a triple, two runs scored and two runs batted in, while Caleb McNeely (2-for-3, 1 RBI, 2 R) hit a solo home run to right field, to lead an early attack. Miguel Ojeda had a second consecutive explosive night, after coming in as a pinch hitter to hit a three-run home run against Alex DuBord's pitches, to close the seventh inning with a killer five-run attack. Other highlights: Both starters represented the first pitching duel between players born in India and Finland in the history of professional baseball. Konsta Kurikka, Monarchs' starter, had 2.1 innings pitched, with six hits, four runs, all of them earned, two walks, two strikeouts and one home run allowed, to bear the defeat. Lou Helmig (1-for-3, 2 RBIs) and Ian Mercado (2-for-3) were the rest of the architects of Mumbai's explosive offense. — Agencies

Haaland strikes as Norway thump Italy
to reach first World Cup since 1998

MILAN: Norway qualified for their first World Cup since 1998 after Erling Haaland struck again in a 4-1 thumping of Italy on Sunday, which sealed a spot in the 2026 edition in the United States of America (USA), Canada and Mexico. Haaland scored the decisive brace in the space of seconds at a soaking San Siro for Norway, who completed Group I with a perfect 24 points from their eight qualifying matches. Norway would have had to lose by nine goals or more in order to be overtaken by Italy for the group's only automatic place for next summer's finals in North America, but Stale Solbakken's side gloriously ended their campaign in front of 70,000 people. However, Solbakken was coy as to his powerful team's chances now that a 28-year weight has come to an end. Haaland's father, Alf-Inge, was still an international player when Norway last competed in the World Cup 27 years ago, a tournament won by a Zinedine Zidane-inspired France. And the Manchester City striker, called a "goal machine" by Solbakken, will be



one of the players to watch in North America after smashing in 16 goals during qualifying. The 25-year-old is averaging more than a goal a game for club and country this season and was typically ruthless when presented with his opportunities to both put Norway ahead and then double their lead in the

78th and 79th minutes. Pio Esposito opened the scoring for Italy in the 11th minute, but once Antonio Nusa levelled with a thumping strike in the 63rd minute, there was only one team that looked like winning, and Jorgen Strand Larsen's brilliant individual goal completed the rout in stoppage time. — APP

Pakistan sweep Bangladesh in FIH Hockey
World Cup Qualifier series

Pakistan had earlier won the opening two games of the series with scores of 8-2 and 8-0 respectively

DHAKA: Pakistan delivered a dominant performance to defeat Bangladesh 10-3 in the final game of the three-match qualifier series at the Maulana Bhashani Stadium on Sunday. Having already secured a spot in the FIH Hockey World Cup Qualifiers 2026 after two commanding victories in the earlier matches, the Green Shirts maintained their superiority throughout the series, sweeping the hosts in all three encounters. The upcoming Hockey World Cup Qualifiers will take place in Belgium from February 28 to March 8, 2026. In the final match, Pakistan impressed with five goals in the first half, while Bangladesh managed only one. The visitors continued their dominance in the second half, doubling their lead and sealing an emphatic win. Sufyan Khan emerged as the Top Scorer of the Tournament, while Ammad Butt received the Best Player of the Tournament award for his exceptional attacking dis-



Hockey World Cup Qualifiers will take place in Belgium from February 28, 2026

play across the three matches. Pakistan had earlier won the opening two games of the series with scores of 8-2 and 8-0 respectively. The series was organised by the

International Hockey Federation (FIH) after Pakistan could not participate in the Asia Cup in India in August and September due to strained political relations between

the two neighboring countries. Looking ahead, Pakistan's next assignment will be their maiden appearance in the FIH Pro League, which begins next month

in Argentina. The seventh edition of the tournament will feature nine teams: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, England, Germany, India, the Netherlands, Spain and Pakistan, with Ireland relegated after finishing last in the previous season. One of the highlights of the season will be the clash against arch-rivals India in London on June 23 and 26, 2026. Pakistan will start their campaign in Rosario, Argentina, facing the Netherlands on December 10, followed by hosts Argentina on December 12. In total, the Green Shirts will play 16 matches across four international legs. Their second leg takes them to Hobart, Australia, in February, where they will face the hosts and Germany. In June, Pakistan will participate in the European leg with fixtures against Belgium and Spain in Wavre, before concluding the tournament in London against England and India. — Agencies

Bangladesh
demands
India
extradite
Hasina

FROM PAGE 01
the people of Bangladesh, including in peace, democracy, inclusion and stability," the ministry said in a statement that does not directly address the issue of potential extradition.

Faisal
becomes new
AJK PM as
assembly
ousts
Anwarul Haq

FROM PAGE 01
President Asif Ali Zardari revealed the political strategy last month. The party bolstered its strength in the Legislative Assembly when 10 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf lawmakers joined the PPP on October 26 during a meeting with President Zardari's sister, Faryal Talpur, at Zardari House in Islamabad. Among those who joined the PPP were Muhammad Hussain, Chaudhry Yasir, Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, Chaudhry Arshad, Chaudhry Muhammad Rash-eed, Zafar Iqbal Malik, Faheem Akhtar Rabbani, Abdul Majid Khan, Muhammad Akbar Ibrahim, and Asim Sharif Butt. Later, the PML-N also tendered its support for the no-confidence motion, but decided against joining the government's fold.

Pakistan,
Iran pledge
to cement
bilateral
relations

FROM PAGE 01
the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) and the Joint Trade Committee (JTC) to advance cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Pakistan and Iran further reaffirmed their commitment to working together at multilateral forums, including the UN, OIC and ECO, and continuing dialogue on global and regional issues. Officials described the engagement as reflective of the close and brotherly ties rooted in shared history, culture and faith. Both sides agreed to hold the next round of Bilateral Political Consultations in Tehran on mutually convenient dates.

Governor KP
congratulates
Pakistan
Team on
victory over
India in
Rising Star
Asia Cup

"By defeating India, our young Shaheens have made the whole nation proud," the Governor said. He added that the team's exceptional performance in the high-pressure match reflected their hard work and dedication.

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday congratulated the Pakistan cricket team on their remarkable victory against India in the Rising Star Asia Cup, calling it a proud moment for the entire nation. Governor Kundi praised the stellar performance of the national team, saying that the Pakistani Shaheens had lifted the nation's spirits by defeating their arch-rivals. He said the team's excellent display of skill and determination had not only secured a memorable win but had also paved the way for Pakistan's entry into the semi-finals, a significant achievement. "By defeating India, our young Shaheens have made the whole nation proud," the Governor said. He added that the team's exceptional performance in the high-pressure match reflected their hard work and dedication. Governor Kundi further said that Pakistan's victory was a triumph for the entire country and expressed hope that the team would continue their winning momentum in the upcoming stages of the tournament.

Briefs

Landslides in Indonesia's kill at least 18, dozens missing

JAKARTA: Rain-triggered landslides in two regions in Indonesia's Central Java province last week have led to the deaths of at least 18 people, authorities said on Monday, with search operations ongoing. A landslide in the city of Cilacap last week buried a dozen houses in Cibeunying village, the disaster mitigation agency said. Search and rescue efforts were challenging as people were buried 3 to 8 meters (10 to 25 feet) deep, it said. The Cilacap landslide has killed at least 16 people, with 7 missing, said M Abdullah, chief of the search and rescue agency's local division. Excavators were deployed to dig through dirt in Cilacap, footage from news channel KompasTV showed on Monday. Separately, two people died and 27 were missing after a landslide on Saturday in the region of Banjarnegara in Central Java, the disaster mitigation agency said on Monday. —APP

Public Debt declines by over Rs1,371 b: Khurram

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's total public debt has fallen from PKR 80,518 billion during June 2025 to PKR 79,146 billion in September 2025, a decline of over PKR 1,371 billion, Advisor to Finance Minister, Khurram Shahzad said here Monday. The advisor posted on X that the first quarterly decline in 69 months (since Dec 2019), marks a notable shift in debt dynamics, adding it was the largest quarterly reduction ever in both absolute value and percentage decline (QoQ). He said the achievement was the result of disciplined fiscal management and strategic use of surplus funds for early retirement of costly debt adding that it would help lower future borrowing needs, reduce refinancing and rollover risks, and strengthen medium-term financial stability.—APP

Gold price remains stable at Rs 430,662

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24-karat gold remained unchanged on Monday and was traded at Rs430,662 per tola, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association. Similarly, the rate of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also stayed stable at Rs369,223, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold were sold at Rs338,466, showing no change from the previous day. In the international market, gold prices held steady as well, standing at \$4,083 per ounce. On the other hand, silver prices recorded an increase. The price of 24-karat silver per tola rose by Rs55 to reach Rs5,368, while 10 grams of 24-karat silver increased by Rs47, settling at Rs4,602. International silver prices also edged up, climbing by \$0.55 to trade at \$50.96 per ounce, the association reported.—APP

Germany to lift curbs on arms exports to Israel

BERLIN: Germany is to remove restrictions it placed in August on arms exports to Israel which could be used in the Gaza Strip, the government announced Monday. "The restrictions on arms exports to Israel... will be lifted," government spokesman Sebastian Hille told reporters, adding that the decision "will take effect on 24 November." Chancellor Friedrich Merz justified the original decision to restrict exports in August as a reaction to plans announced by the Israeli government at the time for an escalation in its Gaza City offensive. "We have always stated that we would review this practice in light of developments on the ground," Hille said on Monday. "Since 10 October, there has been a ceasefire in Gaza, which has also fundamentally stabilized," he went on, saying that "this forms the basis for this decision" to lift the restrictions.—APP

EU envoy Raimundas for boosting Pak-EU eco ties

DNA

KARACHI: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI; President ECO-CCI and VP CACCI, has apprised that the Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Raimundas Karoblis, accompanied by senior officials, visited the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and held extensive discussions with the business leadership on further strengthening Pakistan-EU economic relations. FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh informed that Pakistan and the European Union, celebrating over 60 years of strong diplomatic and economic ties, are hosting the first high-profile European Union-Pakistan Business Forum (EU-PKBF) on 28-29 April 2026 in Islamabad. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh highlighted that this landmark event, supported by the EU, its member states, and the Government of Pakistan, aims to facilitate high-level dialogue, empower partnerships and unlock opportunities for businesses in both regions. The event is expected to be opened by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Mr. Atif Ikram Shaikh has said in his message that the EU remains one of Pakistan's most important trading partners and the continued validity of GSP Plus status has been instrumental in boosting our exports. We are grateful to the EU for its support and look forward to working closely to meet all 27 international conventions for the



next cycle. FPCCI is fully committed to facilitating European investors and joint ventures in diverse sectors including renewable energy, IT, textiles value-addition, agriculture processing and logistics. H.E. Mr. Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador of the EU in Pakistan, appreciated the pivotal role played by FPCCI as the apex body of trade and industry in Pakistan and underlined the EU's commitment to further deepen economic ties. Pa-

kistan is a very important partner for the European Union. We highly value the constructive engagement with FPCCI and the Pakistani private sector. The EU will continue supporting Pakistan's sustainable economic growth, particularly through the GSP Plus scheme, social & environmental initiatives and enhanced people-to-people contacts. Mr. Asif Inam, VP FPCCI, said that today's visit reflects the strong trust and mutual confidence

between Pakistan's private sector and the European Union. We have assured the Ambassador of the business community's complete support in enhancing bilateral trade volume, which has already crossed 12 billion, and in attracting more FDI from EU member states. FPCCI will act as a bridge to resolve any issues faced by European companies operating in Pakistan. Mr. Zubair Baweja, Head of FPCCI's Pak-EU Desk,

stressed that this engagement underscores the vital role of the Pak-EU Desk in fostering direct business linkages. We are eager to collaborate with Ambassador Karoblis on targeted initiatives to leverage GSP Plus opportunities, promote sustainable supply chains, and facilitate market access for Pakistani exporters in key EU sectors like green technologies and value-added manufacturing.

Migrant shipwreck leaves 36 dead as Malaysia ends search

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia ended its search Monday for migrants who went missing after their boat capsized 11 days ago, with searchers recovering 36 bodies after the sinking off the Thai-Malaysian coast. Fourteen survivors were also rescued since the shipwreck on November 6, near Thailand's Tarutao island while trying to reach Malaysia. Officials said the vessel was carrying some 70 undocumented migrants, mostly from Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya community. "The search-and-rescue operation will be called off at 6:30 p.m. (1030 GMT) today (Monday)," said Zainudin Mohd Zuki, deputy operations director of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) in the northern states of Kedah and Perlis. "We have examined all factors, including the size of the area, assets deployment, duration of the operation and information about the incident. "However, if there are any new leads or indications, we will reassess and reactivate the operation to search for the remaining missing victims," Zainudin said at a news conference. Malaysian rescuers have recovered 29 bodies, while their Thai counterparts have found seven in recent days. "As of Monday, the Malaysian and Thai authorities found 36 bodies, cumulatively," Romli Mustafa, MMEA's director in Kedah and Perlis, told AFP. The 14 survivors — mainly Rohingya and Bangladeshi citizens — were all found in Malaysian waters since operations began on November 8, with Monday marking the 10th day of the search. At least 19 vessels and more than 300 personnel searched an area of around 1,750 square nautical miles, roughly eight times the size of Singapore. The passengers on the capsized boat were likely part of a larger group of some 300 people who had left Myanmar two weeks ago, and were split between at least two vessels, officials say. Malaysian police reported the second vessel as missing. Relatively affluent Malaysia is home to millions of migrants from poorer parts of Asia, many of them undocumented, working in industries including construction and agriculture. But sea crossings, facilitated by human trafficking syndicates, are hazardous and often lead to overloaded boats capsizing. The Rohingyas have been persecuted in Myanmar for decades, and thousands risk their lives every year to flee repression and civil war, often aboard makeshift boats. More than 5,300 Rohingyas fled Bangladesh and Myanmar by sea between January and early November, with more than 600 reported dead or missing, the United Nations Refugee Agency and International Organization for Migration said last week.—DNA

Syrians, EU officials hold meeting in Damascus

DAMASCUS: Representatives of Syria's civil society held open discussions in Damascus in the presence of officials from the EU and the government. They touched on sensitive topics, including sectarian tensions and ethnic divisions. The EU-organized meetings known as "The Day of Dialogue" are the first to be held in Damascus after taking place in past years in Brussels. Saturday's meetings came nearly a year after the fall of the 54-year Assad family rule in Syria in early December. The meetings that used to take place within the framework of the Brussels Conferences were mostly boycotted by then-President Bashar Assad's government. The EU said Saturday's meetings were organized in cooperation with Syrian civil society and the Syrian authorities. "The meeting that used to be held to talk about Syria is now being held in Syria," Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shibani said in a speech at the opening session held at a conference center in the southern outskirts of Damascus. Al-Shibani added that Saturday's meetings represent "a solid partnership with the civil society and our partners in the EU." Michael Ohnmacht, chargé d'affaires of the EU delegation to Syria, said 500 people from Syria's different religious and ethnic groups took part in the meetings and "this is something very positive." "This is what we hope for Syria's future, to see this inclusive state which will be a state in the form of all its citizens," Ohnmacht said. Social Affairs Minister Hind Kabawat said: "Today's dialogue is the beginning of change, and rebuilding Syria only happens through partnership based on respect between the state and civil society." During one of the sessions on transitional justice and the fate of the missing, Syrians demanded answers on issues still pending, such as more than 130,000 people who went missing under Assad's rule.—APP

UK threatens visa bans on three African nations

LONDON: The UK government on Monday threatened visa bans on three African countries unless they accept the returns of irregular migrants, as the interior minister was set to announce sweeping changes to the asylum system. Britain said it would stop granting visas to nationals from Angola, Namibia and the Democratic Republic of Congo unless the countries accepted the returns of "their criminals and illegal immigrants," the interior minister said in a statement. Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood was expected later on Monday to announce what has "most sweeping reforms to tackle illegal migration in modern times," been touted by the government as the "most sweeping reforms to tackle illegal migration in modern times. Immigration has become a bitterly divisive issue in Britain in recent years, fueling support for the hard-right Reform UK party. Mahmood's hard-line rhetoric and measures are aimed at curbing asylum seekers crossing the Channel from France to Britain on small boats — but they are widely seen as an attempt to claw back public support from Reform, which has surged past the governing Labour Party in popularity polls. Echoing US President Donald Trump's travel bans, the Home Office said the "three countries face penalties for their unacceptably low cooperation and obstructive returns processes." Home Office minister Alex Norris told Sky News the countries had "one month to get this in order." The government also said it would consider similar measures against other countries. These include an "emergency brake" on visas for people from countries with high rates of asylum claims, who travel to the UK by legal routes. Despite an increase in asylum claims being submitted, the number of initial positive decisions the UK authorities have granted fell from 2023 to 2024, according to the latest government figures. Thousands of visas have been granted under humanitarian schemes for Ukrainians, Afghans and Hong Kong residents in recent years. Other planned measures, modelled on Denmark's strict asylum system, will include ending automatic benefits for asylum seekers and drastically reducing protections for refugees. One of the most contentious proposals — which has been condemned by charities as well as Labour lawmakers — will see the length of refugee status cut from five years to 30 months. Refugees will have their protection "regularly reviewed" and will be forced to return to their home countries once those are deemed safe. They will also need to wait for 20 years, instead of the current five, before they can apply for permanent residency. "We should be welcoming and integrating and not creating this situation of kind of perpetual limbo and alienation, which doesn't help the refugees and it doesn't help society," Labour MP Tony Vaughan told the BBC's Today program.—DNA

Japan seeks to calm escalating row with China over Taiwan

TOKYO/BEIJING: Japan on Monday moved to tamp down an escalating row with China over Taiwan that has prompted Beijing to urge its citizens to stay away from its East Asian neighbor. The dispute erupted after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told Japanese lawmakers earlier this month that a Chinese attack on Taiwan threatening Japan's survival could trigger a military response, a scenario previous administrations have avoided discussing in public to avoid provoking Beijing, which claims the self-ruled island. Masaaki Kanai, the director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asia and Oceania Bureau, will meet his Chinese counterpart, Liu Jinsong, in Beijing this week, Japanese media reported on Monday. Kanai is expected to explain that Takaichi's comment does not signal a shift in Japan's security policy and urge China to refrain from actions that further damage ties, they said. Taiwan sits just over 110 kilometers from Japan's westernmost islands and near vital sea lanes Tokyo relies on for oil and gas shipments. Japan also hosts the largest concentration of US military power outside the United States. "Various channels of communication are open," Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary said at a regular press briefing when asked about Kanai's reported China visit. China's travel warning, he added, "is incompatible with the broad direction of promoting a strategic, mutually beneficial relationship. We have made a firm request

for the Chinese side to take appropriate steps." Takaichi may get a chance to speak directly to China's Premier Li Qiang later this week, with both expected to attend the Group of 20 summit in South Africa from Friday. Speaking to reporters in New Taipei on Monday, Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said China was carrying out a "multifaceted attack" on Japan. "I call on the international community to continue paying close attention and I also urge China to exercise restraint and demonstrate the conduct befitting a major power, rather than becoming a troublemaker for regional peace and stability," he said. Leisure, retail shares take a hit. The row flared with Takaichi's comment on November 7, a week after she met Chinese leader Xi Jinping and agreed to pursue stable ties.

The following day, China's Consul General in Osaka, Xue Jian said "the dirty neck that sticks itself in must be cut off" in a now-deleted post on X. Japan summoned China's ambassador to protest about his "extremely inappropriate" statement and several Japanese politicians called for Xue's expulsion. The rift widened on Thursday when China summoned Japan's ambassador for the first time in more than two years to lodge a "strong protest" over Takaichi's remarks. On Friday, China said Japan would face a "crushing" military defeat if it intervened over Taiwan and voiced "serious concerns" about Japan's security direction including

Egypt, Sudan hold talks on advancing peace efforts

DUBAI: Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty held a phone call on Monday with his Sudanese counterpart Mohi El-Din Salem to discuss ways to advance efforts toward a comprehensive settlement of the Sudanese crisis. Abdelatty reaffirmed Egypt's firm position in support of Sudan's unity, and the preservation of its national institutions, stressing Cairo's complete rejection of any attempts to divide the country or undermine its stability. Abdelatty condemned the recent atrocities committed in El-Fasher, expressing Egypt's solidarity with the Sudanese people and reiterating support for the internationally recognized "Government of Hope" led by Kamel Idris. Abdelatty also discussed the urgent need to establish an effective humanitarian corridor to ensure the delivery of aid, alongside expanded relief assistance and enhanced cooperation with the United Nations, the African Union and humanitarian agencies. The minister emphasized the importance of fully implementing the Quartet statement - issued by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the United States — which outlines a set of principles for ending the conflict. The Quartet's statement, released in September, stressed Sudan's unity and sovereignty, rejected any military solution, called for unhindered humanitarian access and outlined a roadmap beginning with a three-month humanitarian truce leading to a permanent ceasefire.—APP

4 dead in migrant shipwreck off Libya

TRIPOLI: Libya's Red Crescent said it took part in a major rescue operation after two boats carrying close to 100 irregular migrants capsized off the country's coast, leaving four dead. The four dead were among 26 Bangladeshis traveling aboard one vessel, the organization said. The second boat was carrying 69 migrants, two of them Egyptian and the rest Sudanese, eight of whom were children, the Red Crescent said, reporting no deaths among them. The organization said it had received an alert overnight about two boats that had capsized in the Mediterranean. They had departed from the Libyan city of Khoms, 120km east of Tripoli. The Red Crescent said it had worked alongside the coast guard and port authorities. Libya is a key transit country for thousands of migrants seeking to reach Europe by sea each year. Earlier this week, the International Organization for Migration said the sinking of another ship that sailed from Libya had left 42 missing, presumed dead.—APP

Kremlin hopes for a new Putin-Trump summit

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Monday that it hoped another summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump could take place as soon as the necessary preparation had been completed. Putin and Trump last met in August at a summit in Alaska, where they discussed a possible resolution to end the war in Ukraine. Last month they announced plans for a summit in Budapest, but Trump canceled it soon afterwards, saying that the timing did not feel right. Asked if Moscow had missed an opportunity, and under what conditions a new Putin-Trump meeting might happen, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: "We can hardly predict now when these conditions will arise. Although, of course, we are all interested in these conditions occurring sooner rather than later."

He said both sides agreed a summit required deep preparation in order to be productive. "Therefore, as soon as this preparation is completed and the conditions for holding the summit are in place, we hope it will take place." Announcing the cancellation of the Budapest summit, Trump last month reiterated his frustration with Putin, saying: "Every time I speak with Vladimir, I have good conversations, and then they don't go anywhere." On October 22, he imposed Ukraine-related sanctions on Russia — targeting oil companies Rosneft and Lukoil — for the first time in his second term.—APP

CDNS accomplish Rs 550b savings inflows by Nov 15

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has attained a target of Rs 550 billion in savings inflows of the annual target for the current fiscal year, from July 1 to November 15th, 2025-26, 2025. The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS), has set a savings inflows target of Rs 1.3 trillion for the current Fiscal Year, 2025-26. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 50 billion in investments in Islamic Investment for the Current Fiscal Year 2025-26, which will lead to the growth of the Islamic economy in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP on Monday. The senior official of CDNS said that the National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1650 billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the country's saving culture. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs170 billion in investments in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year, which will lead to the growth of this sector. Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and exceeded 100 per cent of the annual target in the last fiscal year 2023-24, from July 1 to June 30.—APP

Briefs

Saudi Arabia prohibits seriously ill pilgrims

Action will be taken against doctors who issue fitness certificates to seriously ill pilgrims, say ministry sources

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi government has imposed strict restrictions on seriously ill individuals seeking to perform Hajj 2026, The News reported on Monday. A policy for deporting seriously ill pilgrims has also been enforced, under which Saudi authorities will send such pilgrims back to their homeland, and the returning pilgrims will be required to bear the cost of their travel. The ministry has clarified that, according to directives from the Saudi Ministry of Health regarding medical conditions for Hajj 2026, patients suffering from kidney diseases or undergoing dialysis will not be permitted to perform the pilgrimage. The Saudi ministry has also prohibited Hajj for patients with heart diseases that limit their ability to perform physical activity. Individuals with advanced lung and liver diseases will also face restrictions and will not be allowed to participate. In addition, the Saudi government has barred people with severe neurological or psychiatric illnesses, memory impairment, severe disabilities, and dementia from performing Hajj. People suffering from severe old age-related conditions, including Alzheimer's and epilepsy, will also be restricted. Pregnant women, as well as patients with whooping cough, tuberculosis, and viral hemorrhagic fever, will similarly be unable to perform Hajj 2026.

MQM confident local govt issue will be addressed

DNA

KARACHI: Health Minister Mustafa Kamal expressed confidence on Monday that the changes pertaining local governments sought by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) would be addressed in the next constitutional amendment slated for the "coming months". Kamal made the remarks while addressing a press conference in Karachi, less than a week after the contentious 27th Constitutional Amendment was enacted into law amid protests by the opposition and other quarters. When the 27th Amendment was tabled in the National Assembly on Nov 11, Kamal had referred to Article 140-A of the Constitution, which relates to local governments, and said his party's proposed amendments "are not dead yet" and would be discussed as part of the 28th Amendment. Speaking to the media today, he said that changes were initially pitched to be included in the 26th Amendment, which was passed by Parliament during an overnight session in October last year.

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Monday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.71 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 280.72. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 281.55 and Rs 281.80, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs0.59 to close at Rs 325.96, up from the previous day's close of Rs 326.55, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Pak, China agree to deepen co-op against terrorism

Chinese Ambassador Jian Zedong Called on Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Discusses Deepening Pakistan-China Security ties

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Jian Zedong. During the meeting, Pakistan-China bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest were discussed. Ambassador Jian Zedong condemned the suicide attack near the Islamabad District Courts and expressed his condolences over the tragic loss of human lives. The Ambassador said that the spokesperson of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also condemned this unfortunate incident. Both sides agreed to further strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism and security. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan-China relations are based on mutual trust and respect. He added that China is a trusted friend of Pakistan, which has stood by the country in every difficult moment. The Chinese Ambassador said that China will continue to extend full cooperation to Pakistan.



No ISIS commander killed in Punjab: Tarar

"There is no evidence linking Burhan to ISKP nor was he a commander," the ministry said, adding that Khalilzad's post twisted a "purely criminal or personal dispute into a terrorism-linked killing, creating a false impression of ISKP activity in Punjab

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) on Monday debunked a claim by former United States special envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, who had alleged that a ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) commander had been killed in Punjab. On Sunday night, Khalilzad said on social media platform X, "Good news from #Pakistan: Reportedly a senior ISIS-K commander Burhan, also known as Zaid, was killed in Patak part of Akhtarabad city in Punjab." In response to the post, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's official fact-checking account said the incident in question took place in Habibabad in Kasur district on March 5 and not in Akhtarabad as claimed. "The victim, Burhan, was killed by a dacoity/robbery-related incident or a case of personal enmity, not a counter-terror operation," the ministry said, adding that a first information report (FIR) of the incident was also registered on March 6 at the Saddar Pattoki police station. It said that Burhan was living with his father-in-law, Shah Muhammad, near a fruit market in Habibabad. "There is no presence of ISIS/Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) elements in Punjab, Pakistan, according to credible security assessments," the ministry said. "There is no evidence linking Burhan to ISKP



nor was he a commander," the ministry said, adding that Khalilzad's post twisted a "purely criminal or personal dispute into a terrorism-linked killing, creating a false impression of ISKP activity in Punjab". "The case remains a criminal matter, not related to militancy or organised terror groups," it added. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said that Pakistan had become "extremely relevant" on the global stage after its performance during the military conflict against India in May. The conflict between the two countries in May this year was sparked by an attack on tourists in India-occupied Kashmir, which New Delhi, without evidence, linked to Pakistan. Islamabad strongly denied responsibility while calling for a neutral investigation. New Delhi then launched deadly air strikes in Punjab and Azad Kashmir on May 7. After tit-for-tat strikes on each other's airbases during the four-day escalation, it took American intervention on May 10 for both sides to finally reach a ceasefire. Both governments launched diplomatic blitzes after the conflict to take their stance on the ordeal to other countries. Elaborating on Pakistan's image and standing in the world in the conflict's aftermath while speaking at a function, the information minister said, "In a very short span of time, we have become extremely relevant in our foreign policy. We have seen in the past two years, and especially after the May war, I think that has redefined who we are."

Two more FCC judges take oath

Justice Rozi Khan Barrech, Justice Arshad Hussain Shah sworn in; Justice Aminuddin forms three FCC benches

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Monday became operational after two more judges were sworn in to serve on the newly formed court established under the recently passed 27th Constitutional Amendment. FCC Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan administered the oath to Justice Rozi Khan Barrech and Justice Arshad Hussain Shah in the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) conference room, taking the total number of judges of the court to seven. On Saturday, Justice Muhammad Kareem Khan Agha was sworn in an FCC judge which was preceded by the oath-taking of Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Aamer Farooq, Justice Ali Baqar Najafi.

The new court, which has been established as a result of the 27th Amendment, is set to have equal provincial representation. The president and the prime minister will play key roles in judicial appointments, while powers to hear constitutional cases of the Supreme Court will be transferred to the new court. A crucial power of the Supreme Court, taking suo motu notices, has also been transferred to the FCC, which has been empowered to take suo motu notice upon petitions. Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, who was sworn to the coveted post on October 30, 2024, still remains the top judge; however, once his tenure ends after the stipulated three years, the senior-most judge from amongst the SC and FCC judges will become the top judge. The judicial overhaul, part of the latest amendments, not only paved the way for dissolving the Constitutional Benches but also, through the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2025, transferred the authority to constitute case-hearing benches to a three-member committee headed by the chief justice. The committee will comprise the chief justice of the Supreme Court, the most senior judge, and a third judge nominated by the country's top jurist. In the absence of any member, the chief justice may nominate another judge to serve on the committee. Decisions regarding the formation of benches by the committee will be made by a majority vote.

Pakistan's economic future tied to population and climate action



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, has underscored that Pakistan's long-term economic prospects depend on effectively confronting the dual national challenges of rapid population growth and climate vulnerability. He made this observation during his address to the launch ceremony of the District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP), organized by the Population Council in Islamabad today. The Minister noted that while the country continues its trajectory toward macroeconomic stabilization and growth, Pakistan cannot realize its full potential without addressing the pressures created by population momentum and escalating climate risks. He highlighted that the impacts of high population growth

are reflected in persistent human development challenges, including child stunting, learning poverty, and a workforce insufficiently equipped for the future. At the same time, climate change continues to expose communities to extreme temperatures, floods, droughts, and environmental degradation, with the most severe effects falling on districts already struggling with poverty, weak infrastructure, and limited access to essential services. The Finance Minister affirmed the Ministry's commitment to supporting national efforts in population and climate-related policymaking by integrating these priorities into budgeting and resource allocation. He underscored the increasing role of finance ministries globally in mainstreaming climate and demographic considerations, reinforcing that Pakistan must adopt the same approach to ensure long-term resilience and equitable development. Senator Aurangzeb commended the Population Council for producing a comprehensive, data-driven District Vulnerability Index based on three years of research. He emphasized that the Index provides actionable management information through its detailed analysis across six domains, offering meaningful insights into geographic disparities and identifying districts most at risk, particularly in Balochistan and Sindh. The findings reflect how social vulnerabilities and climate exposure reinforce each other, creating compounded risks for already marginalized populations. He also drew attention to the growing trend of rural-to-urban migration and the expansion of informal settlements, where inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions contribute to poor nutrition outcomes and perpetuate child stunting. He encouraged further research on urban vulnerabilities so that national planning can address the full spectrum of demographic and climate-linked challenges.

Federal Constitutional Court Nullifies LHC Judgment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court has set aside a Lahore High Court ruling regarding the appointment of the Vice Chancellor of King Edward Medical University (KEMU), effectively disposing of the case. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan heard the appeal on Monday. At the outset of proceedings, the bench noted that no counsel appeared before the court.

After reviewing the case record, the court held that the Lahore High Court's decision could not be sustained and was therefore declared null and void. The bench observed that if any party felt aggrieved by a judicial decision, it retained the right to approach the appropriate forum for relief.

With these remarks, the appeal was disposed of. It may be recalled that the Lahore High Court had terminated the appointment of Professor Asad Aslam as Vice Chancellor of KEMU while hearing a petition challenging the selection process. The petition was filed by Iftikhar Ahmed, who questioned the legality and transparency of the appointment procedure. However, the case remained pending before the Supreme Court for nearly eight years without being fixed for hearing.

FCC seeks DRAP report on availability of Life-Saving medicines

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court on Monday directed the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to submit a comprehensive report on the nationwide availability of life-saving medicines and adjourned further proceedings for an indefinite period. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan took up the case. During the hearing, the petitioner informed the court that he had sought the registration of 41 life-saving drugs, of which registration for 30 medicines had been completed. However, he said DRAP had not yet provided complete information regarding the availability of these medicines in the market. - Agencies

Trump reverses stance on Epstein files

"It's time to move on from this Democrat hoax perpetrated by radical left lunatics," says US president

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has urged his fellow Republicans in Congress to vote for the release of files related to the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, reversing his earlier resistance to such a move. Trump's post on his Truth Social came after House Speaker Mike Johnson said earlier that he believed a vote on releasing Justice Department documents in the Epstein case should help put to rest allegations that Trump had any connection to Epstein's abuse and trafficking of underage girls. Although Trump and Epstein were photographed together decades ago, the president has said the two men fell out before Epstein's convictions. Emails released last week by a House committee showed the disgraced financier believed Trump "knew about the girls," though it was not clear what that phrase meant. Trump, who has recently dismissed the Epstein files as a Democratic smear campaign, has since instructed the Department of Justice to investigate prominent Democrats' ties to Epstein. The battle over disclosure of more Epstein-related documents, a subject Trump himself campaigned on, has opened a rift with some of his allies in Congress. Many of Trump's most loyal supporters believe the government is withholding sensitive documents about Epstein, a convicted sex offender who died by suicide in jail in 2019, that would reveal the late financier's ties to powerful public figures. Trump late on Friday withdrew his support for US Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, long one of his staunchest supporters in Congress, following her criticism of Republicans on certain issues, including the handling of the Epstein files. US Representative Ro Khanna, a California Democrat and an original sponsor of the petition calling for a vote on the files' release, said on Sunday that he expected more than 40 Republicans to vote in favour.

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