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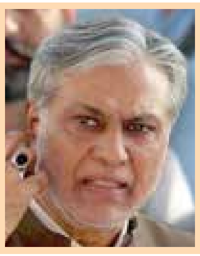
Daily Islamabad POST

Thursday, November 20, 2025 | Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper | Price Rs. 30

Afghan govt must not support TTP, says EU Ambassador

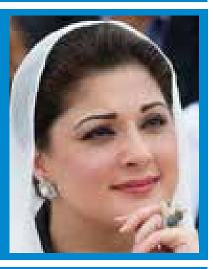
Detailed News On Page-08

Pak pushes for regional connectivity



Detailed News On Page-01

Punjab govt committed to serve people



Detailed News On Page-02

Fix, expand, build

5-year flood management plan approved

Premier directs early preparedness for next monsoon, implementation of short-term plan

Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has approved a 5-year flood management strategy – fix, expand and rebuild, Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik said on Wednesday. The minister revealed this during a press conference, alongside the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) chief, outlining Pakistan's flood management strategy following heavy losses from recent floods. Malik said the 2022 floods caused damage equivalent to 9% of the country's GDP. Over the past three to four major floods, more than 4,500 people have died, and around 40 million were displaced. This year alone, 3.1 million people lost their homes, the minister said adding that the current drainage system cannot cope with the intensity of present-day monsoons.

Malik said that the government has prepared a 250-day monsoon plan to deal with short-term challenges and will implement integrated measures over the next 200 days.

"If similar floods occur next year, we must be ready," he added. He said that a meeting chaired by PM Shehbaz made key decisions on a three-phase strategy of flood management. The first phase focuses on repairing damaged infrastructure, including dykes, flood gates, and other critical systems, within 200-250 days, before the next monsoon.

He said that the PM directed early warning systems be immediately integrated at the district and tehsil levels. Officers at the AC and DC offices will screen incoming data, ensuring alerts reach vulnerable areas first.

Malik further said that the PM also called for formulating plans to establish temporary schools and mobile healthcare units in flood-hit areas to prevent disruption to education and healthcare. The medium-term plan aims to expand existing drainage and flood management systems over the next three years. Meanwhile, the long-term strategy, spanning five years, envisions climate-resilient infrastructure capable of withstanding extreme weather events, he added.

Malik emphasised that flood prevention and minimising loss of life should guide policymaking, adding that river floods, flash floods, drainage-related flooding, and coastal destruction were all highlighted during the PM-led meeting. He said the premier will personally lead the programme, review updates on implementation and integration to ensure Pakistan is better prepared for extreme weather conditions, both hot and cold.

As per the details from the meeting, PM Shehbaz directed the relevant authorities to ensure early preparedness to avert rain-related losses in next year's monsoon and implement the short-term plan presented by the climate change ministry. The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review measures to prevent damages from next year's monsoon, approved the short-term plan and instructed its immediate implementation. He asked the Ministry of Climate Change, Ministry of Planning, and NDMA to work in coordination with provincial governments for integrated planning on climate change. He also called for preparations to convene a meeting of the National Water Council to carry out national-level planning on water management.

PM Shehbaz said that, being a developing country, Pakistan had to spend a significant portion of its GDP to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change, which otherwise could be used for development projects. He said that unfortunately, Pakistan was faced with the negative impacts of climate change despite having almost a negligible contribution to carbon emissions.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Khalid Magsi calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

PTI says Imran sisters manhandled

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI said late on Tuesday that police manhandled and "violently detained" the sisters of ex-premier Imran Khan from outside Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, where they were camped out after being denied a weekly meeting with the party founder.

The PTI had held a protest outside the jail on Tuesday, where Imran is currently incarcerated, but the jail administration did not allow party leaders and the PTI founder's family to meet him. Subsequently, the party held a sit-in outside the jail and criticised the prison administration for violating the court order in this regard. In a post on social media platform X after midnight, the party said Aleema Khan, Noreen Niazi and Dr Uzma Khan were "sitting

Continued on Page 06

SCO summit

Pakistan pushes for enhanced regional connectivity: Dar

Dar meets Russian, Chinese and leaders of other nations with talks centred on trade, transit and cooperation

News Desk

MOSCOW: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar pushed for enhanced regional connectivity, new SCO financial mechanisms and deeper engagement with key partners, including Russia and China, at the 24th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting in Moscow.

Dar also held a series of high-level bilateral meetings on the sidelines. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Dar led Pakistan's delegation to the CHG, held from November 17 to 18, and joined other heads of government in a joint call on Russian President Vladimir Putin, who welcomed the delegations and underlined the importance of strengthening regional economic cooperation under the SCO as a platform for connectivity,

Continued on Page 06

Pak, Russia FMs express satisfaction at positive trajectory of bilateral ties

DNA

MOSCOW: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, wherein both sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and expressed deep satisfaction at the current positive trajectory of ties. In the meeting held on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting here, the deputy prime minister also congratulated his

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Deadly fire in Japan destroys buildings

News Desk

TOKYO: A fire ripped through more than 170 buildings and killed one person in a southern Japanese coastal city on Wednesday, with military and firefighting helicopters scrambling to extinguish the country's largest urban blaze in almost half a century. Aerial footage from broadcasters showed houses reduced to rubble and thick plumes of smoke rising from the hilly Saganoseki district of Oita city, which overlooks a fishing harbour renowned for its premium Seki-brand mackerel. The flames had also spread to nearby forested slopes and an uninhabited island more than one kilometre off the coast, likely due to strong winds, local media reported.

Justice Mandokhel says RO was right

Faisal Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail has observed that returning officers (ROs) correctly prepared lists of 41 independent candidates during the 2024 general elections, as it was PTI's decision-makers who "compelled" them to contest in that manner. Justice Mandokhail, a member of the now-defunct CB, made the observation in his additional note in the reserved seats review case. In its June 27 ruling, the CB, by a majority of seven judges, had overturned the earlier SC judgment of July 12, 2024 that had granted reserved seats to the PTI. While seven judges had accepted all review petitions filed by the ruling coalition parties.

Pak–Afghan tensions

Iran exploiting crisis; offering alternate lifelines

India, meanwhile, is playing a silent but effective role. Through investments in Chabahar, concessions in air cargo, and steady humanitarian support, it has strengthened Afghanistan's ability to diversify its trade routes

Shamim Shahid

WHATEVER the justification or future strategy formulated by policymakers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad for fuelling friction with neighbouring Afghanistan, the unfolding situation appears to be benefiting another regional actor–the Islamic Republic of Iran. Emerging reports suggest that the ongoing border tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have dramatically reshaped the regional trade landscape. In this fast-changing environment, Iran has emerged as the biggest beneficiary, quietly transforming its Chabahar Port into a rising commercial hub. Pakistan, which traditionally enjoyed dominance over Afghan markets and earned sizeable transit revenue from Central Asia, is witnessing heavy losses–running into billions of rupees–as trade flows divert away from its territory.

Iran, by contrast, has doubled its share in Afghan trade and diverted more than 50 percent of Afghanistan's commerce toward its ports. Lower tariffs, free storage facilities, and expanded customs infrastructure at border points have made Iran the preferred choice of Afghan traders. For a country long vulnerable due to its landlocked geography, Afghanistan has unexpectedly found stability and options–this time on Iran's shoulders.

India, meanwhile, is playing a silent but effective role. Through investments in Chabahar, concessions in air cargo, and steady humanitarian support, it has strengthened Afghanistan's ability to diversify its trade routes. The pressure tactics Pakistan believed would strengthen its hand have instead backfired. Iran is content, India is reassured, Afghanistan is breathing easier–and Pakistan is left watching its lost markets from a distance. Analysts argue that this crisis is more than a border dispute. It marks the beginning of a new regional trade order in which the winners will be those who keep routes–and hearts–open. In many ways, Afghanistan owes this newfound resilience to former

Continued on Page 06

Pak Navy foils drug smuggling bid

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy has successfully conducted a major counter-narcotics operation in the Arabian Sea, seizing narcotics worth $130 million.

Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Tabuk intercepted a suspicious stateless dhow in the Arabian Sea, resulting in the seizure of over 2,000 kilogrammes of methamphetamine (ICE), a statement issued by the Pakistan Navy Directorate General Public Relations (DGPR) stated on Wednesday.

Continued on Page 06

US report acknowledges 'Pak military success' over India

Report submitted to US Congress states Pakistan deployed Chinese-made J-10C to down Rafale fighters

DNA

NEW YORK: DA report presented to the United States Congress has acknowledged Pakistan's "military success over India" in the four-day war in May this year, stating that Pakistan used Chinese-made weapons to down Indian fighter jets, including French-made Rafales.

The conflict was instigated by India after launching strikes inside Pakistan following a deadly attack that killed 26 people in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam town. The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission report – reviewing US-China security and foreign affairs – highlighted the deepening defence cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing, stating that Pakistan employed advanced Chinese weaponry to enhance its military edge over India. The conflict saw Pakistan successfully employing China's modern weapons systems in active combat for the first time, including the HQ-9 air-defence system, PL-15 air-to-air missiles, and J-10C fighter aircraft. The clash – during which Islamabad says it downed seven Indian fighter jets, including Rafales – became a notable "selling point" for China's defence sales efforts, the report added.

It also noted that China offered to sell 40 J-35 fifth-generation fighter jets, KJ-500 surveillance aircraft, and ballistic missile defence systems to Pakistan in June. The report also emphasised the intensity of the conflict, observing that both countries struck targets deeper into each other's territories "than at any point in the past 50 years". The deadly conflict between the two countries began when India conducted missile strikes inside Pakistan during the night of May 5 and 6, which New Delhi claimed were aimed at "terrorist targets" in response to the Pahalgam attack.

However, the strikes resulted in the martyrdom of several civilians and security personnel, while Pakistan, in addition to downing Rafales and other fighter jets, downed dozens of drones. Pakistan Armed Forces then launched a large-scale retaliatory strike, named "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos", targeting over 20 Indian military sites across multiple regions. The Pakistan Air Force also used its JF-17 Thunder jets to destroy India's S-400 air defence system in Adampur by using hypersonic missiles. The clashes between the two nuclear-armed nations came to a close on May 10 after a ceasefire agreement brokered by the United States.

Parents urged to get kids vaccinated

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Deputy Commissioner Abdul Nasir has urged all parents to get their children vaccinated during the ongoing Measles-Rubella campaign. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting to review the drive. He said the youths were considered as architect of the country's future, thus that timely immunization was essential to protect the younger population from potentially dangerous diseases like measles and rubella. The meeting was attended by officials from the health, education and other relevant departments. It examined field deployment, assessed challenges encountered during the initial days of the drive, and issued directions to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the remaining phase of the campaign. It was informed that the district-wide Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign, launched on November 17, was underway and would continue until November 29.

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari hosted dinner for the Executive Committee of the APNS. Present in the picture are Information Secretary, Director General PR, Senator Sarmad Ali President APNS, Shahab Zubairi, Mujeeb ur Rehman Shami, Imtinan Shahid, Dr. Tanvir A Tahir, Mohsin Siyal, Munir Jilani, Faisal Zahid Malik, Imran Athar, Naveed Chaudhry, Bilal Mahmood, Hamayun Gulzar, Irfan Athar, Mumtaz Shah, Najmudding Shikh and others. DNA

CM KP announces free healthcare for young patient

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail Afridi has announced the provincial government will provide complete free medical treatment for a young cancer patient from Bajaur. The announcement came during a visit by the boy Mairajuddin and his father to the Chief Ministers office Mairajuddin was accompanied by his father along with Bajaur Member of Provincial Assembly Dr Hamid and former National Assembly member Gul Zafar Khan. Chief Minister Afridi reviewed all of Mairajuddins medical records and treatment details during the meeting.

18 new cases of dengue reported in KP

PESHAWAR: Around 18 new cases of dengue have been reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last twenty four hours, raising the toll of total cases to 5978 According to Dengue Situation Report issued by Public Health Section, Directorate General Health Services KP on Wednesday, out of 18 new cases around 7 have been hospitalized in different cities. The total number of hospitalized patients due to dengue has been reached to 2063 till date, the report mentioned. While out of total cases of 5978, around 5702 have been recovered from the disease. In all a total of four deaths including one during the last 24 hours has been reported in current year due to the vector borne infection.–APP

Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF JAVED IQBAL CENIOR CIVIL JUDGE RAWALPINDI

Application certificate succession Nuzat Shaheen Widow of Shafaqat Munir R/o Dhock Major, Post Office Khass, Abn e Chak, Tehsil And District Rwalpindi etc. Versus Public at large Notice to Public at Large The service through ordinary means is difficult, so informed the public at large through this notice if any one have objection regarding the said application he attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 20-11-2025 at 9am.

Punjab CM announces signal-free corridor

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday announced major development initiatives for the garrison city, including a Rs30 billion signal-free corridor and the expansion of the electric bus fleet from 45 to 80 vehicles, alongside a range of transport, infrastructure and welfare projects Speaking at the inauguration of the Electro Bus Phase-II project, the chief minister said work on the 25-kilometre signal-free corridor – featuring nine underpasses and three flyovers – had commenced and would be completed next year, providing relief to an estimated 200,000 daily commuters. Maryam said the increase in electric buses formed part of the government's wider plan to introduce 1,100 green buses across Punjab by December. The service, she added, offered Rs20 fares, with women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and students travelling free of cost. She said the buses were equipped with Wi-Fi, charging ports, CCTV monitoring, wheelchair space and separate compartments for women. The chief minister, while speaking about past development work, remarked that major projects executed earlier in Rawalpindi and Murree – including the metro service – had been undertaken during the prime ministerships of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif. She said the Pakistan Muslim League-N had a consistent record of infrastructure development, asserting that "when the PML-N is in office, the country progresses" and that fact had even been admitted by the rivals. Maryam also highlighted that road development had accelerated across the province, stating that thousands of kilometres of roads had been completed over the past year, while 1,000 inter-village roads were planned for this year. She added that the Wagah–Lahore stretch had been transformed into a 14-kilometre Green Heritage Corridor. She announced a Rs100 billion programme to overhaul rural drainage and sewerage systems, a new provincial anti-harassment law, and the construction of the Thal Expressway from Rajanpur to Bhakkar. After the completion of the Lahore Cancer Hospital, new cancer hospitals would be established in Rawalpindi and Dera Ghazi Khan, she added. The chief minister said over 100,000 houses were under construction under the "Apni Chhat Apna Ghar" programme, with 350 to 400 units being completed daily. Medicines for cancer, hepatitis and diabetes were now being delivered at patients' doorsteps, while cardiology centres were being established in 20 cities. Maryam said 1.5 million families were receiving ration cards and 80,000 students were benefitting from scholarships. Missing facilities in public schools were being addressed, teachers' shortages were being filled, and the school meal programme had boosted enrolment, she added. She said smog-control measures had reduced seasonal smog by up to 70 per cent, and clean drinking water would be provided to every household in the Potohar region this year. Rural areas, she added, were being developed as model villages with improved amenities. Maryam said the crackdown on illegal weapons and drug peddling near educational institutions had been intensified, while police reforms had led to significant reductions in crime. She said Rs85 billion in loans had been issued under the Easy Business Scheme, and that the "Suthra Punjab" initiative and plantation drives were improving sanitation and greenery across the province. –DNA

HA Pindi steps up park to enhance public facilities

RAWALPINDI: The Horticulture Agency (HA) Rawalpindi has intensified efforts to improve the city's parks and green belts, aiming to provide residents with a cleaner, safer, and more attractive recreational environment. A spokesman said on Wednesday the Agency workers, acting on the instructions of its Managing Director Ahmed Hassan Ranjha, were carrying out routine landscaping, seasonal plantation, and maintenance work across major public parks. He added that fresh flowers, improved walkways, and enhanced greenery had drawn strong public interest, particularly during evening hours. The spokesman further said that the managing director had also ordered stricter security arrangements in all parks to ensure a safe environment for families and visitors. "No negligence will be tolerated in maintaining public facilities," the MD was quoted as saying. He reaffirmed the Agency's commitment to expanding greenery and upgrading recreational spaces across the city.–APP

IHC dismisses Kingdom Valley's petition in favour of CCP

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has dismissed the writ petition filed by Kingdom Valley (Pvt) Limited against the Rs150 million penalty imposed by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) According to the CCP press release issued here on Wednesday, the Court ruled that the petition was not maintainable because the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) was now functional. The petition was filed when CAT was not operational due to the absence of its chairman. At that time, the Court had granted an interim stay on recovery. During Wednesday's hearing, the petitioner argued the case in detail. The Court, however, noted that the Tribunal was now available as the proper forum for appeal. CCP's counsel informed the Court that CAT had already taken up Kingdom Valley's appeal. He also stated that CAT has not granted any stay. After hearing both sides, the Court dismissed the writ petition for being not maintainable. This has cleared the way for the appeal proceedings before CAT. Earlier, CCP had fined Kingdom Valley Rs.150 million for misleading advertising. The Commission found that the company marketed its project as "Kingdom Valley Islamabad," although the project is located in Mouza Choora, Rawalpindi.

The company also misrepresented links with the Naya Pakistan Housing Program and NAPHDA. It advertised the project as "NOC approved" without proper disclosure. A two-member CCP bench held that the company violated Sections 10(2)(a) and 10(2)(b) of the Competition Act, 2010. The Commission also noted further non-compliance related to financial disclosures.–APP

Strong Public Response as ICT launch M-Tag facilities

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police's rollout of M-Tag facilitation counters at seven key points across the federal capital has drawn an encouraging public response, with citizens widely welcoming the move as a major step toward safer, faster and more technology-driven entry procedures The initiative–introduced under the enhanced security plan of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi–has quickly gained traction as residents appreciate the convenience of on-spot registration and the promise of smoother, digitally verified access into the city. An official told APP on Wednesday that under the revised security regime, all vehicles entering Islamabad are required to carry a valid E-Tag/M-Tag for digital verification at checkpoints. He clarified that vehicles already carrying an M-Tag issued in other cities do not need to reapply, as the system is fully compatible and recognised at all Islamabad entry points. The official added that the initiative aims to ensure secure, verifiable and technology-enabled entry into the federal capital by monitoring vehicle movement and reducing the risks associated with unchecked access. He said the system supports the Interior Minister's and IGP Rizvi's vision of making Islamabad one of the safest and most technologically monitored cities in the country. Citizens have been advised to obtain their M-Tag–if they do not already have one–to avoid delays at checkpoints and to support the enhanced security measures being enforced across the federal capital.–APP

CDA intensifies crackdown on illegal constructions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In line with the direction of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, action against unauthorized constructions and violators of building bylaws in Islamabad has been further intensified. In this regard, the Building Control Section, with the support of the Enforcement Wing, the district administration, and Islamabad Police, conducted operations in various areas of the city on Wednesday. Sealing 28 buildings for violations of the CDA Ordinance 1960 and Building Control Regulations 2020, and also issuing notices to the owners violating the said regulations. According to details, on Wednesday, the Building Control Section, in collaboration with the Enforcement staff, sealed 8 buildings on Kuri Road in Zone-IV of Islamabad for non-conforming use. Similarly, 20 buildings in Zone-IV, which were being used in violation of the Building Control Regulations 2020, were also sealed. In total, 28 buildings were sealed and notices were issued to the owners. On the instructions of Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the enforcement of building bylaws across the entire city is being ensured. It is important to note that operations against building bylaw violations will continue consistently. On this occasion, CDA administration said that actions against illegal constructions in the Capital City, Islamabad, will continue consistently in the coming days. In this regard, citizens are also urged to cooperate and ensure they obtain the necessary permission from the relevant CDA formation before starting any construction work.

MD PHA wants no green belt of city without grass, plants

LAHOR: Managing Director PHA Lahore Raja Mansoor Ahmad on Wednesday directed zonal directors to make sure, not a single green belt be without grass or plants and ensure daily maintenance He said that weekly mass plantation drives will be carried out across the city. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of PHA directors held here at Head office. Senior PHA officers, including Zeeshan Nasrullah Ranjha, Directors Ahmad Saeed Manj, Farah Adeeba, Naeem Afzal, and other horticulture directors were also present.–APP

Incident inside courtroom not sufficient grounds for death penalty: SC

The judgment cited several Supreme Court precedents where the death penalty had been reduced to life imprisonment due to lack of proven motive or the presence of mitigating circumstances

ISLAMABAD: Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan of the Supreme Court has observed, in his dissenting note in the Maaf Ali murder case, that the mere occurrence of an offence inside a courtroom is not enough to justify the death penalty. According to the detailed written judgment, approved for reporting by the Supreme Court, the prosecution succeeded in proving the charge of murder under Section 302-b of the Pakistan Penal Code; however, key aspects and weaknesses in the case did not support the upholding of the death sentence. The Court commuted Maaf Ali's death sentence to life imprisonment, while maintaining his acquittal under Section 7(a) of the Anti-Terrorism Act. The incident took place on January 24, 2014, inside a family court in Gujrat, where the accused, Maaf Ali, allegedly killed his wife, Naeema Bibi, who had been pursuing a separation case against him and was residing in Darul Aman.

Justice Malik Shahzad emphasized that the fact that the murder occurred inside a courtroom does not automatically warrant capital punishment, and that mitigating factors must not be overlooked. The prosecution failed to present any solid motive, and the family court record was also not produced. The victim's mother refrained from testifying against the accused and had earlier suspected another person in a previously lodged kidnapping case. Justice Malik Shahzad further noted that the accused's two children had already lost their mother, and a death sentence would deprive them of their father as well. He added that familial circumstances and social pressures can influence human behaviour. The judgment cited several Supreme Court precedents where the death penalty had been reduced to life imprisonment due to lack of proven motive or the presence of mitigating circumstances. Upholding the conviction under the murder charge, the Court converted the death sentence to life imprisonment, while maintaining the orders relating to diyat and fines.–DNA

Daily Islamabad POST
METROLITE
Thursday November 20, 2025

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria
National Day

Nov 04/Italy
Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation
Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia
National Day

Nov 11/Poland
Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan
Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium
Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil
Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
National Day

Nov 18/Oman
National Day

Nov 18/Morocco
Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh
Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon
Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname
National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania
National Day

Nov 28/Albania
Flags Day

Emergency

Rescue (Police)................15
Bomb Disposal.................15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad............1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations
Islamabad..............9222596
Rawalpindi........9270601-20

Enquiry

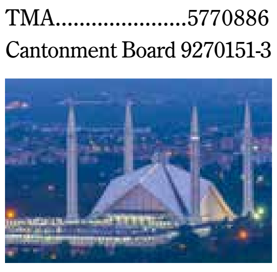
Edhi Ambulance.............115
PIA Flight Info................114
PIA Cargo.............9280979
Railway Inquiry.............117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA......................9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....................5611111
MH..........................561116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ..................5556311-4
RGH....................9290301-7
Holy Family.........9290322-7
PIMS................9261170-79
Polyclinic...........9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.................9221334-43
CDA.................9208301-04
Met Office..........9250360-6
RDA......................5555864
TMA.....................5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad......0321-5744480

NUML's ICECT discusses emerging technologies

Speaking on the occasion, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, Director General NUML, and Dr. Noman Malik, Dean FEC and Conference Chair, expressed satisfaction over the successful conduct of the conference

Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: The Faculty of Engineering and Computing (FEC) at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, organized the 4th International Conference on Engineering and Computing Technologies (ICECT 2025). The two-day event brought together national and international scholars, researchers, and industry professionals to discuss recent developments in engineering, computing, and emerging technologies. ICECT 2025 included keynote talks, invited lectures, technical sessions, and research presentations covering subjects such as Artificial Intelligence, Large Language Models in education, digital resilience, software engineering improvements, electric vehicle technologies, 6G communication, data center innovation, security systems, and biomedical advancements. A total of 110 research papers were submitted to the conference, out of which 39 were accepted after a double-blind peer-review process. Best Paper Awards were presented in three categories: Emerging AI in Software Engineering, Intelligent Systems in Engineering, and Cyber Guard and Digital Resilience. Keynote speakers from academia included Dr. Muazzam Ali Khattak, Senior Member IEEE; Prof. Dr. Naveed Ikram from Riphah University; Dr. Asif Gill from University of Technology Sydney; and Prof. Dr. Mahmood Niazi from KFUPM Dhahran. Industry leaders such as Dr. Shoab Khan, Chancellor CASE and CEO CARE Pvt. Ltd., and Mr. Barkan Saeed, CEO Vizteck Solutions, also addressed the conference.

A special dialogue session titled "Bridging Academia, Industry, and Innovation for Pakistan's Technological Future" was held at Studio NUML, featuring discussions on entrepreneurship, AI-driven innovation, semiconductor development, and graduate employability. The conference was attended by Dr. Hafez Ullah Khan, former Chairman PSF and NAVTAC, as Chief Guest, and Dr. Nosherwan Shoaib, Chairperson IEEE Islamabad Section. Speaking on the occasion, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, Director General NUML, and Dr. Noman Malik, Dean FEC and Conference Chair, expressed satisfaction over the successful conduct of the conference. They appreciated the participation of researchers and highlighted NUML's commitment to promoting research, innovation, and productive academia–industry linkages. The event concluded with appreciation from participants for providing a collaborative platform for knowledge sharing and technological advancement.

ICT reports new Dengue case amid intensified anti-mosquito steps

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration dengue control efforts have moved closer to the official target, with only one new case reported and more than 29,518 inspections and 963 fogging operations completed across high-risk zones. According to the spokesman of ICT administration here, the city is now seeing a steady decline that may lead to a dengue-free status in the coming days. Islamabad's district administration has shared its latest daily surveillance report on dengue, showing consistent reduction in new cases and steady progress toward this season's control target. According to officials, only one new dengue patient has been reported in the federal capital, and that case came from a rural area. Urban localities have reported zero cases for several days, reflecting the success of recent field operations. The administration stated that under the ongoing anti-dengue campaign, dedicated teams completed fogging drives in 963 identified high-risk zones. These operations were carried out according to the city's daily response plan, which focuses on rapid coverage of vulnerable areas. Along with fogging activity, teams also completed 29,518 comprehensive inspections across residential, commercial, and open spaces. These inspections were aimed at detecting and eliminating breeding points before the spread of the virus. Officials confirmed that during these visits, larvae were found at 54 open locations, while all commercial hotspots were declared clear after inspection. No positive larvae were detected at sites identified earlier for follow-up. Meanwhile, hospitals across the city have also reported encouraging updates. The number of dengue patients currently under treatment has dropped to nine, with most earlier patients having fully recovered and been discharged. Health teams continue to monitor case trends and share data with the administration for timely decision-making. Authorities said the city avoided a wider outbreak due to immediate response measures and coordinated field action. Daily tracking, rapid fogging, and routine inspections helped teams reduce potential breeding spots early in the season. Furthermore, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, said the district administration remains fully active in its efforts to make Islamabad dengue-free. He added that strict action has been taken where dengue SOPs were not followed. Several locations violating guidelines were sealed, and multiple individuals were detained during the campaign. The DC noted that public cooperation has played a central role in bringing case numbers down. Residents have been repeatedly urged to keep their homes and surroundings clean, remove stagnant water, and report any suspected cases or violations. According to him, the decline in cases is directly linked to citizens' participation in preventive steps. He further stated that the administration is confident that Islamabad will be declared dengue-free in the next few days if the current trend continues. Teams are monitoring areas with past dengue activity and increasing outreach where needed to ensure complete elimination of breeding sources.–**DNA**

Islamabad to get new footpaths, improved streetlights

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's aging footpaths and streetlight network are set for a major overhaul as the Capital Development Authority (CDA) moves ahead with a comprehensive restoration and upgradation plan for all sectors of the capital. The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Wednesday.Senior officials including Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza and DG Works were also present.

Under the plan, existing footpaths across sectors will be repaired, while new pedestrian routes will be constructed where needed Faulty streetlights and damaged poles will be replaced, and additional lighting infrastructure will be installed to enhance visibility and safety in residential and commercial areas. Alongside the pedestrian and lighting improvements, the wider project includes road construction and repair, re-carpeting, patchwork, installation of signage, lane marking and rubber speed breakers. Sewerage and drainage systems–along with manholes and kerb stones–are also set for rehabilitation. Officials briefed the meeting that surveys of all sectors and marakiz have been completed, and the Engineering Wing has finalised initial cost estimates after reviewing older neighbourhoods. Chairman Randhawa directed that work begin simultaneously in key commercial zones including Super Market, Jinnah Super, Aabpara, Karachi Company and Blue Area.–**APP**

Govt plans district-level early-warning systems to reduce floods

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik said on Wednesday that the federal government, in collaboration with provincial authorities, will integrate all disaster early-warning systems at the district and tehsil levels under a 250-day short-term plan, enabling the timely evacuation of people and movement of assets ahead of floods. The unified system will allow local administrations to respond "within a critical window of time" and significantly reduce losses during next year's monsoon, said the minister while addressing a press conference here. Sharing details following a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Dr Malik said the Prime Minister reviewed all categories of climate-related threats – from riverine floods and hill torrents to urban flooding and coastal impacts – and approved a national resilience roadmap covering short, medium and long-term measures. The minister said Pakistan currently has multiple fragmented early-warning systems scattered across different agencies, resulting in delays and confusion. The Prime Minister has now directed that all datasets be consolidated and displayed on real-time screens in the offices of assistant commissioners and deputy commissioners. "The first alarm will ring at the tehsil and district levels – not in Islamabad," he said, stressing that rescue officials and communities must get alerts early enough to evacuate before flood water arrives. Under the 250-day short-term phase, all damaged embankments, levees, drainage channels and floodgates will be restored. Urban drainage systems clogged or overwhelmed during recent monsoons will also be repaired ahead of time. He said recent floods displaced millions, washed away entire settlements and deprived around two million children of school. As part of the plan, temporary schooling arrangements will be established in disaster-hit districts so education continues even if families are displaced for weeks. A mobile emergency healthcare system capable of on-site primary treatment and urgent surgeries will also be deployed to reduce casualties caused by delayed medical assistance. Dr Malik said that although the climate ministry consulted provincial irrigation, agriculture and disaster departments while preparing the initial plan, the Prime Minister has directed a second round of consultations to ensure full provincial ownership. "Work on the ground has to be done by provinces," he said.–**DNA**

Allama Hisham visits ICCI, delivers inspiring address

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) hosted an enlightening session with renowned Islamic scholar Allama Hisham Ellahi Zaheer, who delivered a captivating address on the importance of ethical business practices, purity of income, and the imperative of avoiding interest-based transactions in Islam. Allama Hisham Ellahi Zaheer deeply engaged the audience with his insightful remarks, noting that Islam not only encourages business but elevates it to the level of worship when conducted with honesty, fairness, and responsibility. He stressed that halal income forms the foundation of a peaceful and prosperous society, adding that true blessings enter one's life only when earnings are free from deceit, exploitation, and interest. He urged the business community to adopt integrity as their hallmark and to view business as a service to humanity.

In his welcome address, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood expressed gratitude to the distinguished scholar for honouring ICCI with his presence. He said the Chamber places high importance on uplifting the ethical and spiritual outlook of the business community. Highlighting ICCI's strong commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), he noted that the Chamber has initiated regular Friday sittings dedicated to learning, spiritual growth, and the dissemination of Islamic teachings on business ethics, social justice, and community welfare. Sardar Tahir Mehmood also announced that ICCI will soon host a dedicated, in-depth session with Allama Hisham Ellahi Zaheer to further benefit the business community spiritually and morally.

He added that such sittings are designed to enrich the hearts of entrepreneurs and encourage them to align their commercial dealings with Islamic values. "A business community grounded in faith, fairness, and social responsibility becomes a true national asset," the President remarked, reaffirming ICCI's resolve to continue fostering such meaningful initiatives.

Police get custody of 12 accused

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday handed all 12 accused to the police custody who were arrested in the incident of a fight in the courtroom ATC Judge Abual Hasnat Muhammad Zulkarnain heard the case wherein the police had requested the court for 20 days of physical remand of the accused so that the investigation into the incident could be completed. According to the police, a case has been registered against the accused in Ramna police station under terrorism and other serious sections. After hearing the arguments, the court partially accepted the police's request and remanded all the arrested accused to the police for 12 days. A case has been registered against the accused in Ramna police station.–**APP**

Call for legislative action for Polio-Free Pak

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR) of the National Assembly convened a meeting titled "Polio-Free Pakistan: A Legislative Priority" at the Parliament House, Islamabad.

The meeting was chaired by the Convenor of PCCR, Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan, MNA, and attended by Parliamentary Secretaries Rana Ansar, Farah Naz Akbar, and Saba Sadiq; Member PCCR, Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, MNA; Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Government of Sindh, Mr. Muhammad Qasim Soomro, MPA; Draftsman, National Assembly, Tahir Farooq; officers from the Health and Finance Divisions and representatives of civil society organizations Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan underscored the urgent need for robust legislative measures to eradicate Wild Polio Virus (WPV1) from Pakistan. She emphasized that eliminating polio is both a constitutional and moral obligation, highlighting priority areas including mandatory vaccination, deterrence against vaccine refusal, state support for polio-affected children, and the formulation of a comprehensive Polio Eradication Act. She also reaffirmed the PCCR's commitment to unified action, strengthened oversight, harmonized provincial legislation, and nationwide awareness initiatives.

The National Coordinator of the Polio Program, Ministry of Health, Capt. (R) Anwar-ul-Haq, presented an overview of the current epidemiological situation. He noted an overall decline in Wild Polio Virus (WPV1) cases nationwide, with no cases reported since September 2025 However, he highlighted rising cases in South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which accounts for over 50% of recent detections. He also shared year-wise data from 2021–2025, identified five priority zones across Pakistan, and outlined provincial challenges and progress in the ongoing vaccination drive. Responding to the queries, Capt. (R) Anwar-ul-Haq emphasized the need to focus on South KP, Karachi.–**APP**

Briefs

Police conduct combing operations in Industrial area, Sangjani

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police carried out large-scale search and combing operations in multiple areas under the jurisdiction of Industrial Area and Sangjani police stations to curb crime and strengthen public safety. An official told APP on Wednesday that the operations were conducted under the supervision of SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza, while SP Industrial Area, SP Swan and SP Saddar monitored the field activities. Teams of ladies, police and CTD personnel also participated in the operations. Before the start of operations, police personnel were given a detailed security briefing. During the search operation, 627 individuals and 76 houses were checked. Police teams also inspected 17 shops, 35 hostels, 31 hotels and 7 guest houses. Furthermore, 48 motorcycles and 28 vehicles were checked, while 30 suspicious individuals and three motorcycles were shifted to the respective police stations for verification and legal procedure. The official said the primary objective of these operations is to curb criminal activities and enhance security in the surrounding areas. He added that the Inspector General of Police (IGP) has issued strict directions to conduct a grand search and combing operations across the district to eliminate crime and ensure safety.–APP

Safety steps urged as gas leak incidents surge in winter

RAWALPINDI: Rescue 1122 Rawalpindi has warned citizens to exercise extreme caution as gas leakage and fire-related incidents rise sharply with the onset of winter. Rescue 1122 spokesman Muhammad Usman Gujar, in a statement on Wednesday, expressed concern over the increasing number of accidents caused by public negligence, faulty gas appliances and unattended heaters, which, he said, could largely be prevented through timely precautions. He noted that most cases occurred at night when residents inadvertently left gas heaters or stoves switched on, allowing gas to accumulate in closed spaces and triggering explosions or fires. "The citizens must ensure that all gas appliances are turned off before going to bed and confirm there is no leakage," he stressed. Gujar advised that in the event of a gas smell inside a house, residents should avoid switching any electrical appliance on or off and refrain from lighting a match, as even a minor spark could lead to a major blast.–APP

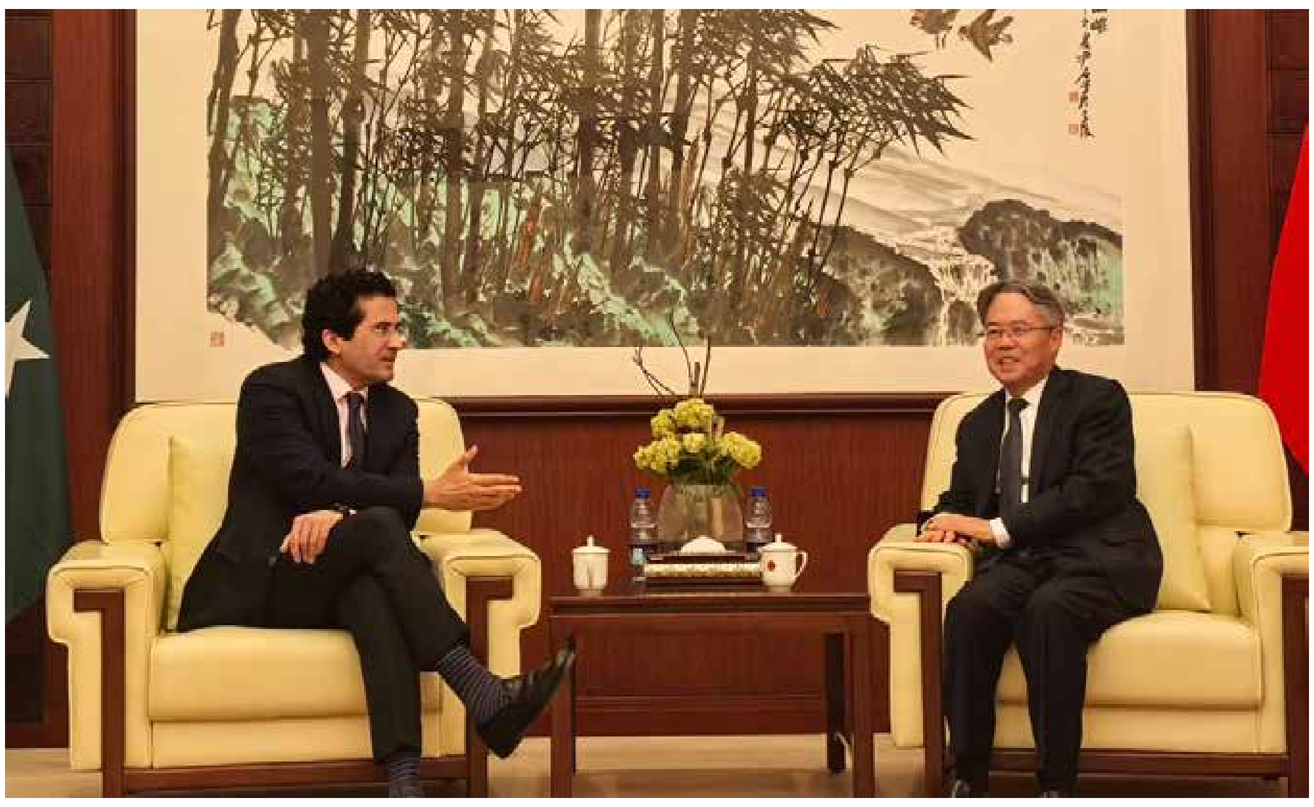
Shops, firms fined Rs192,000 for consumer act violations

RAWALPINDI: The Consumer Authority Rawalpindi has imposed a fine of Rs192,000 on various shopkeepers and companies for violating provisions of the Punjab Consumer Act during inspections carried out in local markets. The enforcement drive was conducted on the instructions of Adviser to the Chief Minister Punjab Salma Butt; Secretary Price Control and Commodities Dr Kiran Khurshid; and Director General, Price Control and Commodities Imran Qureshi. The officials have recently activated consumer authorities across the province to ensure the provision of quality goods and services to buyers. Under the Punjab Consumer Act, all retailers are required to display price lists prominently, mention manufacturing and expiry dates and ingredients on products, and clearly state their return-and-exchange policies. They are also bound to issue proper receipts to customers, bearing the seller's full name, address and details of items sold. A spokesman said the Rawalpindi Consumer Authority inspected various markets and found several retailers and companies in breach of these mandatory requirements. Fines totalling Rs192,000 were imposed and deposited under Head C02955 in the Punjab Government Treasury.–APP

Pak, China deepen strategic ties, focus on energy coop

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to transforming the all-weather strategic partnership into increased investment and shared prosperity, with a particular focus on the promising mining and energy sectors

SAIFULLAH ANSAR



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, and Jiang Zaidong, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan reaffirmed the unwavering strength of the Pakistan-China partnership and discussed avenues to enhance cooperation in the energy and mineral sectors in a meeting held at Chinese Embassy Islamabad. The discussions centered on mutual support, economic collaboration, and the shared vision for regional stability and prosperity. Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik extended a formal invitation for the upcoming Pakistan Mineral Investment Forum (PMIF) 2026. He emphasized that the mining sector is a priority area for Pakistan and represents a significant opportunity for deepening bilateral cooperation. In response, the Chinese Ambassador warmly welcomed the invitation and gave his assurance. "We will encourage the heads of our relevant institutions to participate in the Pakistan Mineral Investment Forum," the Ambassador stated. He highlighted that mining is a key area for China-Pakistan collaboration and noted the strong existing presence of Chinese companies in Pakistan's petroleum and mineral sectors. Chinese companies MCC , CNOC are working in this sector in Pakistan and China hopes to expand this partnership. Saindak and Siadak Mining projects are key chinese projects in Pakistan's mineral sector.

Minister Malik expressed Pakistan's profound appreciation for China's steadfast support during a difficult economic phase. He reiterated Pakistan's firm and principled stance alongside its Chinese brothers, affirming Pakistan's full support for China's sovereignty and regional stability. The Chinese Ambassador commended Pakistan's ongoing reform agenda, describing it as a welcome step towards sustainable development. "We are committed to supporting Pakistan's development and will continue to facilitate the economic development of the people of Pakistan through our cooperation," the Ambassador said. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to transforming the all-weather strategic partnership into increased investment and shared prosperity, with a particular focus on the promising mining and energy sectors.

Shaza to witness B2B MoU signings

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja arrived in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on a two-day official visit to attend the signing ceremony of B2B MoUs between Pakistani companies and firms from CAREC member countries. She is also scheduled to meet the President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to explore new avenues of digital connectivity, investment, and regional cooperation. The discussions will focus on expanding Pakistan–ADB collaboration in technology-led development During the visit, the minister will participate in the opening session of the CAREC Ministerial Conference in Bishkek. She will also present Pakistan's position in a high-level session titled "Soft Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity."Shaza Fatima will highlight the importance of regional digital cooperation, smart connectivity, and deeper digital integration to accelerate shared economic progress across the region.–APP

Magsi attends convocation at COMSATS varsity Wah

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Khalid Hussain Magsi, attended the Convocation of COMSATS University Wah Campus as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he termed the graduating students the bright future of Pakistan, stating that education is the most powerful asset of any nation. He added that Pakistan's development is deeply linked with modern research, innovation, and the strong intellectual foundation of its youth. The Federal Minister emphasized that Pakistan urgently needs the creative, modern, and scientific ideas of young people to advance the country in technology, economy, and global competitiveness. He noted that youth are the real strength of the nation, capable of driving economic progress, technological growth, and social harmony. Khalid Hussain Magsi congratulated the graduates and said that they are the architects of Pakistan's future. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to opening new avenues in science, technology, and research to help youth enhance their skills. The Minister urged students to utilize their abilities for national development and to represent Pakistan positively on the international stage.–APP

Students are the face of our country: Wajiha

The 35th council ceremony was presided by the principal of the college, Prof Fakhruzzia Kamal, while distinguished Principals Shazia Shamim Rizvi,Farah Khan and Mussrat Bukhari grace the occasion with their presence

DNA

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Education & Professional Training Wajiha qamar said that education is extremely important for female students in Pakistan because it empowers them to build a better future for themselves and their families. When girls receive quality education, they gain confidence, skills, and opportunities to participate in society and the workforce.

She was talking to media as in oath taking ceremony of students council held at Islamabad model college for girls F10-2 here on Wednesday. "Educated women contribute to the country's progress, make informed decisions, and help break the cycle of poverty. By supporting girls' education, Pakistan invests in a stronger, more equal, and more prosperous nation, and no doubt the students are the face of our country. "she added The 35th council ceremony was presided by the principal of the college, Prof Fakhruzzia Kamal, while distinguished Principals Shazia Shamim Rizvi,Farah Khan and Mussrat Bukhari grace the occasion with their presence. The students from the junior section presented a melodious song to welcome the honourable guests. Oaths were administered, and sashes were conferred upon Monitors, Proctors, Discipline Force members, and society representatives. The elected president, Zohra Anum Vice president Ayesha Shahid, was elected as the Vice President, Ms. General Secretary Nimra Naeem Finance Secretary Anaya Asghar, along with Secretaries of different societies, took their oath. Former president Ms. Fidak Zahra presented a lit candle to the newly elected president, Ms. Zohra Anum. A group of students presented a Kashmiri song and the college anthem. A cake-cutting ceremony was held, and the ceremony concluded with the national anthem.

Investment Minister Qaiser opens Pakistan energy expo

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, inaugurated the Pakistan Energy & Exhibition Conference 2025 (PEEC-2025) today in Islamabad, formally opening the exhibition with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. During the event, the Minister addressed the media and emphasized the government's commitment to strengthening Pakistan's energy sector and promoting investment. In his address, Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh highlighted that modern technology and strategic investment are key to ensuring energy security in Pakistan. He stated that Pakistan is entering a new era in energy policy, refining, and exploration, which positions the country as an attractive destination for national and international investors. The Minister underscored that strong partnerships with global energy companies are central to the government's strategy and that Pakistan possesses immense potential in the energy sector, including opportunities in exploration, refining, and downstream industries. He described PEEC-2025 as an ideal platform for fostering new partnerships, innovative solutions, and actionable strategies for sustainable energy development. Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh also highlighted the broader economic vision under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, stating that the government is taking proactive measures to enhance industrial competitiveness, upgrade refining capacity, improve energy infrastructure, and create a more conducive environment for investors. The minister noted that Pakistan offers investment opportunities in the minerals sector, is strengthening the foundations for export growth, is addressing investor security concerns, and is providing tax-free Special Economic Zones. The Board of Investment, under the leadership of Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, remains fully committed to promoting investment and supporting both domestic and foreign investors for a prosperous and energy-secure Pakistan.–DNA

Winter chill fuels dry fruit demand as prices rise in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: As temperatures continue to fall in the federal capital, the demand for dry fruits has surged sharply, turning local markets vibrant with seasonal buyers seeking warmth, nutrition and flavour. Freshly harvested winter dry fruits have begun arriving from various regions, boosting both market activity and consumer interest. Dry fruits have become a household staple during the winter months, finding their way into traditional delicacies such as Gajar Ka Halwa and Sohan Halwa, as well as bakery products enriched with nuts. Residents say they increasingly rely on these nutrient-packed treats to stay warm and energized. Despite a noticeable rise in prices, footfall in the capital's dry fruit markets remains high. Vendor Pervaiz Khan told APP that demand is at its peak, adding that consumers continue to purchase dry fruits for both their taste and their natural ability to combat the cold. He said prices have climbed compared to last winter due to increased cultivation and transportation costs. Many buyers cite the health benefits of dry fruits as the main reason for their rising consumption. Shopper Muhammad Ahmed described them as an ideal winter diet, while another customer said she primarily buys nuts to garnish and add flavour to Gajar Ka Halwa. The seasonal trend has also boosted sales of confectionery items made with dry fruits.

E-commerce platforms are witnessing a parallel uptick in sales, with online stores offering competitive rates. However, sellers say they also face challenges such as order cancellations and higher delivery charges. "Online selling is very appealing during winter," said one online store owner, "but cancellations push operational costs up." Suppliers continue to source dry fruits from across Pakistan and abroad. According to supplier Wazir Hashmat, pine nuts arrive from Balochistan, walnuts from Gilgit–Baltistan and Balochistan, while peanuts come from different parts of Punjab. Rising farming inputs and transportation costs, he said, are key factors driving price increases. Nutrition experts underscore the extensive health benefits of dry fruits, which are rich in nutrients, fibre, antioxidants and healthy fats. Regular consumption supports heart health, digestion, bone strength and reduces the risk of chronic diseases. Clinical Nutritionist Zahra Mumtaz called dry fruits a complete diet full of proteins and calories.

Chinese tech support spurs Pak's IT export to $386m

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) exports climbed to a historic $386 million in October 2025, marking a 17% year-on-year and 5% month-on-month increase, according to official figures. The performance stands well above the 12-month average of $332 million and marks the fifth consecutive month of annual growth, reflecting rising global and Pakistan's ex-panding international client base. Economists and analysts believe this impressive momentum is closely linked to China's expanding role in Pakistan's digital transformation, especially under CPEC Phase II, which prioritizes technology, connectivity, human-resource development, and innovation partnerships, Gwadar pro reported on Wednesday. As Pakistan works to deepen its presence in software development, global outsourcing, and cloud-based services, Chinese support has emerged as a central pillar. New digital infrastructure, enhanced connectivity, and strengthened talent pipelines created through Sino-Pak cooperation are increasingly viewed as key drivers of export growth.

Chinese tech leaders, including Huawei and ZTE, have played a fundamental role in shaping Pakistan's next-generation IT workforce. Through AI training labs, cloud-computing programs, and long-standing university collaborations, they have trained thousands of young Pakistani professionals in advanced digital skills that are in growing global demand. Talking to Gwadar Pro, Sohail Sarwar, a Pakistani IT specialist who worked with Chinese technology companies in Shanghai and Beijing for several years, said these initiatives are helping Pakistan overcome a long-standing skills deficit. "Our workforce is increasingly entering fields like AI, cybersecurity, and cloud services–areas where Chinese companies have consistently supported training and capacity building," he said.

Sarwar added that China's digital contribution extends far beyond training. "China's involvement is not limited to hardware projects. The new fiber-optic corridor, cloud-computing initiatives, and data-center development have given Pakistani IT firms the bandwidth, speed, and reliability they need to compete internationally." He highlighted the 820-kilometre CPEC fiber-optic cable from Khunjerab to Rawalpindi as a major breakthrough, improving data quality and significantly reducing latency–critical for software exports and global outsourcing operations. A major contributor to this transformation is China Mobile Pakistan (CMPAK–Zong), now one of the country's most active digital enablers.

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Saudi–US strategic reset deepens after Crown Prince's US Visit

IN a landmark moment for US–Saudi relations, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's recent visit to Washington and his meeting with President Donald Trump has accelerated and deepened a transformative strategic package between the two countries. Once strained by controversies such as the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, their partnership now appears to be entering a new chapter grounded in mutual economic ambition, defense cooperation, and a pragmatic understanding of past tensions.

During his US trip, MBS and Trump finalized a "historic" Strategic Defence Agreement, reinforcing America's role as a regional security enabler and streamlining US defense companies' operations in Saudi Arabia.

Notably, Trump approved a major defense sales package that includes F-35 jets – a long-sought capability by Riyadh. Reports suggest that Saudi Arabia could buy as many as 48 of the jets. On the economic front, MBS pledged to significantly increase Saudi investment in the United States, taking the figure from an earlier $600 billion commitment to nearly $1 trillion. This surge underscores the Crown Prince's ambition to deepen US–Saudi economic ties beyond oil – tapping into sectors like artificial intelligence, infrastructure, and critical minerals. Indeed, their agenda included agreements on civil nuclear energy cooperation, an AI Memorandum of Understanding, and a framework for critical minerals – each designed to boost industrial and technological collaboration.

Through these deals, the US aims to safeguard its broader supply chains and reinforce its technological leadership, while Saudi Arabia bets on diversification in line with its Vision 2030. This rapprochement carries strong symbolic weight. MBS's trip to Washington was his first since 2018, following the global uproar over Khashoggi's murder. The very fact that such high-stakes cooperation – including advanced arms sales – has moved forward points to a tacit, if uneasy, reconciliation. Analysts suggest that both sides have quietly agreed to put old grievances on the back burner in favor of strategic gains. While human rights concerns remain alive, there's a clear signal that they will not derail the renewed partnership. The US continues to voice support for nonproliferation and good governance, but geopolitics appears to be taking priority. Strategically, the alignment comes at a crucial moment: Riyadh seeks greater security guarantees amid regional volatility, while Washington is eager to deepen ties with a Gulf power that can act as a counterweight in a shifting Middle East. For Saudi Arabia, advanced US military hardware and promises of long-term economic engagement remain indispensable. For the US, securing Saudi capital, access to AI and critical minerals, and strengthened defense ties supports both its economic and security imperatives.

Local bodies elections — strengthening democracy at the grassroots

THE Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has finally announced that local government elections in Punjab will be held in Islamabad. The long-awaited decision has been welcomed across political and civic circles. Though delayed due to prolonged litigation and administrative hurdles, the announcement rekindles hope for a long-overdue revival of grassroots democracy in the country. The ECP's move must be appreciated—better late than never. Local government institutions are the foundation of a functional democracy. They bring governance closer to the people, empower citizens to influence decisions affecting their lives, and allow communities to hold public officials accountable. Unfortunately, successive political governments in Pakistan, irrespective of party affiliation, have shown little enthusiasm for devolving power. For decades, provincial and federal governments have treated local bodies as a threat rather than a necessity, fearing the loss of control over resources and influence. The truth is that no democracy can truly flourish without an active local government system. National and provincial assemblies are too distant from the daily struggles of ordinary citizens. It is the union council, tehsil, and district level representatives who understand local issues — whether it be sanitation, education, water supply, or community health. A strong local government network not only improves service delivery but also strengthens national unity by ensuring that citizens feel heard and represented at every level.

The delay in holding these elections has been deeply frustrating. Punjab, the country's largest province, has remained without elected local representatives for several years. The dissolution of the previous local bodies and subsequent legal challenges left a vacuum in community-level governance. During this period, development projects and public service delivery were managed through bureaucratic control, often leading to inefficiency and public discontent.

Now that the Election Commission has taken the initiative, it is imperative that the process remains free, fair, and transparent. All political parties must be provided a level playing field. The people of Punjab deserve a genuine democratic exercise where their vote can translate into visible change in their neighborhoods. The provincial government must cooperate with the ECP rather than create new hurdles or exploit administrative loopholes to delay the process further.

Equally important is the empowerment of the elected local bodies once they assume office. Merely holding elections is not enough; authority, funds, and autonomy must follow. Local councils should have the financial and administrative capacity to make independent decisions. Too often in Pakistan, local bodies have been reduced to symbolic institutions—without real power, resources, or relevance. The spirit of the Constitution, particularly Article 140-A, demands genuine devolution of power to the lowest tiers of government. Provincial governments must honor this constitutional responsibility.

Trump–MBS Pact: F-35s, $600 Billion and the End of Israel's Monopoly

Qamar Bashir

This mega-deal comes on top of an already staggering pipeline of U.S.–Saudi defence commerce. In May 2017, Trump's first term began with letters of intent for $110 billion in immediate arms sales and up to $350 billion over ten years. In May this year, his second administration announced a further $142 billion defence cooperation package in Riyadh, billed as the largest in U.S. history, spreading contracts across air defence, missiles, naval security and cyber systems. Add a prospective F-35 tranche of around $10–12 billion, and Trump-era arms frameworks with Saudi Arabia edge toward $260 billion in nominal value...

WHEN Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stepped onto the White House lawn on 18 November 2025, it was not just a long-delayed rehabilitation of a controversial leader. It was the opening scene of a transactional revolution: a Saudi-American bargain that combines hundreds of billions of dollars in investment with the transfer of the United States' most advanced stealth fighter to a second power in the Middle East. According to a White House fact sheet, Saudi Arabia has already committed to invest some $600 billion in the United States over coming years, spanning energy, critical minerals, technology and infrastructure. As part of this week's visit, officials say at least $20 billion of that will be channelled specifically into U.S. artificial-intelligence data centres and digital infrastructure, locking Saudi capital into the next engine of American power.

Alongside this economic flood comes hard steel. Trump has now publicly confirmed that Washington will sell F-35 Lightning II fighters to Saudi Arabia, ending Israel's exclusive status as the only F-35 operator in the region. Riyadh has formally requested up to 48 aircraft, a "multi-billion-dollar" package that U.S. officials acknowledge will transform the regional air balance. The precise price tag is still classified, but export precedents are revealing. Australia's F-35 programme, for example, works out to roughly $160 million per jet once training, spares, depots and support are included. Switzerland's deal for 36 F-35As is valued at about $7.5 billion, more than $200 million per aircraft when all ancillaries are counted. On that basis, defence economists estimate that a 48-jet Saudi package, with weapons, simulators, basing works and training, could easily fall in the $10–12 billion range, and ultimately cost far more over its multi-decade life.

This mega-deal comes on top of an already staggering pipeline of U.S.–Saudi defence commerce. In May 2017, Trump's first term began with letters of intent for $110 billion in immediate arms sales and up to $350 billion over ten years. In May this year, his second administration announced a further $142 billion defence cooperation package in Riyadh, billed as the largest in U.S. history, spreading contracts across air defence, missiles, naval security and cyber systems. Add a prospective F-35 tranche of around $10–12 billion, and Trump-era arms frameworks with Saudi Arabia edge toward $260 billion in nominal value, even before counting legacy sales and support. Not all of this will be delivered in full, but the political signal is unmistakable: Saudi Arabia is no longer just a big oil client; it is the premier customer of the U.S. defence-industrial state.

To grasp how disruptive this is, one must recall what Washington's Middle East doctrine was really about for decades. American strategists had two core goals: keep the oil and trade arteries open, and ring-fence Israel's security with a lattice of bases, pre-positioned stockpiles and compliant regimes. U.S. aid to Israel reflects that priority. Under a ten-year memorandum of understanding signed in 2016, Washington pledged $38 billion in military assistance between 2019 and 2028—$3.8 billion a year, including $500 million for missile defence. Cumulatively, Israel has received more than $300 billion in U.S. economic and military aid since 1948, making it the largest single recipient of American assistance anywhere in the world. Even today, Israel holds roughly $39 billion worth of active U.S. Foreign Military Sales cases, from precision munitions to missile-defence components.

That hardware has been used with devastating effect in Gaza since October 2023. After Hamas's attack that killed some 1,200 people in Israel, the subsequent war has, according to the Gaza Health Ministry and UN-cited tallies, killed more than 69,000 Palestinians by early November 2025, with total fatalities across Gaza and Israel now exceeding 71,000. Entire neighbourhoods were levelled, famine conditions took hold, and the word "genocide" moved from activist slogans into the vocabulary of UN officials, human-rights bodies and international courts. In much of the Arab and Muslim world, this confirmed a long-held belief: that American bases in Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and elsewhere existed less to protect host countries than to guarantee Israel's ability to fight, occupy and—when it chose—annex.

In that climate, the Trump–MBS summit is startling because it punctures the aura of untouchability around Israel's military monopoly. By opening the F-35 club to Saudi Arabia, Washington is no longer treating Israel as the only trusted steward of fifth-generation air power in the region. Instead, the United States is consciously elevating Riyadh into a near-peer, even at the cost of re-arguing Israel's "qualitative military edge" in Congress and within its own law. The Council on Foreign Relations notes that maintaining that edge has, for years, meant giving Israel the region's first access to new platforms and then compensating it when others received high-end kit. This time, it is Israel that must watch while another capital is courted with the crown jewels.

The strategic implications are far wider than one procurement line. Saudi Arabia is already deepening security ties with Pakistan, the Muslim world's only declared nuclear power, and has the financial capacity to buy nearly any conventional system it desires. The F-35 fleet would sit atop an ecosystem of imported missiles, air-defence networks and cyber capabilities, manned by Saudi officers but designed, trained and patched by a rotating cadre of American and allied technicians. In parallel, tens of billions in Saudi AI and tech investments will intertwine its fortunes with U.S. semiconductor fabs, data farms and software platforms. Economic leverage begins to flow in both directions: Washington sells arms and regulatory shelter; Riyadh deploys capital, energy coordination and political cover in a turbulent region.

For the Gulf publics who watched U.S. assets stand aside—or assist—during the destruction of Gaza, this shift carries another message. If the same American system that armed Israel can now empower a Saudi-led axis to say "no" to future adventures, the old equations begin to crack. Arab governments, burned by the realisation that U.S. bases were used primarily to shield Israel rather than their own cities, will be under pressure to tether any future U.S. operations tightly to their national interest. If Israel again contemplates annexation or large-scale attacks on neighbours from whose soil U.S. forces operate, they will not only face resistance from their populations but also from Gulf rulers who can now point to their own F-35 inventories and ask why they need foreign tripwires at all.

This changing geometry does not mean Israel is abandoned. Its cumulative $300-plus-billion aid record, the active $38-billion MOU and fresh wartime top-ups—at least $16.3 billion in extra military support authorised since October 2023—ensure it remains embedded in the American security machine for years to come. But it does mean that the story of a Middle East entirely scripted by Israeli preferences and enforced by American power is fraying. The Trump–MBS handshake, buttressed by the promise of $600 billion in Saudi investment and a prospective $10-plus-billion F-35 package, says plainly that Washington now prices Saudi Arabia not just as a client but as a co-author of regional order.

Critics will rightly point to the moral abyss: the Khashoggi assassination unresolved, political prisoners in Saudi jails, and an American weapons pipeline implicated in tens of thousands of Palestinian deaths. Supporters will counter that arming Saudi Arabia and tying its fortunes to advanced U.S. technology is the surest way to pull it permanently into a U.S.-led orbit and restrain more adventurist actors, from Tehran to non-state militias. Both readings may prove partly true. What is beyond dispute is that the Trump–MBS summit has fused money and metal on an unprecedented scale, producing a relationship where petrodollars, AI clusters and stealth fighters are all strands of the same rope.

For decades, Middle Eastern observers have complained that Washington was effectively "run by Israel," its regional policy captured by a single small state with a huge lobby. This week's choreography at the White House does not magically dissolve that perception, but it does crack it. A United States willing to put F-35s in Saudi hands, welcome $600 billion in Saudi investment, and accept some erosion of Israel's exclusive privileges is no longer acting as a wholly owned subsidiary of anyone. It is, for better or worse, reverting to something more dangerous and more interesting: a great power juggling multiple clients, playing off rival ambitions, and gambling that this time its bet—on Mohammed bin Salman, on Saudi capital, and on a re-armed Gulf—will produce stability rather than another cycle of catastrophe.

– Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister,
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former Press Attaché to Malaysia
Former MD, SRBC
Macomb, Michigan, USA

The Throne of Thorns

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

Bangladesh reflects a similarly fraught relationship between politics and the judiciary. The longstanding rivalry between Sheikh Hasina Wajid and Khaleda Zia has repeatedly spilled into the courtroom. Sheikh Hasina herself was imprisoned during the emergency of 2007–2008 on extortion charges...

THE political landscape of South Asia remains one of the most turbulent in the world, where the power of the ballot is often matched—if not surpassed—by the power of the courtroom. In no other region have so many former prime ministers faced such an extensive array of legal battles, ranging from disqualifications and corruption cases to imprisonment and, in rare but tragic instances, the death penalty. The phenomenon is so widespread that political observers describe judicial scrutiny of former leaders as not an exception but a rule, though nearly always seen through the prism of political rivalry and shifting power structures.

Pakistan stands out as the country with the highest number of former prime ministers punished by courts, whether through convictions, disqualifications, or other legal sanctions. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, who served three non-consecutive terms, remains the most vivid example. His 2017 disqualification by the Supreme Court in the Panama Papers case, not for corruption but for failing to declare an unwithdrawn salary from his son's company, set the tone for an era in which technical omissions could end political careers. A year later, accountability courts sentenced him in the Avenfield and Al-Azizia references, leading to imprisonment, though these verdicts were eventually overturned in 2023, allowing him to return to political life.

Imran Khan, too, met a swift judicial downfall, beginning with his 2022 disqualification in the Toshakhana case, followed by imprisonment for the illegal sale of state gifts and a later conviction in the Cipher case. Both he and his foreign minister were handed ten-year sentences for violating the Official Secrets Act, marking one of the most consequential legal actions against any sitting or former Pakistani premier in decades.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani was removed from office in 2012 for contempt of court, while Benazir Bhutto, during her years in exile 1999, was convicted in absentia in a corruption case later overturned. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi spent months during 2019 in jail over the LNG scandal, and Raja Pervez Ashraf endured years of legal proceedings stemming from the Rental Power Projects case before his eventual acquittal.

Yet the most somber judicial episode in Pakistan's history remains the trial and execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1979. Removed in a military coup and tried for conspiracy to murder, Bhutto's conviction and hanging have long been viewed as the darkest miscarriage of justice in the region. In March 2024, the Supreme Court of Pakistan issued a historic advisory opinion acknowledging that Bhutto had not received a fair trial, offering symbolic vindication decades after his death.

Bangladesh reflects a similarly fraught relationship between politics and the judiciary. The longstanding rivalry between Sheikh Hasina Wajid and Khaleda Zia has repeatedly spilled into the courtroom. Sheikh Hasina herself was imprisoned during the emergency of 2007–2008 on extortion charges later withdrawn. Khaleda Zia, meanwhile, received a ten-year sentence in the Zia Orphanage Trust case and has remained under severe legal and political restrictions ever since. The most extraordinary development occurred on November 17, 2025, when a special tribunal sentenced Sheikh Hasina Wajid to death in absentia for crimes against humanity linked to the brutal suppression of student protests in 2024. The ruling, delivered by the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh, cited audio evidence purportedly linking her office to military operations that resulted in more than a thousand deaths. It was a decision unprecedented in South Asian political history.

In Sri Lanka, political leaders have rarely been convicted but frequently investigated. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the world's first female prime minister, was stripped of her civic rights for seven years in 1980 after being found guilty of abuse of power by a special commission—an action widely regarded as political retribution. Mahinda Rajapaksa and Ranil Wickremesinghe have each faced inquiries into corruption, misuse of authority, and grave security lapses, though neither has been convicted.

India's democratic traditions have spared its prime ministers from formal criminal convictions. Yet even here the shadow of the courtroom has loomed. Indira Gandhi was disqualified by the Allahabad High Court in 1975 for minor electoral violations, a judgment that triggered the imposition of the Emergency. Rajiv Gandhi, long after his assassination, remained entangled in the political legacy of the Bofors scandal until courts ultimately cleared his name.

In Nepal, former prime ministers have often faced accusations but seldom convictions. Allegations against figures such as Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Girija Prasad Koirala, Baburam Bhattarai, and Sher Bahadur Deuba were swept into the broader context of civil war politics, foreign policy tensions, and institutional frailty. Cases were announced with great fanfare but quietly dissolved over time, illustrating a judiciary too weak—or too politicized—to pursue lasting outcomes.

Across South Asia, these stories converge into a familiar pattern. Former leaders are more likely than not to face investigations, arrests, or disqualification once they leave office. The timing of cases frequently coincides with electoral cycles, and the outcomes often hinge less on the evidence than on the prevailing balance of political power. Convictions are celebrated by rivals, condemned by supporters, and frequently overturned when the wheel of politics turns again.

The way forward for South Asia lies in reinforcing judicial independence and establishing transparent, consistent standards for public accountability, so that justice is neither delayed nor used as a political weapon. Until that transformation takes place, the courtrooms of the region will continue to function as extensions of its political battlegrounds, where the fate of leaders is decided long after they have left their offices.

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Thursday, November 20, 2025

Briefs

Pakistan pushes for enhanced regional connectivity: Dar

FROM PAGE 01

stability and mutually beneficial development. In his statement at the CHG Narrow Format (SCO members only) session, Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the "Shanghai Spirit" and set out priorities that included enhanced cooperation in connectivity, energy, transport linkages, logistics and infrastructure development. He encouraged member states to promote the use of national currencies for mutual settlements and called for the establishment of an SCO Development Bank, an SCO Development Fund and an Investment Fund. On regional politics, he underscored the need for a comprehensive dialogue to address the full spectrum of regional issues, reiterating that stability in Afghanistan remains imperative for peace and stability across the region. Addressing the CHG Expanded Format, the deputy premier reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to building economic bridges through tangible actions, emphasising greater economic integration through trade, investment and digital advancement.

Iran exploiting crisis; offering alternate lifelines

FROM PAGE 01

President Ashraf Ghani, who, sensing Pakistan's tightening border regime as early as 2014–15, accelerated efforts to develop alternate trade pathways. Pak–Afghan mistrust is not new; it dates back to the colonial era when British forces repeatedly failed to subdue Afghanistan in the 19th and early 20th centuries. With the emergence of Pakistan in 1947, old imperial rivalries morphed into new regional tensions. Afghanistan saw a new Muslim neighbour replacing the British on its eastern frontier, but without resolving longstanding boundary disputes. Despite occasional cooperation, the two countries have mostly managed their relationship through unceremonial, and often unfriendly, means. Reports from Kabul indicate that Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who oversees economic and trade affairs, has been holding back-to-back meetings with business leaders and foreign diplomats to navigate the crisis. Afghanistan, meanwhile, is finalising new trade agreements with neighbouring countries. The most notable shift is toward Iran, which is offering generous incentives to relocate nearly all Afghan transit trade to Bandar Abbas and other ports. With over half of Afghanistan's foreign trade already shifted to Iran and Central Asian states, the economic centre of gravity in the region is rapidly changing. The complete termination of Pak–Afghan trade would be damaging for both countries—but devastating for the Pashtun populations living along the border. Trade via Iran and Central Asia favours Afghanistan's northern and western regions, sidelining the Pashtun belt that has historically depended on commerce through Pakistan. Such disruption could fuel illegal trade networks, smuggling, and trafficking in the border regions. Rising unemployment and economic stress would undermine Pakistan's broader efforts against terrorism, extremism, and narcotics trafficking. In essence, the ongoing tension may serve short-term political narratives, but it carries long-term consequences that Pakistan can ill afford. The region is entering a new era—one defined not by closed borders and punitive policies, but by openness, connectivity, and economic pragmatism. If Pakistan remains disengaged, it risks isolating itself while its neighbours redraw the map of regional trade without it.

French Ambassador Nicolas Galey visits Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi

Ambassador Galey also highlighted the importance of Karachi's growing cultural engagement, saying that such exchanges were bringing global communities closer together and strengthening Pakistan's cultural presence internationally

DNA

KARACHI: The Ambassador of France to Pakistan, H.E. Nicolas Galey, visited the Arts Council of Pakistan (ACP) Karachi along with his wife, Camelia Galey, and the Consul General of France in Karachi, H.E. Alexis Chahtahtinsky. The delegation also included the Director of Alliance Française de Karachi, Emmanuel Bruerec, Chairman of Alhamra Lahore Arts Council, and Mr. Razi Ahmed.
President of the Arts Council, Mohammad Ahmed Shah, warmly welcomed the French delegation and briefed them on the council's ongoing cultural programmes. He also guided the guests through various sections of the Arts Council, where multiple artistic and cultural activities were underway as part of the World Culture Festival.
During the visit, Ambassador Nicolas Galey appreciated the council's efforts in promoting cultural diversity and international artistic exchange. He noted that the World Culture Festival, with its vibrant display of global traditions and performances, was playing a vital role in fostering connections among cultures across the world.
Praising the work of renowned French mural artist Chifumi, the ambassador said the artist's ongoing transformation of the Arts Council's wall into a colourful cultural mural symbolises the deepening friendship and artistic harmony between Pakistan and France. "This mural is a matter of great pride and a testament to the creative bond shared by our two countries," he remarked.
Ambassador Galey also highlighted the importance of Karachi's growing cultural engagement, saying that such exchanges were bringing global communities closer together and strengthening Pakistan's cultural presence internationally. He commended the Arts Council for hosting meaningful events that provide a platform for national and international artists to showcase their talent. At the conclusion of the visit, President Mohammad Ahmed Shah presented bouquets to the French ambassador, his wife Camelia Galey, and other distinguished guests as a gesture of appreciation.

Decent Defeat Chaudhary Sports in PCB Inter-Club Tournament

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Decent Cricket Club defeated Chaudhary Sports Cricket Club by five wickets in the ongoing PCB Inter-Club Cricket Tournament.
In a low-scoring encounter played at Rawal cricket ground, Chaudhary Sports were bowled out 71 runs in 21.4 overs. Mujeeb ur Rehman top-scored with 24, while Afzal Javed contributed 13 and Abdul Rehman added 10 runs. For Decent Club, the off-spinner Karamat Khan delivered an exceptional spell, claiming five wickets for just 15 runs, while Muhammad Nabi picked up two wickets.
In reply, Decent Club comfortably chased down the target in 11.4 overs, losing five wickets. Firdus Khan played a crucial knock of 38, while Samiullah added 14 runs to steer the team to victory. For Chaudhary Sports, Mujeeb ur Rehman took 2 for 13, while Afzal Javed and Fahim Aslam claimed one wicket each.

Regular cricket events, an evidence of Pakistan's positive image, peace: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Wednesday, said that the continuous hosting of international cricket events in Pakistan was evidence of the country's positive image, peace, and stability. The prime minister hosted a luncheon at the PM's House in the honour of the cricket teams of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe participating in the Tri-Nation Series. The prime minister observed that the passion, skill, and dedication demonstrated by three teams participating in the series were commendable, adding the players were representing their respective countries in an exemplary manner.
He urged the players to keep on displaying sportsmanship and mutual respect in the matches, setting a guiding example for the younger generation. The luncheon was also attended by Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Interior Minister and PCB Chairman Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, Sri Lankan High Commissioner Rear Admiral Fred Senivirathne and Zimbabwean High Commissioner Titus Abu Basutu. The prime minister also lauded Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, under whose leadership, he said the PCB was successfully conducting all matches of the series with excellent arrangements. – **Agencies**

Pak, Russia FMs express satisfaction at positive...

FROM PAGE 01

Russian counterpart on the successful holding of the SCO-CHG meeting. Moreover, he noted the vital role of both countries' leadership and bilateral institutional mechanisms in further strengthening the bilateral relations. In addition, both leaders exchanged views on wide-ranging regional and international issues. Taking into account the excellent coordination at multilateral fora, including the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, they pledged to deepen them further in the interest of both countries.

PTI says Imran...

FROM PAGE 01

peacefully" outside the jail when the police action happened. It added that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Minister Meena Khan Afridi, MNA Shahid Khattak and other party workers, including several women, were "subjected to violence and picked up by police". "What should be routine weekly court-mandated family visits, in accordance with Imran Khan's rights as a prisoner, are being used as a tool of oppression and violence against his family members and supporters," the party said.

Shehroz Fails to Win Medal in Islamic Games

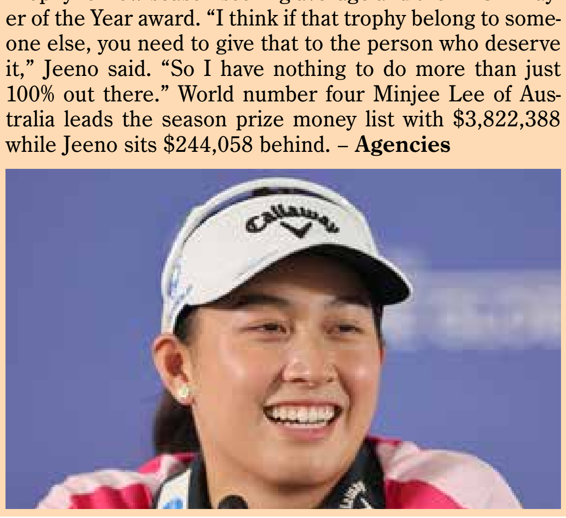
ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's high jumper Shehroz Khan delivered a disappointing performance in the athletics high jump event, failing to secure a medal for the country at the ongoing Islamic Solidarity Games Shehroz managed a jump of 2.08 meters, finishing in fourth place and missing out on the podium in Prince Faisal bin Fahad Stadium, Riyadh.
Uzbekistan's Amir Nagaev claimed the gold medal with an impressive jump of 2.15 meters. Turkey's Yasir Kuduban, also clearing 2.15 meters but with fewer successful attempts, secured the silver medal, while the athlete from Oman earned the bronze with a jump of 2.13 meters.
Shehroz's below-par performance has once again raised questions about the transparency of the selection process. The high jump trials for the Islamic Games, held in August under the supervision of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), were won by Army athlete Ahmed Faraz. Despite this, the PSB overrode the trial results and included Shehroz Khan's name for the Islamic games, even though he did not participate in the trials. This decision had already raised serious concerns within athletics circles prior to the team's departure.

No.1 Jeeno seeks repeat win at LPGA Tour Championship

Jeeno Thitikul Chases Season Hat-Trick, Record $4M Prize and Multiple Honors in High-Stakes LPGA Tour Championship Finale Against Elite Field in Naples, Florida

MIAMI: Top-ranked defending champion Jeeno Thitikul of Thailand seeks her third title of the season and the richest payday in women's golf at this week's season-ending LPGA Tour Championship. The $11 million showdown of 60 top players for a $4 million top prize at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida, features the 22-year-old Asian star, who has a triumph among six top-10 finishes in her past seven starts. Jeeno won the Mizuho Americas Open in May and last month's LPGA Shanghai event, but has been a runner-up four times this season, including in a fight for her first major title at July's Evian Championship in France.
"I'm super excited," Jeeno said. "It has still been really like amazing ride this year. Definitely ups and downs. Definitely had a lot of close ones but couldn't finish it. Cried a lot for sure on second runner-up (Evian). "But how often you fall, how fast you know how to stand up, so I think that's a really good life learning experience for me."
Jeeno, never outside the top-10 at the Tour Championship, is also in the hunt for the season money crown, the Vare Trophy for low season scoring average and the LPGA Player of the Year award. "I think if that trophy belong to someone else, you need to give that to the person who deserve it," Jeeno said. "So I have nothing to do more than just 100% out there." World number four Minjee Lee of Australia leads the season prize money list with $3,822,388 while Jeeno sits $244,058 behind. – **Agencies**



Pak Navy foils drug..

FROM PAGE 01

The counter-narcotics operation was part of the Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP) and in support of Saudi-led Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), it added. "The current apprehension of narcotics by PNS TABUK is the third consecutive successful interdiction conducted in the last [two] months by PN ships," the statement said.

Unbeaten Pakistan Shaheens defeat UAE in Asia Cup Rising Stars

Pakistan Shaheens Dominate UAE with Nine-Wicket Win, Top Group B Unbeaten in ACC Rising Stars 2025 After Fierce Bowling Display and Explosive Batting Performance in Doha

DOHA: Pakistan Shaheens maintained their impressive performance in the ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars 2025, defeating the UAE by nine wickets in their last Group B match at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.
Chasing a modest target, Pakistan cruised to victory in just 5.2 overs, losing only one wicket. The early blow came when Mohammad Rohid dismissed Mohammad Naeem for six off five balls.
However, Maaz Sadaqat and Ghazi Ghori ensured there were no further hiccups, stitching together a 50-run partnership for the second wicket to seal a comfortable win. Sadaqat delivered a blistering, unbeaten knock of 37 from 15 deliveries, featuring four boundaries and three sixes. Ghori supported him well with 16 off 12 balls, including three fours.
Earlier, the UAE struggled from the outset after being put in to bat. They lost three wickets inside the power play.
Opening batter Ahmed Tariq was dismissed for a first-ball duck by Shahid Aziz, followed by skipper Alishan Sharafu, who fell for three after being trapped LBW by Arafat Minhas. Sohaib Khan's brief resistance ended when Ahmed Daniyal removed him for two off 14 balls, leaving UAE at 15-3.

Sufiyan Muqeem added to the UAE's woes by dismissing Harshit Kaushik for five, before Maaz Sadaqat broke a rebuilding effort by removing Syed Haider for 20 off 19.
Daniyal struck again to send Muhammad Arfan back for a duck, while Mohammad Shahzad dismissed Yayin Kiran Rai for seven. Muqeem returned in the 14th over to remove Muhammad Farooq and Muhammad Rohid off consecutive deliveries, reducing UAE to 50-9. Sadaqat then wrapped up the innings by dismissing Muhammad Jawadullah, as UAE folded for 50 in 18 overs.
Muqeem led the bowling attack with impressive figures of 3/12 in four overs. Sadaqat and Daniyal claimed two wickets each, while Aziz, Shahzad, and Minhas took one apiece. With this victory, Pakistan Shaheens finished atop Group B with three wins from three matches, collecting six points and boasting a net run rate of 4.560. – **Agencies**

Mumbai Cobras beat Arabia Wolves 5-3 to spoil home debut

DUBAI: The Mumbai Cobras defeated home team Arabia Wolves 5-3 on Tuesday to keep their lead in the Baseball United season one standings and spoil the local franchise's debut. Star performers were Tushar Lalwani, who became the first Indian pitcher to win an official professional game, and Lou Helmig and Gedionne Marlin with their timely hitting. Akeel Morris had a solid 3.0 innings-pitched relief appearance. – **APP**

Briefs

PSX remains bullish, gains 1,291 points

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday witnessed bullish trend, gaining 1,291.15 points, an increase of 0.80 per cent, closing at 162,226.28 points compared to 160,935.13 points on the previous trading day. A total of 1,029.78 million shares were traded in the ready market with a value of Rs45.17 billion, compared to 1,545.92 million shares worth Rs38.85 billion in the previous session. Market capitalisation increased to Rs18.483 trillion from Rs18.376 trillion. Out of 484 active companies in the ready market, 194 closed higher, 244 declined, and 46 remained unchanged The leading ready-market turnover companies included WorldCall Telecom with 160.12 million shares, followed by Bank Makramah with 111.69 million shares, and Beco Steel Ltd with 78.67 million shares. The top gainers were Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited, which increased by Rs249.97 to close at Rs29,899.96, and Supernet Technologies Limited, rising by Rs95.54 to close at Rs1,978.15. On the other hand, the major losers were PIA Holding Company Limited-B, which declined by Rs781.95 to settle at Rs24,205.05, and Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited, decreasing by Rs71.65 to close at Rs9,388.33. In the futures market, turnover stood at 242.53 million shares with a traded value of Rs12.357 billion. The top volume contracts in the futures segment were WTL-Nov with 35.11 million shares, BML-Nov with 25.01 million shares, and KEL-Nov with 24.44 million shares._APP

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 01 paisa against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 280.66 compared to the previous day's closing of Rs 280.67. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 281.65 and Rs 281.80, respectively The price of the Euro decreased by Rs0.36 to close at Rs 325.13, from the previous day's close of Rs 325.49, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went down by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 1.80, whereas the exchange rate of the British Pound witnessed a decrease of Rs 0.43 and closed at Rs 368.90 compared to the previous day's Rs 369.33. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham stood stagnant at Rs 76.41 and the Saudi Riyal came down by 01 paisa to close at Rs 74.83.–APP

Gold price rises by Rs7,900 per tola

ISLAMABAD:The price of 24-karat gold surged by Rs7,900 on Wednesday, reaching Rs431,562 per tola compared to Rs423,662 on the previous day, according to the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs6,773, rising to Rs369,994 from Rs363,221, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold went up by Rs6,209 to Rs339,173 against yesterday's Rs332,964. In the international market, gold was traded at $4,092 per ounce, showing an increase of $79 from the previous rate of $4,013. The price of silver also registered an upward trend. Silver per tola rose by Rs177, reaching Rs5,422 compared to Rs5,245 a day earlier, whereas the price of 10 grams of silver increased by Rs152 to Rs4,648 from Rs4,496.International silver prices stood at $51.50 per ounce, up by $1.77 from the prior level of $49.73.–APP

Women must play an active role in driving economic growth

FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh said women are not only participants in the economic landscape but also a driving force behind innovation and sustainable growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries, Haroon Akhtar Khan, has said that the federal government is fully committed to resolving issues faced by women and providing them with the facilities needed to participate effectively in the economy. He emphasized that empowering women through small enterprises is a key government priority. "More than 50 percent of Pakistan's population is female, yet we are operating with only half of our available workforce," he noted. "Women must contribute actively to the journey of economic development."

He expressed these views while addressing the International Women Entrepreneurship Day event, jointly organised by the FPCCI and SMEDA on Wednesday.

The ceremony was attended by FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, SMEDA CEO Nadia, FPCCI Vice President Qurat-ul-Ain, Tariq Jadoon, Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman Coordination and President Hafizabad Chamber Malik Suhail Hussain, and several other dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh said women are not only participants in the economic landscape but also a driving force behind innovation and sustainable growth. He praised Haroon Akhtar Khan's vision and support for women's empowerment within SMEs and the broader business sector. He also acknowledged the contributions of FPCCI Vice President Qurat-ul-Ain in advancing women's entrepreneurial development. "Pakistan cannot progress while leaving half of its population behind," he said. "The future of our economy and sustainable development depends on the active involvement of women. Today, women-led businesses are transforming industries. Despite challenges, women entrepreneurs across Pakistan are breaking barriers, generating employment, and developing strong brands."

He added that FPCCI, in collaboration with SMEDA, is committed to capacity-building and training programmes aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs and enhancing their business skills. Addressing the gathering, SMEDA CEO Nadia reaffirmed the government's commitment to economically empowering women through the Small and Medium Enterprises sector. She said women could be empowered through improved access to financing and robust skills development initiatives. The event concluded with a unified call for greater inclusion of women in Pakistan's economic activities, underscoring that their active role is essential for the country's long-term growth and prosperity.

South Korean ferry with 267 on board stranded

SEOUL: A South Korean passenger ferry carrying 267 passengers and crew got stranded on Wednesday after running aground off the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula and a rescue operation was underway to bring them to land, the coast guard said South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, who is currently traveling in the Middle East, ordered a swift rescue of all on board to prevent casualties and details of the operation to be made public as they occur, the Yonhap News Agency reported.

Authorities were deploying all possible resources in the rescue operation, the coast guard said in a statement.

The coast guard believed there were no casualties so far from the incident and the boat was not taking on water, it said.

The 26,000-ton ferry was traveling from Jeju Island to Mokpo, according to the coast guard..–APP

Indonesia raises alert level as volcano near Bali erupts

SURABAYA, Indonesia: A volcano on Indonesia's main island of Java erupted on Wednesday, throwing ash and gas kilometers into the sky and forcing officials to raise the alert status to its highest level.

Mount Semeru in eastern Java, about 310 kilometers west of the tourist hotspot of Bali, erupted at 2:13 p.m. local time (0713 GMT), spewing what are known as pyroclastic flows, Indonesian geological agency head Muhammad Wafid said.

"The public is advised not to engage in activities within an 8 kilometer (5 miles) radius of the crater or peak of Mount Semeru due to the risk of being struck by ejected rocks," he said in a statement The national disaster agency said the plume of ash had risen as far as 13 kilometers (eight miles) into the air. Its spokesman Abdul Muhari said at least 300 villagers living near the volcano have been evacuated to two temporary shelters. _APP

Indonesia opens UAE-funded hospital

JAKARTA: President Prabowo Subianto opened on Wednesday the Emirates-Indonesia Cardiology Hospital, the first dedicated cardiology facility in Indonesia's Central Java province. Heart disease is the second leading cause of death in Indonesia, with about 95.68 deaths per 100,000 people. The hospital, which began construction in 2023, was built in Surakarta — also known as Solo — with a 417 billion rupiah ($25 million) grant from the UAE. It has three surgery rooms and a total capacity of 100 beds. Prabowo inaugurated the heart hospital alongside one of UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan's sons, Sheikh Theyab. "This hospital is a symbol of friendship between two nations, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates," Prabowo said during the opening ceremony. "A successful country is a country that is able to give decent healthcare service for all Indonesians. This is why I have instructed for the development of 66 new hospitals, and I have requested that all of them adhere to the standards of this hospital." Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said the Indonesian Health Ministry will also be working with the UAE to jointly train their healthcare workers. "We have received a commitment from the UAE that we can go there, and they can also come here so we can improve each other's capabilities," Sadikin said. "The hospital is funded by the UAE government, and we hope that it can be a cardiology center in Central Java." The Emirates-Indonesia Cardiology Hospital is the second UAE-funded facility in Solo, after the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque was opened to the public in 2023. The mosque is a smaller replica of the popular landmark in Abu Dhabi, named after the UAE's late President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan. It is a gift from the UAE president, who inaugurated it alongside Indonesian President Joko Widodo in 2022.–APP

Rival Libya parliaments agree to unified uplift program

BENGHAZI, Libya: Representatives from Libya's two legislative chambers signed a deal for a "unified development program" on Tuesday, the central bank said, in a step toward uniting the finances of the country's rival administrations. Libya, a significant oil producer, is divided between administrations in the west and east that have not had a unified budget in more than a decade. The Central Bank of Libya did not give details of the program, but development spending has historically been a major conduit for the billions of dollars in oil revenues the rival administrations have vied to control. The bank said the agreement "establishes a clear framework for unifying spending channels and allocating funds for development projects," adding it was "a proactive and necessary step to protect the macroeconomy from larger crises." The two chambers are the House of Representatives, or HoR, based in Benghazi in the east and the High State Council in Tripoli in the west, where the internationally recognized Government of National Unity, or GNU, is based–APP

Settlers rampage through village, torching homes, cars

TEL AVIV: Israeli settlers have rampaged through a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank, torching homes and cars in the latest in a string of settler attacks in recent weeks. The violence drew a rare condemnation from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other top leaders. Israel's military said soldiers and police were sent to Al-Jaba, a small village southwest of Bethlehem, after reports of fires and vandalism. The attack came hours after clashes between Israeli security forces and settlers defending an unauthorized outpost on a nearby hill facing evacuation and demolition. Israeli police said earlier that six suspects were arrested in confrontations during the demolitions, where dozens of Israeli settlers were entrenched and hundreds rioted. The Monday night attack in Al-Jaba was the latest in a growing wave of settler violence to hit West Bank villages, which has surged this fall as Palestinians take part in their annual olive harvest. The UN Humanitarian office reported that October saw the highest number of Israeli settler attacks since tracking began with more than 260 incidents causing injuries or property damage. That's on top of 2,660 settler attacks documented this year through the end of September. Six hundred ninety Palestinians and 38 Israelis have been killed this year during the uptick in violence across the territory. Meanwhile, flooding has added yet another layer to the humanitarian crisis gripping Gaza. The UN humanitarian office said 13,000 families were affected by the rain that began late last week. Abdallah Abu Quta, displaced to a tent with his family, called the suffering indescribable. "All night, we and the children were awake, shivering from the cold. We made a channel in the ground to drain the water out," he said on Sunday. Israel sweeping military offensive has throughout the war killed more than 69,000 Palestinians in the coastal enclave, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.–DNA

Poland to close Russian consulate after railway sabotage

WARSAW: Poland said on Wednesday it would close the last Russian consulate in its territory and urged EU allies to restrict Russian diplomats in the bloc's Schengen free-travel area in response to a railway explosion it blames on Moscow.

Poland, a major ally in Kyiv's fight against Russia's invasion, says two Ukrainians collaborating with Moscow perpetrated the weekend blast on the Warsaw-Lublin line, which connects Warsaw to the Ukrainian border The pair fled to Belarus, an ally of Russia, Warsaw says. Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said at a news conference that the first response would be to close Russia's last operating consulate in the northern city of Gdansk. Warsaw has previously closed Russian consulates in Krakow and Poznan over sabotage acts "It was not only an act of sabotage but also an act of state terrorism.–APP

Algeria says willing to back 'mediation' over W.Sahara

Tuesday's move comes after the United Nations Security Council on October 31 voted in favor of Morocco's plan for the territory, which would provide Western Sahara autonomy under the kingdom's sole sovereignty

ALGIERS: Algeria said on Tuesday it was willing to back mediation between Morocco and Western Sahara's Polisario Front in their dispute over the territory to achieve a "just and lasting" solution Algiers, which broke off relations with Rabat in 2021, had long called for a referendum on the Sahrawi people's self-determination, unilaterally backing the pro-independence Polisario. Tuesday's move comes after the United Nations Security Council on October 31 voted in favor of Morocco's plan for the territory, which would provide Western Sahara autonomy under the kingdom's sole sovereignty. Western Sahara is a vast mineral-rich former Spanish colony that is largely controlled by Morocco but has been claimed for decades by the Polisario Front. "Algeria will spare no effort to support any mediation initiative between the two parties to the conflict, provided it falls within the UN framework and is based... on the fundamentals of a just, lasting and definitive solution," Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf said at a press conference. The Security Council had previously urged Morocco, the Polisario Front, Algeria and Mauritania to resume talks to reach a broad agreement on the Western Sahara. But at the initiative of US President Donald Trump's administration, the council backed Rabat's plan, which Morocco initially presented in 2007. The resolution said "genuine autonomy could represent a most feasible outcome" under the plan to end the dispute. Morocco must now update its proposal to reach "a final mutually acceptable solution," according to the resolution. Western Sahara remains on the UN list of non-self-governing territories. The Polisario still demands a UN referendum on self-determination — promised under a 1991 ceasefire but never held.–APP

IHC dismisses Kingdom Valley's petition in favor of CCP

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has dismissed the writ petition filed by Kingdom Valley (Pvt) Limited against the Rs150 million penalty imposed by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) According to the CCP press release issued here on Wednesday, the Court ruled that the petition was not maintainable because the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) was now functional. The petition was filed when CAT was not operational due to the absence of its chairman. At that time, the Court had granted an interim stay on recovery. During Wednesday's hearing, the petitioner argued the case in detail. The Court, however, noted that the Tribunal was now available as the proper forum for appeal. CCP's counsel informed the Court that CAT had already taken up Kingdom Valley's appeal.–APP

Pakistan-Indonesia power duo wrap up high intensity Shaheen Strike-II

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan and Indonesia have successfully concluded their joint military exercise Shaheen Strike-II, a two-week training activity dedicated to improving counterterrorism capabilities. The exercise was held from 8 to 19 November 2025 and brought together specialised combat teams from both the Pakistan Army and the Indonesian Army. The drills officially came to an end on 18 November, during a ceremony attended by a senior General Officer from Pakistan as the Chief Guest. High-ranking officers from the Indonesian Army were also present, highlighting the importance both nations attach to their defence partnership. The presence of senior military leadership underscored the significance of the exercise in strengthening operational ties between the two countries. Throughout the training, troops from both sides displayed a high level of discipline, coordination, and professionalism. The exercise focused heavily on counterterrorism (CT) operations, especially in situations involving built-up and urban areas where threats are more complex. Soldiers practiced room-clearing drills, urban combat movement, and tactical planning for challenging environments. A major part of the training also covered counter–IED (improvised explosive device) procedures, allowing participants to refine their response to one of the most common threats in modern warfare.ISPR reported that all planned training objectives were met successfully. The sessions helped both armies share experience, improve interoperability, and learn from each other's operational practices. According to officials, such joint exercises not only improve tactical readiness but also build mutual confidence between the participating forces.

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Taliban regime must halt TTP support, says EU ambassador

"Pakistan's call for Taliban to stop TTP from operating on Afghan soil is legitimate," says Raimundas Karoblis

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The European Union's Ambassador to Pakistan, Raimundas Karoblis, has voiced strong support for Islamabad's stance that Pakistan faces real security threats from militant groups based in Afghanistan. Speaking to Pakistani media, the envoy said Pakistan's demand that the Taliban prevent the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) from using Afghan territory was "legitimate and justified."

"We condemn terrorism in every form," Karoblis said, emphasising that Pakistan's concerns regarding TTP sanctuaries across the border were grounded in reality. However, he also underlined that Islamabad must couple its security expectations with concrete progress on human rights and democratic standards, areas closely monitored by the EU.

Karoblis noted that the EU was encouraging Pakistan to sustain diplomatic engagement with Kabul, pointing to Turkiye's ongoing mediation between the two sides. Responding to a question about whether the Taliban were honouring their Doha commitment not to allow Afghan soil to be used against neighbouring states, he said he did not possess independent intelligence to verify compliance. "It is too early for a definitive conclusion," he added.

The ambassador confirmed that a high-level Pakistan–EU Strategic Dialogue is scheduled to take place in the coming weeks, led by EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar. The discussions will focus

on Afghanistan, the Russia–Ukraine war, regional security and Pakistan's role at the United Nations. Issues related to trade, migration and counterterrorism will be addressed through separate specialised platforms.

The upcoming dialogue holds particular significance as Pakistan seeks to retain its GSP+ trade preferences, which grant duty-free access to European markets in return for adherence to international human rights conventions.

Karoblis said enforced disappearances – historically concentrated in Balochistan but increasingly reported in Punjab and Sindh – would be among the EU's "top priorities" in the next monitoring cycle. The bloc will also review the performance of Pakistan's Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances. Commenting on Pakistan's recent elections – both widely criticised by the opposition – the envoy refrained from declaring them illegitimate but acknowledged shortcomings. "No system is perfect, but irregularities must be addressed so they are not repeated," he said.

He stressed that while the EU recognises the current parliament and government, concerns regarding electoral transparency remain under observation. Karoblis also avoided taking a position on the recent constitutional amendments affecting judicial powers, saying Brussels was closely following the debate. Compliance with UN treaties, he said, remained the EU's primary benchmark. Asked about former prime minister Imran Khan's detention, Karoblis declined to comment directly. "I may have personal views, but this is a matter for Pakistan's judicial authorities," he said. "Political pluralism is important, but it must function within the rule of law."

The envoy highlighted that the EU and its member states mobilised nearly one billion euros in support for Pakistan following the catastrophic 2022 floods, including an immediate one-million-euro tranche for emergency relief. Under the EU's Global Gateway strategy, he said, climate resilience and adaptation would continue to be priority areas for future cooperation.

Briefs

Nepra rate review could push power bills higher in 2026

CPPA proposes setting the FY26 benchmark between Rs25.69 and Rs26.69 per unit

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Pakistani households and businesses could face higher electricity bills next year after the country's power regulator on Tuesday opened a review of a proposal to increase the national power purchase price, a step that may drive up energy costs across the board. The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA), in its submission to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), has proposed setting the national power purchase price for fiscal year 2026 in the range of Rs25.69 to Rs26.69 per unit.

This benchmark will serve as a key reference for the tariffs ultimately charged to consumers nationwide, and business groups caution that the proposed level would entrench costly electricity and further strain economic growth.

Nepra Chairman Wasim Mukhtar presided over the public hearing, where the CPPA based its calculations on projected demand, fuel prices and the US dollar exchange rate. Member Nepra Rafiq Ahmed Sheikh criticised the submission as incomplete and deficient, questioning the accuracy of the data underpinning the proposal. Nepra said it would consult industry stakeholders before finalising any rate.

Shehroz Fails to Win Medal in Islamic Games

Ansar Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's high jumper Shehroz Khan delivered a disappointing performance in the athletics high jump event, failing to secure a medal for the country at the ongoing Islamic Solidarity Games

Shehroz managed a jump of 2.08 meters, finishing in fourth place and missing out on the podium in Prince Faisal bin Fahad Stadium, Riyadh. Uzbekistan's Amir Nagaev claimed the gold medal with an impressive jump of 2.15 meters. Turkey's Yasir Kuduban, also clearing 2.15 meters but with fewer successful attempts, secured the silver medal, while the athlete from Oman earned the bronze with a jump of 2.13 meters.

Shehroz's below-par performance has once again raised questions about the transparency of the selection process. The high jump trials for the Islamic Games, held in August under the supervision of PSB, were won by Army athlete Ahmed Faraz. Despite this, the PSB overrode the trial results and included Shehroz Khan's name for the Islamic games, even though he did not participate in the trials.

SCO can play greater role in promoting global governance

BEIJING: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is equipped and capable of taking the joint implementation of the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) as an opportunity to play a greater role in bringing the world under good governance, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said. Li made the remarks when addressing the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Member States of the SCO.

Leaders and representatives from SCO members, observers and dialogue partners, guests of the host country, as well as leaders of international organizations attended the meeting, which was chaired by Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, CGTN reported on Wednesday. Chinese President Xi Jinping solemnly put forth the GGI at the SCO Tianjin Summit in September, offering Chinese wisdom and solutions to help the international community jointly address global transformation and urgent challenges, Li said. – DNA

Air India lobbying to use Chinese airspace amid mounting financial woes due to Pakistan ban

Airline seeks govt help as closure of airspace by Islamabad is impacting its profit before tax to $455m per annum

NEW DELHI/HONG KONG: Air India is lobbying the Indian government to convince China to let it use a sensitive military airspace zone in Xinjiang to shorten routes as the financial toll from a ban on Indian carriers flying over Pakistan mounts, a company document shows.

The unusual request comes just weeks after direct India-China flights resumed after a five-year hiatus following a Himalayan border clash between the nations.

Air India has been seeking to rebuild its reputation and international network after a London-bound Boeing Dreamliner crashed in Gujarat in June, killing 260 people and forcing it to briefly cut flights for safety checks. But that effort is being complicated by the closure of Pakistan's airspace to Indian carriers since their diplomatic tensions erupted in late April.

For Air India, the country's only carrier with a major international network, fuel costs have risen by as much as 29% and journey times by up to three hours on some long-haul routes, according to the previously unreported document submitted to Indian officials in late October and reviewed by Reuters.

The Indian government is reviewing Air India's plea to diplomatically ask China to allow an alternative routing and emergency access to airports in case of diversions at Hotan, Kashgar and Urumqi in Xinjiang, aiming to reach US, Canada and Europe faster, the document said.

"Air India's long-haul network is under severe operational and financial strain [...] Securing Hotan route will be a strategic option," it added. The airline, owned by Tata Group and Singapore Airlines estimated the Pakistan airspace closure's impact on its profit before tax at $455 million annually – a significant amount given its fiscal 2024-25 loss stood at $439 million. – **Agencies**

AJK's 18 new ministers take oath of office; 2 advisers appointed

Nabila Ayub Khan is the only female minister in the cabinet who was elected on a reserved seat. No MLA elected on refugee seats has been inducted in the cabinet

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: A day after newly-elected Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore's oath-taking, 18 legislators from the PPP were sworn in as ministers for his cabinet on Wednesday. The oath to the 18 ministers was administered at Aiwan-i-Sadr in Muzaffarabad by AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, who was substituting as the acting president due to the illness of AJK President Barrister Sultan Mahmood. Mahmood reportedly could not travel to the regional capital due to health issues.

PM Rathore, as well as former AJK premiers Sardar Tanveer Ilyas and Haji Yaqoob Khan, were also present on the occasion. A large number of PPP workers and supporters, as well as several senior civil servants, also attended the ceremony.

The newly-appointed ministers are Mian Abdul Waheed, Sardar Javed Ayoub, Javed Iqbal Budhanvi, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Amar Yasin, Sardar Ziaul Qamar, Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Nabila Ayub Khan, Deevan Ali Chughtai, Malik Zafar Iqbal, Chaudhry Arshad, Chaudhry Muhammad Rasheed, Yasir Sultan, Sardar Muhammad Hussain, Chaudhry Akhlaq, Faheem Akhtar Rabbani, Rafique Nayyar and Ali Shan Soni. Of them, the first eight were elected on the PPP ticket in 2021. The rest had contested the elections on the PTI ticket and recently joined the PPP.

Nabila Ayub Khan is the only female minister in the cabinet who was elected on a reserved seat. No MLA elected on refugee seats has been inducted in the cabinet.

The portfolios of cabinet members were not immediately announced. At the oath-taking ceremony, a notification of the appointment of two advisers to the government was read by the secretary of services and general administration. Sardar Ahmad Saghir, whose mother Shahida Saghir is a directly elected MLA, and Sardar Fahad Yaqoob, son of Haji Yaqoob, have been appointed as the advisers. Shahida was also elected on a PTI ticket but deserted the party afterwards and joined the PPP recently.

The AJK Constitution legitimises the appointment of advisers to the government, but it is silent on their oath-taking. Nevertheless, an oath was administered to the two new advisers by PM Rathore.

Pakistan presses UNFCCC for stronger climate finance at COP30

Pakistan, she said, is working to draw global attention to threats to the cryosphere and has hosted a high-level event at COP30 on the issue

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has pressed the UN climate leadership for a major scale-up in global climate finance and stronger support for adaptation, as senior officials met on the sidelines of the COP30 summit in Belem, Brazil. In a bilateral meeting with the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Simon Stiell, Pakistan's head of delegation and Secretary for Climate Change, Aisha Humera Chaudhry, set out the country's updated climate commitments and warned that progress under the Paris Agreement risked stalling without substantial financial backing for vulnerable nations.

Aisha briefed Stiell on Pakistan's newly submitted Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), a revised roadmap laying out the country's emissions-reduction pathway to 2035.

The updated plan includes an increase in Pakistan's domestically financed mitigation contribution, rising from 15% to 17%, while reiterating that half of the targeted emissions cuts depend on international assistance. She said Pakistan would require an estimated US$565bn by 2035 to deliver its full climate ambitions, arguing that previous pledges had not materialised at the scale promised.

"We are meeting our reporting obligations and submitting our NDCs and transparency reports on time," she said, "but delivery on commitments from developed countries remains far below expectations." The Secretary underscored that adaptation must be elevated to equal footing with mitigation, particularly for states already grappling with worsening climate shocks. Even a tripling of adaptation finance, she cautioned, "would not close the gap, given how low the current baseline is".

Calling for additional, grant-based funding to support national adaptation plans and resilience programmes, Aisha urged the UNFCCC to ensure financial mechanisms – including the Loss and Damage Fund – respond more effectively to developing-country needs. She also highlighted Pakistan's fragile mountain ecosystems and the accelerating risks posed by melting glaciers across the Hindukush, Karakoram and Himalayan ranges. Pakistan, she said, is working to draw global attention to threats to the cryosphere and has hosted a high-level event at COP30 on the issue. She invited UNFCCC leadership to next year's Cross-Regional Glacier Resilience Summit in Pakistan. Stiell welcomed Pakistan's timely updates to its NDCs and sought clarity on its expectations from the ongoing summit. The meeting also touched on Pakistan's collaboration with the NDC Partnership, which is supporting efforts to implement national climate targets. – **APP**

PM directs early preparedness for next monsoon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed authorities concerned to begin early preparations to prevent any loss of life or property during next year's monsoon season and ordered immediate implementation of the short-term plan presented by the Ministry of Climate Change.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review measures to prevent monsoon-related damages, approved the ministry's short-term plan on the subject and stressed its urgent execution. He asked the Ministry of Climate Change, the Ministry of Planning, and the National Disaster Management Authority to work in close coordination with provincial governments for integrated planning on climate change.

He also called for preparations to convene a meeting of the National Water Council to carry out national-level planning on water management. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that, as a developing country, a substantial portion of its GDP was repeatedly diverted to counter the adverse effects of climate change – resources that could otherwise be utilised for development projects.

He said that unfortunately, Pakistan continued to bear severe consequences of climate change despite contributing almost negligibly to global carbon emissions.

DPM Dar due in Brussels today for Pak-EU Strategic Dialogue

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar is scheduled to undertake an official visit to Brussels from November 19-21, at the invitation of the EU High Representative and Vice President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas.

During the visit, the deputy prime minister will co-chair the 7th session of Pakistan-EU Strategic Dialogue, which is the highest level of institutionalised interaction between the two sides.

The Dialogue will review cooperation between Pakistan and EU in all sectors under the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engagement Plan 2019.

During the visit, Deputy Prime Minister Dar will also participate in the 4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum. A number of bilateral meetings and engagements with the senior EU officials are also planned on the sidelines of the Forum.

DPM Dar's visit to Brussels marks a significant milestone in Pakistan-EU relations. Pakistan remains committed to developing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial partnership with the European Union.

Punjab constitutes JITs to probe cases against TLP

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government has constituted 12 joint investigation teams (JITs) to probe cases against the proscribed Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP).

A notification issued by the provincial Home Department said seven JITs will investigate the cases in Lahore, whereas five will cater to those registered in Sheikhupura.

The JITs, which include representatives of the police, Counter -Terrorism Department (CTD) and intelligence agencies, will look into cases registered under terrorism and other serious provisions.

The development comes in response to the request for JITs by the police who have said that more than 2,000 miscreants belonging to the TLP have been arrested in relation to 75 cases against the proscribed religio-political party.

MBS visit sees landmark US-Saudi F-35, nuclear energy agreements

Trump designates Saudi Arabia as "major non-Nato ally," saying it will take military cooperation to even greater heights

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States and Saudi Arabia signed agreements on civil nuclear energy and the sale of cutting-edge US F-35 warplanes during a visit Tuesday by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the White House said. The two countries ratified a "joint declaration" on civil nuclear energy that "builds the legal foundation for a decades-long, multi-billion-dollar nuclear energy partnership" in line with "strong nonproliferation standards," the White House said in a statement.

In addition, President Donald Trump approved a "major defence sale package," which includes future deliveries of F-35 advanced American fighter jets.

The sale of the stealth fighter jets to the kingdom, which has requested to buy 48 of the advanced aircraft, would mark the first US sale of the advanced fighter jets to Riyadh, a significant policy shift.

The deal could alter the military balance in the Middle East and test Washington's definition of maintaining what the US has termed Israel's "qualitative military edge." Until now, Israel has been the only country in the Middle East to have the F-35.

The crown prince has been seeking a deal to unlock access to US nuclear technology

and help Saudi Arabia level up with the UAE and traditional regional foe Iran.

But progress on such a nuclear pact has been difficult because the Saudis have resisted a US stipulation that would rule out enriching uranium or reprocessing spent fuel - both potential paths to a bomb.

Trump said earlier that he could see a deal on civilian nuclear power happening, but added, "It's not urgent." During a formal black-tie dinner at the White House later on Tuesday, Trump also announced he was designating Saudi Arabia as a major non-NATO ally, as he hosted Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for a gala dinner at the White House. "Tonight, I'm pleased to announce that we're taking our military cooperation to even greater heights by formally designating Saudi Arabia as a major non-NATO ally, which is something that is very important to them," Trump said.

"And I'm just telling you now for the first time, because they wanted to keep a little secret for tonight," Trump said of the designation, which only 19 other countries have previously received.

Earlier, Trump hailed Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman $1 trillion investment pledge as the US president laid on a lavish welcome at the White House.

Trump moved to consolidate his growing bromance with the Saudi leader, who is at the Oval Office for the first time in seven years, giving him a parade of soldiers on horseback and a military flypast featuring F-35 jets that he said Washington would soon sell to Riyadh.

Trump opened their White House meeting with a stout defence for the prince's "incredible" human rights record. The heir to the throne then delighted Trump by announcing that he was increasing the $600 billion Saudi investment he promised Trump when the US president visited the country in May.

"We can announce that we are going to increase that $600 billion to almost $1 trillion for investment," Prince Mohammed said in the Oval Office. A grinning Trump asked him to confirm the figure, to which the Saudi royal replied: "Definitely."

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