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Pakistan values relations with the Netherlands

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Pak, Hungary vow to cement relations: Dar

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Briefs

Indian used Mukti Bahini as proxy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: India had used bloodthirsty terrorist group Mukti Bahini as a proxy to attack patriotic Pakistani nationals during Indo-Pak war in 1971. According to an eye-witness account of Muhammad Al-lauddin, a Bihari veteran of the East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces narrates the atrocities committed against the Bihari community by the Mukti Bahini. He said the situation was so horrific in Chittagong and we ourselves collected beheaded bodies in forty five drums. He added that numerous dead bodies were buried. He further revealed that the goons of Mukti Bahini prevented them to seek the help of Pakistan Army as soon as its troops arrived. Muhammad Alauddin recalled that General Tikka Khan recruited them into the army and gave them a brief training of three months. Talking about the internal situation, he revealed that the forces of Mukti Bahini, Shanti Bahini, Lal Bahini had established a complete network of terror on the one hand, while on other, India was continuously undertaking attacks.

'Israel's killing of Palestinians 'needs to stop'

DNA

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that he was deeply concerned about ongoing Israeli attacks that killed 33 Palestinians over the last few hours. "It's not for us, given our lack of participation as a guarantor, to say the ceasefire is holding or not holding ... Our concern is the fragility of the ceasefire," said his spokesperson, quoting Guterres. Stephane Dujarric — the spokesperson — said: "People are getting killed — Palestinians are getting killed — and that needs to stop." Dujarric said the main focus now is getting crucial humanitarian relief to the suffering people of Gaza after two years of war. "Trump's plan for the UN right now, this moment, is on delivering humanitarian aid. We are doing the very best that we can in using every space that is allotted to us to deliver that humanitarian aid," he added.

Pakistan, Lankan agree to continue close bilateral collaboration

BRUSSELS: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Employment of Sri Lanka, Arun Hemachandra on the sidelines of 4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum being held from 20-21 November 2025 in Brussels. During the meeting, both sides agreed to continue close collaboration bilaterally and at multi-lateral fora. The two sides highlighted the importance of strengthening the existing fraternal relations between the two countries through high-level exchanges.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.
— Editor

PIA: Swift, transparent privatization priority: PM

The meeting was further apprised that 75 percent shares of PIA will be privatized with a condition that the name and the theme of the national flag carrier will not be changed

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed that all stages for the privatization of the Pakistan International Airlines be completed swiftly and transparently. He gave these directions, while chairing a meeting pertaining to affairs of PIA, in Islamabad. The Prime Minister directed the authorities to devise a plan to increase the number of airworthy aircraft in PIA's fleet. He further instructed to take measures to ensure timely departure of PIA flights. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on PIA's privatization and a business plan in this regard. It was told that four parties have been pre-qualified for the privatization of the national airlines and bidding will soon be held. The meeting was further apprised that 75 percent shares of PIA will be privatized with a condition that the name and the theme of the national flag carrier will not be changed after the privatization. Regarding the business plan, the meeting was informed that the number of airworthy planes in PIA's fleet will be increased from 18 to 38. It was noted that, at present, the national flag carrier operates in thirty cities, and this network will be expanded to more than forty cities by 2029 under the plan.

Govt agrees on asset declaration of public officers

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: With the International Monetary Fund (IMF) describing the country's top anti-corruption agency, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), as a "political compromise", the government has agreed to the publication of asset declarations of high-level public officials in 2026 and their risk-based verification to improve the country's accountability and integrity standards against widespread corruption. According to IMF's Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment (GCDA), released by the Ministry of Finance as a structural benchmark of the ongoing \$7 billion loan programme, the two sides have agreed under a short-term action plan to "strengthen accountability and integrity among high-level federal civil servants by

Continued on Page 06

Afghan Taliban responsible for trade suspension, delay in border opening: FO

To a question, the spokesperson said that on the Iranian nuclear issue, Pakistan's position was principled and remained steady as the country recognized the right of a nuclear enrichment to the permissible limits as per Iranians' rights

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday reiterating its call for the Afghan Taliban to stop supporting the terrorist outfits, made it clear that the onus of the delay in border opening, suspension of trade as well as the execution of international connectivity projects, rested with the Afghan government. Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi, in his weekly press briefing, told the media that Pakistan had closed the border crossing and suspended all trade with Afghanistan due to Afghan Taliban regime supporting Fitantul Hindustan and Fitna al Khawarij. "The onus of delay in opening the border crossing rests with Afghan Taliban. Similarly, the projects like TAPI and CASA-1000," he said and reiterated that Afghanistan should also stop misuse of its soil for terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.

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Thirteen terrorists killed

DNA

RAWALPINDI: On 20-21 November 2025, thirteen khwarij belonging to Indian Proxy Fitna Al Khwarij were killed in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. On reported presence of Khwarij, a joint intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies in general area Paharkhel, Lakki Marwat District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij location and after an intense fire exchange, ten khwarij were sent to hell.

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JCP to take up SC, SHC and BHC appointments on Dec 2

Meetings to weigh elevation of IHC judges to SC, permanent appointments of SHC, BHC chief justices

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) will take up appointments to the Supreme Court and the posts of chief justice of the Sindh High Court (SHC) and Balochistan High Court (BHC) in a series of meetings scheduled for December 2. According to the issued agenda, the first meeting will be held at 1:30pm in the Supreme Court's conference room, chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) and JCP Chairman Yahya Afridi. In this sitting, the commission will consider Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Sarfraz Dogar, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb for permanent appointment as judges of the Supreme Court. The second meeting, set for 2:00pm, will take up the names of the three most senior SHC judges, acting Chief Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput, Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhor and Justice Mahmood A Khan, for permanent appointment as SHC chief justice. Likewise, the third meeting will be held at 2:30pm, in which the names of the first three senior BHC judges — acting Chief Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan

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FCC chief justice hopes court will stand as symbol of justice'

FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan said on Friday that he hoped the institution would "stand as a guardian of constitutionalism and an enduring symbol of justice for generations to come". The FCC was established under the recently enacted 27th Constitutional Amendment amid much opposition from the opposition and within the judiciary. According to government officials, the creation of the FCC is intended to reduce the Supreme Court's workload, ensure timely adjudication of constitutional cases, and strengthen the independence and credibility of the judicial system. "The creation of this court represents an important moment in

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NATIONAL DAY OF OMAN



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Hanif Abbasi Federal Minister for Railways, Ambassador of Oman Fahad bin Sulaiman bin Khalaf Al Kharusi and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of the Sultanate of Oman, at Islamabad Serena Hote. — DNA

Army, civil armed forces deployment for Nov 23 polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The civil armed forces will be deployed as second-tier responders, with the status of standby/quick reaction force mode only, the ministry added. The Pakistan Army will be deployed as the "third-tier responders (in-situ Quick Reaction Force Mode)". The interior ministry stated that the deployment of the armed forces aimed to support the ECP in ensuring the "peaceful conduct of the by-elections to be held on November 23, 2025". The ministry said that the troops have been "empowered by [the] Federal Government to exercise the powers under Section 4 and 5 of [the] Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 for the duration of employment".

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French commander reveals secret behind air combat victory of Pak over India

DNA

PARIS: A French commander, Captain Jaquis Launay, has revealed a new dimension that caused the shooting down of Rafale fighter jets during an hour-long India-Pakistan air combat between the night of May 6 and 7, 2025. The Indian government has never accepted that its fighter jets were shot down by Pakistan, but more and more confirmations are coming up from different parts of the world.

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Terrorists kill seven peace committee members in Bannu

The incident came only a day after security forces eliminated 30 Indian proxy Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists in multiple engagements across KP as part of efforts to eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country

SHAMIM SHAHID

BANNU: At least seven peace committee members have been killed in a gun attack by terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district, the police said on Friday. The incident, the police added, took place in Bannu's Hoveed area when the terrorists launched an attack on the peace committee's office at around 9pm. In the exchange of fire, seven members of the peace committee were killed, while one person was injured. Those killed and injured in the attack have been shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ). The incident came only a day after security forces eliminated 30 Indian proxy Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists in multiple engagements across KP as part of efforts to eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country.

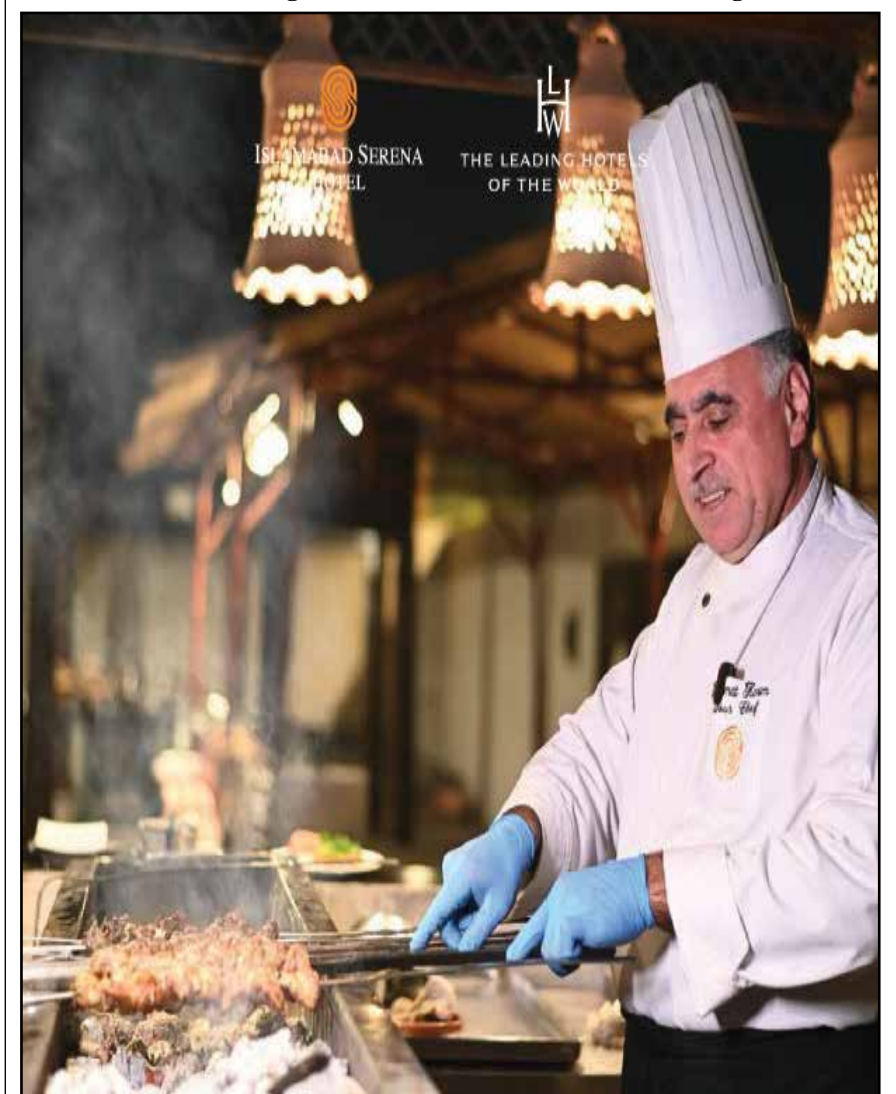
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PM condemns attack on Peace Committee office

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemned the attack by Fitna-ul-Khawarij on the Peace Committee office in Bannu, calling it a cowardly act aimed at undermining national stability. Expressing deep grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives, the Prime Minister prayed for the elevation of ranks of those martyred and patience for their families. He directed the concerned authorities to immediately identify

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Sindh CM, FAO partners in climate-resilient agri projects

Strengthening Resilience of Agro-Pastoralists in Sindh, a \$3.5 million project in Tharparkar and Umerkot focused on securing livelihoods and boosting the resilience of communities impacted by various shocks, including drought and floods

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah met with a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) delegation, led by Director of Land and Water Division Mr. Lifeng Li at CM House here Friday, to review progress on key agriculture and climate-resilience initiatives in the province. The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning and Development (P&D) and Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Agriculture Zaman Narejo and Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khoro and others. The FAO officials, including Asia Water Officer Waleed Hassan Abouel, Senior Water and Land Officer Dr Robina Wahaj, FAO Pakistan In-Charge James Robert Okoth, and Country Programme Head Amina Bajwa. Discussions focused on strengthening food security and adaptive capacity across Sindh through ongoing projects. The CM and the FAO delegation reviewed the status of major projects supported by international partners: Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP), a 48 million EU-funded project implemented in 11 districts (including Sujawal, Thatta, Mirpurkhas, and

Hyderabad). Its goal is to reduce poverty by strengthening MSMEs and agribusinesses in the horticulture and livestock value chains, improving rural livelihoods. Transforming the Indus Basin with Climate-Resilient Agriculture and Water Management, this \$47.69 million project, covering Umerkot, Badin, and Sanghar, is designed to transition Indus Basin agriculture toward a data-driven, climate-adapted model, benefiting over 200,000 households. Strengthening Resilience of Agro-Pastoralists in Sindh, a \$3.5 million project in Tharparkar and Umerkot focused on securing livelihoods and boosting the resilience of communities impacted by various shocks, including drought and floods. The FAO delegation particularly discussed continued technical assistance for the Transforming the Indus Basin project, a \$19.59 million initiative co-funded by the Green Climate Fund (\$14.9 million) and the Government of Sindh (\$4.69 million). This project, running from 2020-21 to 2025-26 in Badin, Sanghar, and Umerkot, focuses on three main components as follows: Enhancing Information Services, developing advanced tools like a Water Accounting System and an ET-based Water Management

System, and improving access to climate, water, and agriculture data via a national portal. Building On-Farm Climate Resilience. Training farmers and extension workers, promoting climate-resilient practices, and enhancing capacity for technology adoption. Creating an Enabling Environment, launching large-scale awareness campaigns targeting 6.25 million people, and providing policy support to federal and provincial governments. The Chief Minister praised FAO's technical support in strengthening Sindh's resilience to climate change and agricultural productivity, welcoming future collaboration in water management, land monitoring, and adaptive farming. Mr Lifeng Li reaffirmed FAO's commitment to supporting Sindh's agricultural modernisation through data-driven approaches and capacity building. To ensure the comprehensive finalisation of all components, both sides agreed to extend the completion timeline for the Transforming the Indus Basin project by one year. The meeting concluded with a commitment to deepen collaboration for climate-smart agriculture and sustainability in the province.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Kundi, Finnish Church delegation discuss interfaith harmony

PESHAWAR: A high-level delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House Peshawar on Friday. The delegation was led by Archbishop Dr. Tapio Luoma and included Rev. Dr. Kimmo Kierylainen, Director of the Department of International Relations; Rev. Laura Hovonen, Advisor on Interfaith Relations; and Rev. Dr. Juha Merilainen, Religious Advisor to the Archbishop. MPA Zarkawar and Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peters were also present on the occasion during the meeting, matters related to governance, administrative affairs, and the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa came under discussion. The delegation briefed the Governor on the Church's efforts to promote peace, brotherhood, and respect for humanity, saying that churches worldwide have always advocated harmony and compassion. Welcoming the delegation, Governor Kundi said Pakistan particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is committed to fostering religious harmony, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue. He praised the Christian community for its valuable services in various sectors, especially education, adding that an environment of brotherhood and interfaith coexistence prevails across the province. The Governor reaffirmed that the rights of minorities are fully protected throughout Pakistan. He also highlighted the challenges KP faces due to cross-border incursions and terrorism originating from Afghanistan, saying that all segments of society.—APP

Tahir calls podcast studio powerful platform for business community

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has formally inaugurated its official podcast studio and launched its new podcast series aimed at empowering Pakistan's youth and business community. The inaugural episode featured ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, who underscored the significance of the initiative as a modern and impactful platform for knowledge-sharing. Speaking at the launch,

Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the podcast series will serve as a valuable source for young entrepreneurs and professionals by providing them access to the real-world experiences, insights, and success principles of accomplished business leaders. He noted that in a rapidly evolving economic environment, authentic guidance and direction are essential for youth and this podcast aims to bridge that gap effectively. The ICCI President stated that the series will feature prominent senior businessmen, industrial leaders, and

distinguished figures from various fields, who will share their journeys, challenges, and key lessons that shaped their success. Highlighting the concept of introducing Pakistan's "economic heroes," he said the podcast will showcase individuals who have made remarkable contributions to the national economy through resilience, innovation, and leadership. He said that the initiative reflects ICCI's commitment to promoting a progressive mindset, fostering innovation, and supporting professional development across the business sector.

Heritage conservation training held

PESHAWAR: A landmark three-week heritage conservation training was held in Peshawar under the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Heritage Skills Training Programme, organised by the Commonwealth Heritage Forum UK (CHF) with support from the Vinehill Trust and in collaboration with the DG Archaeology & Museums, Govt of KP. The first of its kind in the region, the programme brought together expert trainers from the UK and Pakistan for an intensive blend of theory, fieldwork, and specialist lectures. With archaeologists, architects, engineers, artists and heritage practitioners in attendance, the three modules equipped participants with a

holistic and multidisciplinary foundation in conservation practice. The opening ceremony at the Peshawar Museum was attended by James Hampson, Director British Council Pakistan, and also included a message from British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, Philip Davies OBE, Founder and Chief Executive of CHF and one of UK's top heritage experts, highlighted the shared heritage of the UK and Pakistan and spoke about Pakistan's emerging role as a regional hub for heritage skills across the Commonwealth. He noted that the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Commonwealth Heritage Skills Training Programme, supporting conservation training and

practical projects at heritage sites and buildings at risk worldwide, is the largest heritage programme in the Commonwealth's history. It was especially noteworthy that specialists from Aga Khan Cultural Services-Pakistan (AKCSP) participated and delivered expert lectures, marking an important new engagement in KP's heritage landscape. Presentations by Wajahat Ali and Zeina Naseer highlighted AKCSP's pioneering work from community-centred development in the Walled City of Lahore and the conservation of Shigar Fort and Khaplu Palace in Gilgit-Baltistan to the restoration of Lahore Fort's Picture Wall and Sheesh Mahal. The programme comprised three intensive, week-long modules, delivered respectively by Ed Morton (conservation engineering), Muhammad Tahir Khattak (documentation and adaptive reuse), and Dr Zahra Hussain (ethics and inclusive practice).—APP

Efforts afoot for protection, welfare of children: Marriyum

LAHORE: Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that the provincial government is taking historic steps for the protection, welfare, and rights of children, making Punjab a national leader in child-focused reforms. Addressing the central ceremony of World Children's Day at the Punjab Assembly on Friday, she announced that Punjab has become the first province in Pakistan to formally establish a comprehensive Child Protection Bureau Policy aimed at safeguarding vulnerable children. Marriyum Aurangzeb stressed that ensuring the mental, moral, and social development of children is a shared responsibility of the entire society. She said child protection cannot be confined to one department, adding that only when every citizen acknowledges their role in safeguarding children's rights can the province guarantee a safe, healthy, and dignified future for the next generation. The senior minister highlighted major initiatives being carried out under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, including the allocation of Rs. 145 billion for education, establishment of autism schools in every district, nutrition programs for stunted children, and expanded maternal and child health services. She said Maryam Nawaz has emerged as a champion of humanitarian programs, and her child-centered reforms are becoming a model for the rest of the country. Officials revealed that the Punjab government has rescued over 10,000 destitute children from streets and public spaces, while 240 children are currently receiving full government sponsorship to ensure their safety, proper upbringing.—APP

200 new micro-schools to accelerate digital learning in Sindh

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, addressing the Sindh Education Foundation programme of the Accelerated Digital Learning Programme (ADLP), stated that approximately 22.6 million children are out of school nationwide, with 7 million in Sindh alone, the number of out-of-school children in the country surpasses the total populations of many countries globally. "This is why the Sindh government, in collaboration with the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF), has decided to launch phase II of the Accelerated Digital Learning Programme (ADLP), a major expansion of its technology-enabled learning initiative aimed at underserved and out-of-school children across the

province. The decision follows the strong performance of the ADLP pilot phase, launched in June 2023 in partnership with the Teach the World Foundation (TTWF). The chief minister highlighted that Pakistan ranks fourth among South Asian nations in terms of GDP and literacy, which underscores the urgent need for innovative educational solutions. The ADLP, launched in August 2023 and approved by the Sindh government, is a pioneering initiative by the Sindh Education Foundation in partnership with Teach the World Foundation. The programme utilises digital technology to extend quality education to out-of-school children, especially in remote and underserved communities,

Murad Shah explained. Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah offered private organisations and individuals the opportunity: The Teach the World school can accommodate 100 students. If any private organisation or individual adopts a school, the government will match it and establish a second school in their name. The launching ceremony, held at CM House, was attended by Minister of Education Syed Sardar Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary of Education Zahid Abbasi, MD SEF Ganhwar Leghari, Shafiq Khan and Arshad Anis of Teach the World, Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Haji Nazim, Stephen Lyon, Imam Jahangir, Dr Kalbe Abbas, Javed Jabbar, Sultana Siddiqui, Zubair Chhaya, and others.—APP

Cheques distributed for marriage assistance

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: District Zakat Committee Dera Ismail Khan distributed a total of 75 cheques among deserving beneficiaries under various Zakat-funded welfare initiatives aimed at supporting underprivileged families and promoting girls' education. The assistance included dowry support for deserving couples and educational scholarships for female students belonging to low-income households. The District Zakat Committee provided Rs200,000 each to 25 deserving couples for marriage assistance to help them begin their new lives with dignity. Similarly, scholarships were awarded to more than 50 school and college-going female students to ease their educational expenses and ensure continuity of their academic pursuits. These initiatives reflect the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's commitment to people-friendly policies and the direct provision of financial relief to vulnerable segments of society. Speaking at the ceremony, Chairman District Zakat Committee Aamir Pirzada said the relief activities were being implemented under the special directives of former chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur. He noted that a transparent and merit-based system had been adopted to identify the most deserving families for Zakat assistance. He added that the committee was committed to expanding welfare efforts in the future, particularly in sectors related to social protection and the promotion of girls' education across the district. The chief guest, the wife of Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, distributed cheques among the beneficiaries. She lauded the coordinated efforts of the District Zakat Committee, district administration, and local Zakat committees for ensuring timely relief to deserving families. She stressed that supporting underprivileged women, empowering students, and strengthening vulnerable households were among the foremost priorities of the provincial leadership. She expressed hope that the assistance would help beneficiaries move towards a more secure and empowered future. Speaking to media, a scholarship recipient said the support had come at a crucial time. "My parents were struggling to manage my education expenses. This scholarship has lifted a huge burden and will allow me to continue my studies with confidence," she said, expressing gratitude to the district administration. Another beneficiary, a young woman who received Rs200,000 for her marriage, told APP that the assistance had brought great relief to her family. "We did not have the means to arrange basic items for my wedding.—APP

Iran did not breach nuclear non-proliferation treaty

DNA

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, organised a roundtable discussion titled "Iran's Rights and Obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime" on 19 November 2025. As an independent think tank, CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in foreign relations in its wider context. The event was attended by academics, intellectuals, and domain experts. Ms Maheera Munir, a Research Assistant at CASS Lahore, delivered the opening address. The speaker, Mr Sameer Ali Khan, a renowned nuclear and strategic affairs expert, offered an in-depth assessment of

Iran's legal entitlements within the non-proliferation

regime. He asserted that Iran did not breach the NPT; it

needed for consistent international norms and serious reforms in the NPT to prevent further destabilisation. In his closing remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman

(Retd), President of CASS Lahore, underlined the challenges facing the global non-proliferation regime amid widening geopolitical divisions. He added that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action's (JCPOA) expiry in October 2025 marks a critical juncture. He noted that the global nuclear non-proliferation regime is a public good. For the NPT to survive as a viable instrument of global security, it must be defended impartially, enforced universally, and anchored in genuine political will. The roundtable concluded with a lively interactive session. It highlighted the critical importance of the non-proliferation regime in maintaining international stability and security. The participants appreciated CASS Lahore's initiative of hosting this engaging and thought-provoking discussion.



tion framework. He delved into the NPT, which was designed to limit nuclear weapons to P5 states and prevent horizontal prolifer-

ation. He unveiled the pre-existing cracks and loopholes. He discussed in detail the long-term effects of US and Israeli strikes on Iranian

national norms and serious reforms in the NPT to prevent further destabilisation. In his closing remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria
National Day

Nov 04/Italy
Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation
Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia
National Day

Nov 11/Poland
Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan
Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium
Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil
Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of
Northern Cyprus
National Day

Nov 18/Oman
National Day

Nov 18/Morocco
Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh
Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon
Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname
National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania
National Day

Nov 28/Albania
Flags Day



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

Water Tank	
Islamabad.....	0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs meeting on matters related to Pakistan International Airlines on Thursday.

Tarar, Netherlands envoy discuss collaborations in various fields

Both sides expressed their intention to maintain close coordination and constructive dialogue to further advance the promotion and protection of human rights in Pakistan. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of their commitment to deeper collaboration on shared priorities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Robert-Jan Siebert, paid a courtesy call on the Federal Minister for Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar. The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration and exchanging views on ongoing initiatives aimed at promoting and protecting human rights in Pakistan. The Federal Minister welcomed the Ambassador and appreciated the Netherlands' continued engagement and support for Pa-

kistan's human rights priorities. Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to advancing equality, inclusion, and the welfare of all citizens, said a press release. The Ambassador acknowledged Pakistan's efforts in implementing its human rights agenda and commended the government's commitment to constitutional guarantees, including freedom of religion and belief. The Minister highlighted Pakistan's diverse and inclusive society, where all religious communities enjoy constitutional protection. He also briefed the Ambassador on recent legislative advancements, including the in-

troduction of the National Commission for Minorities Bill, a key initiative to safeguard minority rights, promote interfaith harmony, and ensure the full participation of minority communities in national development. The Minister also outlined progress under the National Action Plan on Human Rights, covering policy reforms, improved access to justice, implementation of international commitments and the strengthening of human rights institutions. He highlighted the important role of independent bodies such as the National Commission for Human Rights

(NCHR), National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), and National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC). Efforts to protect vulnerable groups such as women, children, senior citizens, transgender persons, and persons with disabilities were also discussed. Both sides expressed their intention to maintain close coordination and constructive dialogue to further advance the promotion and protection of human rights in Pakistan. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of their commitment to deeper collaboration on shared priorities.

ICRC,PRCS host moot to restore family links

ISLAMABAD: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in collaboration with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) hosted the Global Conference on Restoring Family Links at the PRCS National Headquarters in Islamabad. Following the successful editions held in 2021 and 2023, the 2025 conference brought together eight families from across Pakistan whose relatives have become separated abroad because of international migration, mainly towards Europe. The event aimed to provide these families a safe space to connect, share their experiences, and strengthen mutual support through a global solidarity network. Organized by the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency together with National Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies around the world, the conference serves as a unique international platform for families who have lost contact with loved ones due to natural disasters, international migration, or other humanitarian emergencies. This year, several conference hubs are being hosted simultaneously by Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies globally, bringing together hundreds of families from diverse contexts to share their stories and learn from each other. In her remarks, Chairperson PRCS, Mrs Farzha Naek said that ICRC and PRCS continue to work together under the Restoring Family Links (RFL) program to help people separated from their families following migration, natural disasters, or other humanitarian crises. The

program is part of a global effort by the Family Links Network to locate and reconnect separated relatives. The three-day hybrid conference features a mix of online and in-person sessions, including discussions with experts and families, sharing circles, and presentations on psychosocial support and coping strategies. Participants from Pakistan are connecting virtually with families from around the world, learning how others cope with uncertainty, and exploring the support services available to them. Families seeking to reconnect with relatives abroad, especially in Europe, can visit www.trace-theface.org an online platform that helps people look for their loved ones.—DNA

Gilani visits Mahmood Group of Textile Mills

ISLAMABAD/MULTAN: Acting President of Pakistan Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani visited Mahmood Group of Textile Mills in Multan Industrial Estate. During the visit, the head of the group, Khawaja Muhammad Anees, briefed him on the state-of-the-art machinery, production processes, labour welfare programs, and ongoing export orders. Khawaja Muhammad Anees informed the Acting President that Mahmood Group is producing world-class textile products and is adopting sustainable industrial practices through the use of modern technology. The Acting President appreciated the group's industrial contributions and its role in strengthening Pakistan's exports. A detailed discussion was also held on the overall situation of the textile sector, cotton production, and related agricultural matters. Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani stated that textiles form the backbone of Pakistan's exports, while cotton remains the foundation of the textile industry.—APP

Ahsan stresses quality edu with focus on character building

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday stressed the need to provide quality education to children, with a particular focus on character building and training, enabling them to compete in the modern era and play their due role in national development. Addressing the annual Teacher Development Conference (TDC-2025) here, the minister said education was not merely the transfer of content but equally a process of shaping children's personalities, values and sense of responsibility. Recalling his own childhood, he said earlier generations grew up reading 'Taleem-o-Tarbiyat', a magazine that blended learning with moral guidance, adding that a balance must be restored in Pakistan's education system. Expressing concern that many children were no longer familiar with their literary, historical and cultural heritage, he said teaching was "a holistic effort" and meaningful reforms required a national commitment to restoring identity and cultural awareness among the youth. Ahsan Iqbal said that despite possessing intelligence, skills, honesty and resources comparable to successful nations, Pakistan had repeatedly fallen behind due to the absence of an enabling environment. "Like a seed that cannot grow without stability, moisture and the right season, even the best human potential cannot flourish without peace and continuity," he observed. He underlined that all successful countries ensured four fundamentals like peace, political stability, continuity of policies for at least a decade, and long-term economic direction. He cited China, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea and Bangladesh as examples where leadership tenures spanning 10 to 30 years allowed policy outcomes to materialize. Reflecting on Pakistan's own history, he said the country's developmental take-off periods in the 1960s, early 1990s and 2013–2018 were repeatedly disrupted due to instability and political reversals. He recalled the launch of Vision 2010 in 1997 and Vision 2025 in 2013 by the PML-N government, both derailed before delivering their full impact. "It is not that we lack planning or competence; it is instability and policy discontinuity that have denied us the dividends," he remarked. He said that after the economic turbulence of recent years, Pakistan was now witnessing improvement across various indicators, citing that inflation which stood at 38 percent three years ago had fallen to around 4.5 percent, the stock market had risen from 80,000 points to 170,000, and remittances had climbed to record levels. These trends, he added, had restored international confidence in Pakistan. Urging the nation not to repeat past mistakes, he said, "This is the fourth opportunity Allah has given us. We must not crash this take-off like the previous three." Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan's strong and unified response during the successful Marka-e-Haq had significantly enhanced the country's standing, adding that the episode had elevated Pakistan's prestige globally, with the world now viewing it as a strong and dignified nation.—DNA

Call for gender-responsive policies

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Ume Laila Azhar, has called for gender-responsive policies and reliable data to advance women's empowerment in the latest episode of the podcast series Freedom Gate Dialogues Organized by Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP), the podcast was hosted by Mahnoor Qureshi. Ume Laila Azhar emphasized that data-driven policymaking is essential to ensure that women's social and economic realities are accurately represented in national and provincial development agendas. The discussion also covered NCSW's ongoing initiatives to strengthen gender mainstreaming across government policies and promote women's economic empowerment, legal protection, and participation in decision-making. She highlighted that NCSW is working to enhance cooperation with provincial commissions, ministries, and civil society partners to ensure stronger policy alignment and accountability mechanisms. Welcoming the guest, Muhammad Anwar, CEO of FGP, reiterated that promoting women's economic and social inclusion lies at the heart of FGP's mission.—APP

AIOU to hold Arabic moot month

ISLAMABAD: The Department of Arabic of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) planned to host its fourth annual two-day international conference titled "Andalusian Literature: Cultural and Artistic Connections and Influences between the Arab World and the West" on November 25. Renowned professors, researchers and literary experts from numerous Arab countries including Jordan, Algeria, Oman, Iraq, Morocco and Egypt will participate in the conference. A large number of distinguished scholars from various cities and universities across Pakistan are also expected to attend, said a press release issued here Friday. According to the university's spokesperson on Friday, the primary objective of this conference is to highlight the diverse scholarly, cultural, and intellectual dimensions of Andalusian literature, strengthen literary and cultural ties between the Arab world and the West, and promote new trends and possibilities in contemporary Arabic research. The spokesperson further stated that the conference would feature special keynote lectures, presentation of research papers, and thematic academic sessions. These sessions will also include comprehensive discussions on topics such as the historical background of Andalusian literature, its intellectual influences, artistic aesthetics, and its relevance in the modern era, he added.—APP

Briefs

PWA to host session on growing need for rainwater harvesting

ISLAMABAD: Progressive Writers Association (PWA) would host a special session on Pakistan's water crisis and the growing need for rainwater harvesting at the Writers' House of the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) on November 22 (Saturday). The session aimed to raise awareness about practical methods for collecting and storing rainwater, and how such practices can contribute to environmental protection and long-term water security. The guest speaker, Teacher Usman, widely known for his dedicated work in environmental awareness—particularly in promoting rainwater harvesting techniques—also has a notable presence on social media and several achievements in environmental conservation alongside his colleagues. He is expected to share valuable insights, success stories, and practical guidance during the session. Speaking about the program, Faheem Qureshi, Secretary of the Progressive Writers Association, told APP that the purpose of the session is to encourage public involvement in sustainable water solutions.—APP

FEM festival season 4 all set to thrill soon

ISLAMABAD: The much-awaited three-day FEM Festival Season 4 is gearing up to captivate audiences as it returns to the capital soon at Gulberg Green, Islamabad. Widely regarded as one of the city's most vibrant annual events, the festival is expected to be the biggest edition yet, offering an energetic blend of food, music, culture, and business opportunities. This year's festival promises an expansive culinary experience, with a diverse lineup of food stalls featuring everything from traditional Pakistani favourites to international cuisines. Organisers say visitors can expect a wide range of options—from quick snacks to gourmet delights—aimed at satisfying food enthusiasts of all kinds.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Laborers busy in construction work at Blue Area traffic free track project, which is a pedestrian-only zone from Jinnah Avenue between Savour Foods and Khyber Plaza.

Islamabad's E-tag initiative hits a snag

However, the ground reality tells a different story. Motorists report that none of the seven promised E-Tag points are fully operational. A pattern has emerged in which temporary setups are created, video footage is recorded for internal reporting, and the setup is dismantled shortly afterward

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) recently rolled out an ambitious E-Tag system across the federal capital, accompanied by the announcement of seven dedicated checking points to regulate and streamline vehicle movement. While the initiative is timely and much needed—given Islamabad's growing traffic load, frequent VIP movements, and heightened security concerns—its execution so far has fallen far short of expectations.

According to official briefings, these E-Tag points were to function as permanent facilitation centres where motorists could be

screened, verified, and issued tags on the spot. The plan envisioned a seamless technology-driven mechanism aimed at cutting manual checks, reducing long queues, and strengthening security through automated verification. However, the ground reality tells a different story. Motorists report that none of the seven promised E-Tag points are fully operational. A pattern has emerged in which temporary setups are created, video footage is recorded for internal reporting, and the setup is dismantled shortly afterward. This practice has caused public frustration and raised questions about the seriousness behind the initiative. A recent example is the E-Tag point briefly established near F-9 Park—a strategically

chosen spot due to high traffic flow. The point disappeared within days, reportedly due to vehicle congestion. Instead of improving capacity to handle the rush, authorities simply shut it down, raising concerns about the project's readiness for citywide implementation. Despite periodic press releases announcing new checkpoints, motorists continue to find no staff, no machinery, and no system in place when they arrive. The growing gap between official claims and on-ground service delivery is eroding public trust. Experts agree that the policy itself is progressive and holds the potential to significantly ease traffic bottlenecks, especially during peak hours

and VIP movement. Automated tagging can reduce reliance on manual policing, eliminate unnecessary roadblocks, and contribute to a safer and more efficient traffic environment. For these reasons, stakeholders argue that the ITP must urgently revisit its strategy and commit to a consistent, fully functional rollout. Islamabad's traffic challenges are increasing each day, and the E-Tag system could be a transformative solution—if implemented with seriousness and continuity. The authorities now face a clear choice: move beyond symbolic announcements and deliver tangible results, because even the best reforms lose value when poorly executed.

Public urged to visit National Book Festival

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director (MD) of the National Book Foundation (NBF), Dr Kamran Jahangir, has urged the public to visit the three-day 11th National Book Festival, scheduled to be held at Lok Virsa from November 25-27. In an exclusive interview with APP, Dr Jahangir said the National Book Foundation has long served as an institution of knowledge and literature, committed to enlightening the nation through the power of books. To promote book culture, the Foundation consistently publishes high-quality, informative, and engaging books at affordable prices and regularly organizes both national and international book fairs. The upcoming festival, he added, is a continuation of this tradition. "This year, the National Book Festival is being organized in collaboration with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)," he said. The theme of this year's festival is 'Read and Learn'—a Reading and Learning Festival.—APP

Cement exports increase 28.58% to \$134m

ISLAMABAD: The exports of cement witnessed an increase of 28.58 percent during the first four months of the current financial year 2025-26 as against the exports of the corresponding months of last year. The cement exports from the country were recorded at US \$134.516 million during July-October (2025-26) against the exports of US \$104.617 million during July-October (2024-25), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the cement export also rose by 20.40 percent from 2,857,679 metric tons to 3,440,737 metric tons, the data revealed. Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the cement exports witnessed a decrease of 9.92 percent during the month of October 2025 as compared to the same month of last year.—APP

NA body on Food Security emphasizes research

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research on Thursday emphasized the need for stronger coordination between public and private agriculture research institutions to address emerging challenges and promote sustainable sectoral growth. The committee met under the Chairmanship of Syed Hussain Tariq, which was also briefed on the current state of research and development in Pakistan's rice sector, with particular attention to progress on high-yield and climate-resilient varieties, productivity enhancement and measures to improve export quality. The committee recommended that representatives of private-sector rice production institutions hold a consultative meeting with the Secretary, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, to jointly review sectoral challenges and develop a comprehensive model for improving rice production and market competitiveness, besides submitting the proposed model in its next meeting. Members were also informed that India's Free Trade Agreement with the United Kingdom particularly the relaxation of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) has enabled India to expand its rice exports to the UK market. In response, the committee urged relevant ministries to explore similar FTA opportunities and trade facilitation arrangements to enhance Pakistan's export potential and secure greater market access. The committee stressed the importance of expanding research partnerships, noting that private-sector engagement, alongside universities and research institutions, is essential for developing innovative solutions, promoting technological advancements, and supporting evidence-based policy making. The secretary endorsed

these recommendations, highlighting the need for systematic collaboration to strengthen research capacity in the rice sector. The committee further underscored the urgency of developing local rice varieties capable of withstanding heat stress, flooding, and other climate-related risks. The chairman committee asked the Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) to visit Thatta and engage directly with farmers and provincial authorities to identify gaps in agriculture sector and propose corrective measures. The committee also reviewed the current status of the national seed sector, including local seed production, quality assurance standards, certification processes and constraints faced by seed developers. The Seed Association of Pakistan (SAP), representing nearly 200 seed companies, presented its recommendations for sectoral reform. These included the provision of soft loans for improved storage infrastructure, facilitating private-sector participation in producing pre-basic seed, enhancing variety evaluation processes, and ensuring smooth inter-provincial seed movement. A significant portion of SAP's briefing focused on its strong opposition to the introduction of genetically modified (GMO) corn in Pakistan. SAP highlighted that Pakistan's existing non-GMO maize varieties already outperform GMO-adopting countries in yield and that the crop faces no major pest threats warranting GMO adoption. The meeting was attended by Members of Nations Assembly including Syed Hussain Tariq, Rana Muhammad Hayat Khan, Chaudhary Iftikhar Nazir, Abdul Qadir Khan, Nazir Ahmad Bughio, Syed Javed Ali Shah Jillani, Syed Abrar Ali Shah, Zulfiqar Ali Behan, Syed Ayaz Ali Shah Sheerazi and Usman Ali.—APP

Islamabad's landmarks turn blue

ISLAMABAD: On World Children's Day, Pakistan is turning its iconic landmarks blue to spotlight the importance of children's rights. The Ministry of Human Rights, in collaboration with UNICEF, is marking the occasion with activities that include children stepping into symbolic roles across provincial assemblies, where they speak about their lives, their hopes and their rights. Federal Minister for Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, said that on World Children's Day, Pakistan celebrates its children, their hopes, dreams and limitless potential. He emphasized that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment. He noted that the nationwide 'Go Blue' campaign, illuminating key landmarks, serves as a powerful reminder of the country's shared responsibility to uphold children's rights and well-being. The initiative, he added, symbolizes Pakistan's commitment to ensuring that children are heard and that their future is shaped by their own aspirations. "On World Children's Day, we renew our resolve to ensure every child is protected, supported, and able to achieve their full potential," the Minister said,

underscoring the theme of this year's commemoration. World Children's Day (WCD), observed annually on 20th November, marks the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, and serves as a global reminder that every day is a day of action for the fulfillment of child rights. "Every single day, children's lives are shaped, often limited by the choices adults make. On World Children's Day, we raise our voices as young people determined to shape our own future. We imagine a Pakistan where every child is

safe, included, learning, and heard. Real, lasting change begins when leaders choose to listen, and when children are empowered to lead," said Taqwa Ahmed, UNICEF Youth Advocate. UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Human Rights, is illuminating 18 prominent buildings across the country to draw attention to the importance of investing in every child's well-being, safety, and future. The 'Go Blue' campaign serves as a powerful visual reminder of Pakistan's ongoing commitment to the rights of children everywhere.—APP

safe, included, learning, and heard. Real, lasting change begins when leaders choose to listen, and when children are empowered to lead," said Taqwa Ahmed, UNICEF Youth Advocate. UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Human Rights, is illuminating 18 prominent buildings across the country to draw attention to the importance of investing in every child's well-being, safety, and future. The 'Go Blue' campaign serves as a powerful visual reminder of Pakistan's ongoing commitment to the rights of children everywhere.—APP

ANF seizes over 417 kg of drugs worth Rs 375m

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) arrested 4 suspected drug traffickers, including a Nigerian national, and seized 417.69 kilograms of narcotics valued at Rs 375 million during 7 operations conducted across the country, an ANF Headquarters spokesman said on Friday. He informed that 93 grams of heroin concealed in a woman's purse were recovered from a parcel booked for the United Kingdom at a courier office in Karachi. In another operation in the city, 348,000 diazepam tablets weighing 106.8 kilograms were seized from a motorcyclist near a courier office. The spokesman added that 75 grams of cocaine were recovered from a Nigerian national at a bus stop on the Expressway in Islamabad.—APP

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Crown prince's White House visit could chart the course for the next 80 years

FAISAL J. ABBAS

IT may be a coincidence, but history rarely writes itself without purpose. Next week's meeting in Washington between Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and US President Donald J. Trump falls 80 years after the seminal 1945 encounter between King Abdulaziz and President Franklin D. Roosevelt aboard the USS Quincy. That meeting laid the foundation for a strategic partnership that has endured wars, oil shocks and political transitions. The parallels between then and now are striking — and significant.

In 1945, the world was emerging from the ashes of the Second World War. The US was poised to become a global superpower. Saudi Arabia, under King Abdulaziz, had just unified its territories and was beginning to build its modern state. The USS Quincy summit focused mainly on two pillars: security for the Kingdom and oil for America. The summit came just over a decade after the birth of Saudi Aramco — a joint venture that evolved into the world's largest oil company. Though now fully Saudi-owned, the American contribution to its success remains undeniable. Today, we stand on the cusp of a new chapter — one that could multiply the Aramco success story exponentially.

The relationship is no longer confined to oil and security. Nuclear cooperation, space exploration, artificial intelligence and advanced technologies are now on the table. This is not just a bilateral upgrade — it is a strategic leap. The timing could not be more surreal: Vision 2030 and Make America Great Again are aligned in ambition, scope and urgency. Today, we stand on the cusp of a new chapter — one that could multiply the Aramco success story exponentially. Saudi Arabia is no longer the oil-dependent economy of the past. The Kingdom is unlocking its full potential across tourism, healthcare, mining and tech. American companies have a golden opportunity to be the first movers in many of these sectors — and reap the rewards of early investment, knowledge transfer and cooperation. Furthermore, the bold reforms introduced over the past decade mean that any concerns some might have had over doing business in Saudi Arabia are no longer relevant. And while we are far from being perfect, nobody in their right mind can deny — if they are fair — the quantum leaps that have happened in areas such as women's em-

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powerment, the removal of barriers to entry and bureaucratic procedures, as well as the improvement in the quality of life for both residents and citizens of Saudi Arabia. President Trump, known for his “art of the deal,” is not one to let bureaucracy stifle progress. His administration's openness to fair competition means American firms can engage without being hamstrung by red tape. This is good news for both sides — and for global investors watching closely. Yet, security remains paramount. The region is volatile. Rogue actors persist. The recent Israeli strike on Qatari territory — which hosts the region's largest US military base — underscores the urgency of a robust defense framework. Saudi Arabia, preparing to host Expo 2030 and the FIFA World Cup in 2034, must secure its borders, airspace and waters. A written defense treaty is not just desirable — it is essential. From a Saudi perspective, the scars of Houthi attacks on civilian infrastructure remain fresh. The Biden administration's early decision to delist the Houthis as a terrorist organization and the 2022 withdrawal of Patriot missile batteries was met with concern. Yet, by the end of President Joe Biden's term, negotiations for a historic defense treaty were nearly complete. This visit offers a chance to finalize that pact — and ensure such atrocities never happen again. The Saudi-US relationship has weathered storms. From defeating communism to liberating Kuwait, both nations have collaborated on global challenges. Despite political shifts between Republicans and Democrats, the strategic value of Saudi Arabia has remained constant. It is not a cash machine — it is a stabilizing force. As custodian of Islam's holiest sites, the region's largest economy and a key player in global oil markets, Saudi Arabia is indispensable to US interests. The recent Israeli strike on Qatari territory — which hosts the region's largest US military base — underscores the urgency of a robust defense framework. Saudi diplomacy is also evolving. The Kingdom has pushed for a two-state solution in Palestine, condemned atrocities in Gaza and facilitated negotiations in Sudan, Ukraine and Syria. Its humanitarian aid and development contributions are generous and consistent. Riyadh is no longer just a regional actor — it is a global mediator. The US needs a partner that commands respect in the region. Saudi Arabia fits that role. Whether it is lifting sanctions or brokering peace, American policymakers know that Riyadh's guarantees carry weight. The emergence of a new Syria — after decades of turmoil — is testament to that influence. This visit is not ceremonial. It is consequential. If Israel is ready to commit to a serious path toward Palestinian statehood, it could join what the crown prince calls “the new Europe” — a region of integration, cooperation and shared prosperity. The stakes are high. The opportunity is rare. And the moment is now. Let us hope that Nov. 18, 2025, becomes another date etched in history — not just as a commemoration of the past but as a launchpad for the future.

A Pause, Not a Breakthrough

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



This shift has left many observers wondering whether the United States has abandoned its earlier efforts to set limits on China's behavior and secure long-term advantages. Some officials argue privately that the president is now more focused on short-term political gains than on developing a consistent strategy for dealing with a powerful rival. The modest agreements reached in October seem designed more to offer immediate relief to domestic constituencies than to shape a durable policy

THE October meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping was billed as a moment that could ease tensions between the world's two largest economies. In some ways, it did. Both sides agreed to small, mutually beneficial steps that helped calm the markets and introduced a brief pause in the trade war. However, beyond these gestures, the meeting failed to address the deeper issues that have shaped the growing mistrust between Washington and Beijing. Instead of marking a new beginning, it underlined the unusual and often unpredictable direction of U.S. policy toward China in Trump's second term. During the meeting, officials on both sides emphasized cooperation and the tone was noticeably softer than in previous months. The United States agreed to suspend some tariffs, while China signaled willingness to increase purchases of American agricultural goods. These moves were welcome, especially for industries battered by years of economic friction. Yet they were small steps in a landscape dominated by broader strategic disagreements. The discussions avoided the underlying disputes over technology, national security and influence in Asia areas where both countries see core interests at stake. What stood out most was not what the two leaders discussed, but what the meeting revealed about Washington's shifting approach. A mix of confrontation and selective cooperation had marked the Trump administration's policy during his first term. It argued that China's rise posed economic and security challenges that required a firm and coordinated response. While the methods

were often debated, the direction was clear: the United States would compete with China on multiple fronts while trying to preserve channels of dialogue. In contrast, the president's approach in his second term appears less coherent. Rather than building on earlier strategies or the framework left by the Biden administration, Trump has followed a path that lacks clear priorities. Long-standing concerns about intellectual property, subsidies and market access were barely mentioned following the meeting. Even issues that once commanded bipartisan attention such as Beijing's influence in emerging technologies and its activities in the South China Sea received almost no emphasis in the administration's public messaging. This shift has left many observers wondering whether the United States has abandoned its earlier efforts to set limits on China's behavior and secure long-term advantages. Some officials argue privately that the president is now more focused on short-term political gains than on developing a consistent strategy for dealing with a powerful rival. The modest agreements reached in October seem designed more to offer immediate relief to domestic constituencies than to shape a durable policy. For China, the meeting offered an opportunity to present itself as a stable actor seeking balanced ties. Beijing welcomed the temporary easing of economic pressure and used the occasion to highlight its preference for “win-win” cooperation. However, Chinese officials also recognized that the fundamentals of the relationship had not changed. The United States still views China as a competitor and China continues to expand its influence in areas that Ameri-

can policymakers consider strategically sensitive. The absence of concrete progress in addressing these disagreements means that the calm may be temporary. Meanwhile, businesses on both sides remain uneasy. While the reduction of tariffs provides short-term relief, companies continue to face uncertainty about future rules, investment restrictions and technology controls. Many firms have already shifted parts of their supply chains in response to the earlier rounds of the trade war. Without a clear sense of where U.S. policy is heading, they may accelerate those adjustments in the coming months. The broader implications extend beyond economics. Allies in Asia and Europe have watched the meeting closely, hoping for signs of predictability. Instead, they saw an American administration sending mixed signals signs of flexibility on trade but no clarity on security issues. For countries that depend on the United States for regional stability, the lack of a steady approach raises questions about how Washington will respond to future challenges involving China. The October meeting could have been the beginning of a more thoughtful phase in U.S.-China relations. Instead, it served mainly to highlight confusion about American intentions. While easing trade tensions is a welcome development, it does not resolve the disputes that have defined the relationship in recent years. Until the United States develops a clearer strategy one that balances competition with diplomacy—the world should expect continued uncertainty. The brief respite in October may be only that: a pause rather than a turning point.

Gaza resolution may be terrible, but the alternative was worse

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

Israel's plan was to make Gaza unlivable and slowly start to empty the Strip. It has already sent Gazans without papers or any belongings on planes to South Africa. A mysterious nongovernmental organization was organizing the flights. Israel is still in ethnic cleansing mode. It is time to beat Israel at its own game. Arab and Muslim countries approved Trump's plan because they want the American administration on their side and not against them. The key goal is to outmaneuver Israel. The immediate goals for Gaza are for Gazans to stay and to make Strip...

THE UN Security Council on Monday authorized an International Stabilization Force for Gaza by adopting Resolution 2803, which backs the Donald Trump peace plan. This plan has more holes than a block of Swiss cheese. Despite its many flaws, however, the UNSC's approval allows Gaza to move to stage two of the process, something Israel has been adamantly resisting. The plan has many deficiencies, such as the lack of any reference to a two-state solution or Palestinian self-determination and the absence of any Palestinian agency. Though several countries had reservations about the text of the resolution, it passed with 13 votes in favor and none against, with both the Chinese and the Russians abstaining. The Chinese representative said the text was “vague and unclear” and that “Palestine is barely visible in the draft.” The Russian representative described the resolution as something “we just couldn't support.” He said the document could become a “fig leaf for unbridled experiments” by Israel and the US. Both countries were upset they were not consulted and that the UN had become a forum to merely rubber stamp what the US had already decided. They are right. However, politics is the art of the possible. What else would have been possible in the current circumstances? There was no viable counteroffer on the table that the US would not veto. There was one suggestion by President Gustavo Petro of Colombia to use the so-called Uniting for Peace resolution in the UN General Assembly. However, no resolution was presented at the UN and, more importantly, no superpower to endorse it. Politics is the art of the possible. What else would have been possible in the current circumstances? Still, assigning an international force is better than leaving a vacuum that Israel can exploit. We have seen how Israel has exploited gangs like the one run by Yasser Abu Shabab to create chaos in Gaza. One must be

pragmatic and use whatever is at one's disposal. The proposal is indeed vague and unclear. It has no timeline and no benchmarks. Israel will withdraw “based on standards, milestones and timeframes linked to demilitarization,” which will be agreed on later. This opaqueness is a deficit. However, this deficit could become an asset for the Palestinians if the countries supporting Palestinian statehood were to properly coordinate their efforts and leverage. The US is already reportedly considering dropping the clause in the peace plan regarding disarming Hamas. No country involved in the International Stabilization Force would want to take on the task of disarming Hamas. To start with, it would put their soldiers in danger. They would also be viewed as a proxy of Israel, doing through the UN what Tel Aviv was not able to achieve over the course of two years of war. If the US were to drop this demand, it would be a major setback for Israel. Arab and Islamic countries approved the resolution driven by a sense of urgency. Gazans need immediate help. Aid has to immediately enter the Strip without restrictions. Israel has been blocking the entry of temporary shelters. Amid worsening wintry conditions and stalled humanitarian access due to the Israeli siege, the priority is to make the Strip livable so that Gazans do not leave. Moving to stage two of the plan is an achievement in itself. Israel was planning to sabotage stage two. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the Israeli army would remain in “most” of Gaza even after backing the Trump plan. In fact, this has long been Israel's strategy. It approves the macro plan but always makes the execution impossible. Arab and Muslim countries approved Trump's plan because they want the US on their side and not against them. Israel's plan was to make Gaza unlivable and slowly start to empty the Strip. It has already sent Gazans without papers or any belongings on planes to South

Africa. A mysterious nongovernmental organization was organizing the flights. Israel is still in ethnic cleansing mode. It is time to beat Israel at its own game. Arab and Muslim countries approved Trump's plan because they want the American administration on their side and not against them. The key goal is to outmaneuver Israel. The immediate goals for Gaza are for Gazans to stay and to make the Strip livable again, while making sure Israel withdraws to the pre-Oct. 7 borders. None of this could be achieved if Arab and Muslim countries were to confront Trump. Confronting the US, given that there is currently no alternative, would push Washington to Israel's side. Israel wanted Arab and Muslim countries, particularly the mediators, Qatar, Egypt and Türkiye, to reject the plan. They did not. On the contrary, they are now playing Israel's game. They are agreeing on the macro and then putting down their own conditions for the execution, such as the fact that the International Stabilization Force will not be mandated to disarm Hamas. Many pundits have speculated as to what the various countries might have gotten from the US in return for selling out the Palestinians. In fact, there has been no such selling out. This is a pragmatic new approach that focuses on getting the most out of a certain situation. The key now is to focus on delivering aid, providing a decent living for Gazans and reconstructing the Strip. Of course, one should brace for turbulence. Israel will definitely not accept the situation. It will do everything it can to sabotage the plan. However, Trump has committed himself to peace. He has said the war is over. It will be difficult for Israel to outmaneuver Trump and go back to war. Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib is a specialist in US-Arab relations with a focus on lobbying. She is co-founder of the Research Center for Cooperation and Peace Building, a Lebanese nongovernmental organization focused on Track II.

Briefs

Govt agrees on asset declaration of public...

FROM PAGE 01
initiating the publication of asset declarations in 2026, and introduce risk-based verification of asset declarations". In the longer term, the two sides agreed to "consider establishing a centralised authority to collect, digitise and publish asset declarations of high-level public officials with adequate powers and resources to conduct risk-based verification", a vision that may remain elusive given the expiry of the IMF programme.

JCP to take up SC, SHC and BHC...

FROM PAGE 01
Mulakhail, Justice Iqbal Ahmed Kasi and Justice Shaukat Ali Rakhshani—will be considered for permanent appointment as BHC chief justice. Meanwhile, the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) will take up next week intra-court appeals (ICAs) filed by five sitting judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against the Supreme Court verdict declaring the transfer of judges to the IHC as legal. It was learnt that a six-member larger FCC bench headed by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan will hear the ICAs on November 24. Other members of the bench are Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice KK Agha, Justice Amer Farooq, Justice Ali Baqir Najafi, Justice Rozi Khan Barrech and Justice Arshad Hussain Shah.

Afghan Taliban responsible for trade...

FROM PAGE 01
He told the media that Pakistan tried to remain engaged with Afghanistan, but it incurred the loss of life. He said earlier, Pakistan had segregated trade and security. "But then there is a threshold of patience. I think that threshold of patience has been crossed. We cannot let the trade happen as if trade is to license the killing of Pakistanis from Afghan soil." Asked to comment on a statement by an Afghan leader announcing to prepare 4,000 bombers for Pakistan, Andrabi said that the statement proved what Pakistan had been saying and reinforced Pakistan's position that Afghan soil was being used to launch terrorist attacks inside Pakistan. Asked about US President Donald Trump's statement on his conversation with Indian Prime Minister Modi, who assured that he would not go to war with Pakistan, the spokesperson said "that assurance we obviously take with a pinch of salt. It is not backed up by any cooling down of statements emanating from India." He said Indian political and military leadership continued to monger war, issue hostile statements.

French commander reveals...

FROM PAGE 01
Armed forces all over the world have conducted studies about air combat between India and Pakistan in May this year to seek insights that could offer an edge in future conflicts. It was a rare opportunity for militaries to examine the performance of pilots, fighter jets, and air-to-air missiles in active combat. Now, a French Commander not only confirmed the shooting down of Rafales but also explained some reasons that caused global humiliation for India. Captain Lau-nay is the commander of a Naval Air base at Landivisiau, located between Brest and Morlaix in the north-western end of France. This base is famous due to a squadron of more than 40 Rafales armed with nuclear missiles. Rafale fighter jet taxis on the tarmac during its induction ceremony at an air force station in Ambala, India, September 10, 2020.

ICC unveils schedule for U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026

Tournament to feature 16 teams divided into four groups of four in initial stage

DNA

LAHORE: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday unveiled the match schedule for the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2026, which will be co-hosted by Zimbabwe and Namibia from January 15 to February 6, 2026. The tournament will feature 16 teams divided into four groups of four in the initial stage, following the same format as previous editions. A total of 41 matches will be played over 23 days. Sponsored Content
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The opening day promises exciting matchups, with India facing the USA, Zimbabwe taking on Scotland, and Tanzania meeting the West Indies. Tanzania will make their tournament debut, while Japan returns after last featuring in 2020. The group stage will be followed by the Super Six phase, where the top three teams from each group advance to two groups of six. This will lead into the knockout stage, featuring two semi-finals and a final, with reserve days allocated for these matches. The tournament will be hosted across

multiple venues in Zimbabwe and Namibia, including Harare Sports Club and Takashinga Sports Club in Harare, Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, and Namibia Cricket Ground and HP Oval in Windhoek. ICC Chairman Jay Shah expressed his excitement for the event, highlighting the tournament's role in shaping the stars of tomorrow. "The ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup has long been a cradle of greatness, revealing not just the next generation of cricketers but the next generation of icons. From Brian Lara and Sanath Jayasuriya to Virat Kohli, Kane Williamson, Steve Smith, and Shubman Gill, this event has consistently shaped the future of our sport. "We are thrilled to provide young cricketers with a world-class platform that mirrors

the standards and pressures of senior international cricket. This is where dreams are ignited, rivalries are born, and the global cricketing landscape begins to take its next form. We are especially pleased to welcome Tanzania as they make their debut and join a truly global field of teams." Teams are scheduled to arrive on January 8, with warm-up matches from January 9-14. **Tournament groups:**
Group A: India (five-time champions), Bangladesh (2020 winners), USA and New Zealand.
Group B: Zimbabwe (co-hosts), Pakistan, England and Scotland.
Group C: Australia (defending champions), Ireland, Japan and Sri Lanka.
Group D: Tanzania, West Indies, Afghanistan and South Africa.

FCC chief justice hopes court will stand...

FROM PAGE 01
the nation's ongoing constitutional journey," Justice Aminuddin said in a message posted on the newly launched website for the FCC. "One that reinforces our collective commitment to the rule of law and to the enduring promise of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," he stressed.

PM condemns attack on Peace...

FROM PAGE 01
the perpetrators and ensure they are brought to justice with exemplary punishment. "These cowardly attacks, carried out to sabotage peace efforts, lay bare the evil designs of Fitan-ul-Khawarij to spread chaos in Pakistan," the Prime Minister said. He added that such acts can never weaken the resolve of the Pakistani people. "The entire nation stands united against all anti-state elements and will continue to defeat their nefarious agenda," he affirmed.

Thirteen terrorists killed

FROM PAGE 01
Another intelligence based operation was conducted in Dera Ismail Khan District. In ensuing fire exchange, three Khwarij were effectively neutralised by the security forces. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from killed Indian sponsored Khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the Security Forces, Law Enforcement agencies and target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored kharij found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azam e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country.

Terrorists kill seven peace...

FROM PAGE 01
In the Kurram district, at least 12 terrorists were neutralised and 11 more were gunned down, according to the military's media wing. Terrorists were also killed in Tank, Mohmand and Lakki Marwat as well. Terrorist attacks have seen a sharp increase in Pakistan, particularly in the bordering provinces of KP and Balochistan, since 2021, when the Afghan Taliban regime came into power. A police report noted that KP alone recorded over 600 terror incidents, in which at least 79 police personnel were martyred alongside 138 civilians, during the first eight months of 2025. The violence spread to other regions of the country, including Islamabad, where a suicide bombing on November 11 resulted in the martyrdom of 12 and 36 others were injured, among them lawyers and petitioners.

Army, civil armed...

FROM PAGE 01
ECP is set to hold by-elections for as many as six National Assembly seats and seven provincial seats of Punjab. The development came a day after the ECP took notice of remarks made by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi during a political gathering. The ECP, in letters to secretaries of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior on Thursday, stated that CM Afridi "threatened" district administration, police officers, and ECP officials ahead of the by-election in Haripur. "Regrettably, he [KP CM] used offensive language which amounts to harassing and unduly influencing them which may prevent them [officials] from effective performance of their duties," the letter reads.

Starc takes seven as England rolled for 172 in Ashes opener

PERTH: A venomous Mitchell Starc took 7-58 as England were sent packing for just 172 on day one of the first Ashes Test against Australia on Friday, leaving them with a mountain to climb. Batting after captain Ben Stokes won the toss on a fine day at a packed Perth Stadium, the visitors had few answers to the 35-year-old wreaking ball. His haul came off 12.5 overs with debutant Brendan Doggett chipping in with 2-27. Harry Brook (52) and Ollie Pope (46) offered the only resistance as England crumbled after lunch. Starc bagged three wickets in an intimidating opening spell, including Joe Root for a duck, before returning to send Stokes packing in his first over after the break, then mopping up. All five previous Tests at the venue have been won by the side batting first, but England did their best to challenge that. They got off to a horror start, rocked in the opening over after Starc was handed the new ball in his 101st Test. The veteran strike weapon delivered as he has so many times before, enticing a thick edge from Zak Crawley that Usman Khaw-



ja did well to collect down low at slip, the opener gone for nought.

Starc has now taken a wicket in the first over of an innings 24 times. At the other end Ben Duckett settled his nerves with a textbook drive off Scott Boland to bank the first four of the series and followed it up with another in the same over. But just as the left-hander was getting going, Starc pounced again, trapping him lbw for 21 to leave England tot-

tering on 33-2. That brought Root to the crease in his latest campaign for an elusive first century in Australia. But he only lasted seven balls, edging a seaming delivery into the safe hands of Marnus Labuschagne at third slip. Pope survived the furnace and was composed before Cameron Green was brought into the attack and he was out lbw, leaving them on 105-4 at lunch. Brook hit Boland for a six in the first over after the break before Starc again worked his magic, taking out Stokes's stumps with an inswinger when the captain was on six. A fearless Brook was unperturbed and raced to his 14th Test half-century, off 58 balls, before feathering a short ball to Alex Carey, earning Doggett his maiden Test wicket on debut.

Starc then removed Gus Atkinson (one) with Steve Smith collecting at slip to give him the 17th five-wicket haul of his career. Doggett and Starc ruthlessly wrapped up the tail with little resistance. England, who have not won a series in Australia for 15 years, opted for an all-pace attack with spinner Shoaib Bashir missing out. – Agencies

Spain, Germany stage Davis Cup comeback wins to set up semifinal clash

BOLOGNA, Italy: Spain bounced back from an opening singles defeat on Thursday to beat the Czech Republic 2-1 and reach the Davis Cup semifinals for the first time in six years where they will face Germany, who earned their own comeback win over Argentina. The Spaniards, without world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz after he pulled out on the eve of the event with a hamstring injury, had their backs against the wall when Pablo Carreno Busta was beaten in straight sets by Jakub Mensik. Carreno Busta, ranked 89th, had no response to Mensik's power and 20 aces, going down 7-5 6-4 to the world No. 19. Mensik suffered a break midway through the first set but held tough and broke back twice to bag it. He gave away no other break opportunities, snatching the second set with a late break of his own to put his team in front. Even without Alcaraz, Spain had enough quality to stage a successful comeback, with Jaume Munar drawing them level with a 6-3 6-4 win over Jiri Lehecka. Munar, who earned his first Davis Cup win, needed a break in each set to get past his opponent. It then came down to the doubles match with 39-year-old veteran Marcel Granollers and Pedro Martinez edging past Mensik and Tomas Machac 7-6(8) 7-6(8) in an entertaining encounter. Argentina's Tomas Etcheverry fired 23 aces to earn a straight-sets victory over Jan-Lennart Struff in the last quarter-final of the day, but the Germans responded with Alexander Zverev's 6-4 7-6(3) victory over Francisco Cerundolo to send the tie into yet another doubles decider. – Agencies

South Africa back to full strength for 'colossal challenge' of Irish

DUBLIN: South African head coach Rassie Erasmus said he is expecting Saturday's Autumn Series Test with Ireland to be a "colossal challenge" after he named a side he hopes will deliver a first win in Dublin since 2012. The 53-year-old recalled most of the players who sat out last Saturday's 32-14 victory over Italy – achieved, like the win over France the previous weekend, with the Springboks reduced to 14 men for a large part of the match. In one change from the squad that beat France, Ruan Nortje is promoted from the replacements bench to the starting lineup in place of suspended lock Lood de Jager – whose appeal against his red card against Les Bleus was rejected on Thursday. Kwagga Smith returns to the bench. In the backline, Canan Moodie switches from centre against Italy to wing to fill the void left by Kurt-Lee Arendse, who returned to South Africa after suffering a concussion last week. "Ireland have been among the top-ranked teams in the last few years, and they are a force to be reckoned with at home," said Erasmus in a statement on Thursday announcing the team. "They have a good balance of experienced and exciting young players in their squad, and they pose threats up front and with

their talented backs, so it's going to require a massive effort to beat them. "This group of players have never won a match in Ireland before, so we know how tough it's going to be to win here, and that will certainly motivate us. "It will take a colossal effort, but we are excited about the challenge, and we know that we have to be razor sharp in all departments to get the desired result." Saturday's game will be a landmark or the fearsome Leinster lock RG Snyman, who will win his 50th cap if he comes on in his 'home city'. "He's a great player and team man, and had it not been for injuries along the way, he would have probably earned 50 caps a while ago," said Erasmus. "He deserves this achievement, and it speaks volumes about the quality of the player he is." Damian Willemse; Canan Moodie, Jesse Kriel, Damian de Allende, Cheslin Kolbe; Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, Cobus Reinach; Jasper Wiese, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Siya Kolisi (capt); Ruan Nortje, Eben Etzebeth; Thomas du Toit, Malcolm Marx, Boan Venter Replacements: Johan Grobbelaar, Gerhard Steenekamp, Wilco Louw, RG Snyman, Kwagga Smith, Andre Esterhuizen, Grant Williams, Manie Libbok. – Agencies

Stars, Strikers secure impressive wins

Aroob's impressive all-round performance earned her "Player of the Match" award as Stars sealed a 70-run victory

FAISALABAD: The National Women's One-Day Tournament continued on Thursday with dominant victories for Stars and Strikers, who defeated Invincibles and Conquerors respectively in two action-packed matches played in Faisalabad. At the HPC Ground, Invincibles won the toss and opted to bowl first, allowing Stars to post a competitive total of 214 runs. Sidra Ameen top-scored with a solid 49, while Syeda Aroob Shah added an important 40 runs. For Invincibles, Momina Riasat delivered an outstanding bowling spell, claiming five wickets. In reply, Invincibles could manage only 144 runs, despite a fighting 63-run knock by Natalia Parvaiz. Stars' bowling attack proved too strong, with Diana Baig picking up three wickets, Syeda Aroob Shah and Anam Amin taking two each. Aroob's impressive all-round performance earned her "Player of the Match" award as Stars sealed a 70-run victory. In the second match held at Iqbal Stadium, Conquerors elected to bat first and set a target of 221 after scoring 220 runs before being bowled out. Fatima Sana struck an impressive 58, while Gull Feroza contributed 48 runs. Strikers responded confidently, reaching 221 for 7 to clinch a three-wicket win. The chase was anchored by a brilliant 97-run knock from Aliya Riaz, supported by Noreen Yaqoob's 46, with the pair putting together a match-winning 147-run partnership. Humna Bilal claimed three wickets for Strikers, whereas Aliya Riaz was named "Player of the Match" for her decisive performance. – Agencies

MLS 2026 season features Inter Miami's new stadium debut

NORTH AMERICA: Major League Soccer on Thursday released its 2026 regular-season schedule, highlighted by the opening of Inter Miami's new home at Miami Freedom Park and a mid-year pause for the World Cup in North America. Clubs will play 34 matches, 17 at home and 17 away, with the campaign starting on February 21. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. The opening round will feature Son Heung-min's Los Angeles FC hosting Lionel Messi's Inter Miami at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Inter Miami will inaugurate their new 25,000-seat venue on April 4 when they welcome Austin. Play will be suspended from May 25 to July 16 for the World Cup, which runs from June 11 to July 19 in US, Mexico and Canada. – APP

Trump's 28-point Ukraine plan

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and Secretary of State Marco Rubio had been "quietly" working on the plan for around a month, according to White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt

WASHINGTON: A draft 28-point plan backed by US President Donald Trump would require Ukraine to offer territorial and security concessions to Moscow, while Russia would be readmitted to the G8 group and receive sanctions relief. Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and Secretary of State Marco Rubio had been "quietly" working on the plan for around a month, according to White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he expected to discuss the plan with Trump "in coming days." Here is the 28-point plan, according to a draft reviewed by AFP:
1. Ukraine's sovereignty will be confirmed.
2. A comprehensive non-aggression agreement will be concluded between Russia, Ukraine and Europe. All ambiguities of the last 30 years will be considered settled.
3. It is expected that Russia will not invade neighboring countries and NATO will not expand further.
4. A dialogue will be held between Russia and NATO, mediated by the United States, to resolve all security issues and create conditions for de-escalation.
5. Ukraine will receive reliable security guarantees.
6. The size of the Ukrainian Armed Forces will be limited to 600,000 personnel.
7. Ukraine agrees to enshrine in its constitution that it will not join NATO, and NATO agrees to include in its statutes a provision that Ukraine will not be admitted in the future.

8. NATO agrees not to station troops in Ukraine.
9. European fighter jets will be stationed in Poland.
10. The US will receive compensation for the security guarantee. If Ukraine invades Russia, it will lose the guarantee. If Russia invades Ukraine, in addition to a decisive coordinated military response, all global sanctions will be reinstated, recognition of the new territory and all other benefits of this deal will be revoked. If Ukraine launches a missile at Moscow or St. Petersburg without cause, the security guarantee will be deemed invalid.
11. Ukraine is eligible for EU membership and will receive short-term preferential access to the European market while this issue is being considered.
12. A powerful global package of measures to rebuild Ukraine, including the creation of a Ukraine Development Fund, rebuilding of Ukraine's gas infrastructure, the rehabilitation of war-affected areas, development of new infrastructure and resumed extraction of minerals and natural resource, all with a special finance package developed by the World Bank.
13. Russia will be reintegrated into the global economy, with discussions of lifting sanctions, rejoining the G8 group and entering a long-term economic cooperation agreement with the United States.
14. \$100 billion in frozen Russian assets will be invested in US-led efforts to rebuild and invest in Ukraine, with the US receiving 50 percent of the profits from

the venture. Europe will add \$100 billion to increase the amount of investment available for Ukraine's reconstruction. Frozen European funds will be unfrozen, and the remainder of the frozen Russian funds will be invested in a separate US-Russian investment vehicle.
15. A joint American-Russian working group on security issues will be established to promote and ensure compliance with all provisions of this agreement.
16. Russia will enshrine in law its policy of non-aggression towards Europe and Ukraine.
17. The United States and Russia will agree to extend the validity of treaties on the non-proliferation and control of nuclear weapons, including the START I Treaty.
18. Ukraine agrees to be a non-nuclear state in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
19. The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant will be launched under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the electricity produced will be distributed equally between Russia and Ukraine.
20. Both countries undertake to implement educational programmes in schools and society aimed at promoting understanding and tolerance.
21. Crimea, Luhansk and Donetsk will be recognised as de facto Russian, including by the United States. Kherson and Zaporizhzhia will be frozen along the line of contact, which will mean de-facto recognition along the line of

contact. Russia will relinquish other agreed territories it controls outside the five regions. Ukrainian forces will withdraw from the part of Donetsk Oblast that they currently control, which will then be used to create a buffer zone.
22. After agreeing on future territorial arrangements, both the Russian Federation and Ukraine undertake not to change these arrangements by force. Any security guarantees will not apply in the event of a breach of this commitment.
23. Russia will not prevent Ukraine from using the Dnieper River for commercial activities, and agreements will be reached on the free transport of grain across the Black Sea.
24. A humanitarian committee will be established to resolve prisoner exchanges, remains returned, hostages and civilian detainees returned, and a family reunification program will be implemented.
25. Ukraine will hold elections in 100 days.
26. All parties involved in this conflict will receive full amnesty for their actions during the war and agree not to make any claims or consider any complaints in the future.
27. This agreement will be legally binding. Its implementation will be monitored and guaranteed by the Peace Council, headed by US President Donald Trump. Sanctions will be imposed for violations.
28. Once all parties agree to this memorandum, the ceasefire will take effect immediately after both sides retreat to agreed points to begin implementation of the agreement. – Agencies

Briefs

National Museum to open its 1st gallery dedicated to Islamic art

SEOUL: The National Museum of Korea will open its first gallery dedicated to Islamic art, marking a major step in expanding its global cultural exhibitions. The Islamic Art Gallery, located on the third floor of the museum's Permanent Exhibition Hall, is set to open to the public Friday. To commemorate the launch, the museum is hosting a joint exhibition with the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, titled "Islamic Art: A Journey of Splendor." The show runs for 11 months and features 83 artifacts on loan from Doha. Since launching the World Arts Gallery to showcase diverse cultural heritages, the National Museum has held a series of exhibitions from major museums around the world. This is the first time it is presenting Islamic culture in a permanent exhibition space. "Since it is difficult for us to build a global collection of great works, we have sought ways to introduce Islamic art to local and international visitors through cooperation with leading institutions," museum director You Hongjune said during a media preview of the exhibition at the museum Thursday. You described Islamic culture as "a world of fantastic artistry," noting its complex geometric and calligraphic patterns reflect a sophisticated and modern sensibility. Shaika Nasser Al-Nasser, director of the Doha museum, said Korea and Qatar, though geographically distant, have long been connected through historical trade routes stretching from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. She expressed hope that the upcoming exhibition would deepen cultural ties between the two nations while highlighting the global legacy of Islamic art.—APP

12 more model cart markets set to open

FAISALABAD: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's ongoing urban beautification and employment initiative has entered a new phase as 12 additional model cart markets are ready to be launched across Faisalabad. During a formal handover, Divisional Commissioner/Administrator Municipal Corporation Raja Jahangir Anwar said that this initiative would expand organized vending network of the city in addition to reinforcing the government's commitment to orderly commerce, traffic management and livelihood support for low-income workers. He delivered 70 newly prepared carts to the corporation's concerned teams and said that it is another step toward the rollout of model vending zones. Total 400 carts would ultimately be deployed under the initiative while 9 model cart markets are already functional in the city, providing structured spaces for small vendors and improving the overall urban environment, he added.—APP

SECP warns public about illegal trading application

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has identified unauthorized individuals and groups fraudulently promoting illegal investment and trading platforms through social media and WhatsApp groups. These entities are misusing the names of licensed securities brokers, as well as pictures of celebrities, FinFluencers, and brokerage executives, said a press release issue by the SECP here on Friday. The SECP has identified a mobile/web application titled "TSLWEA/ TSL WEALTH" that is impersonating the licensed securities broker, Toplevel Securities Limited. Furthermore, a WhatsApp group named "A103-Toplevel Stock Strategies Hub" is also falsely associating the "TSLWEA/ TSL WEALTH" application and an AI-based trading system with Toplevel Securities Limited. The public is hereby informed that "TSLWEA/ TSL WEALTH" is neither licensed nor authorized by the SECP to operate any investment or trading platform for the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (PSX) or any other regulated market, it added.—APP

Pakistan, Hungary vow to strengthen relations

They also reaffirmed maintain close contact to expedite the finalization of other pending agreements to further deepen cooperation between Pakistan and Hungary

DNA

BRUSSELS: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto @FM_Szjarto on the sidelines of the 4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Brussels. The Ministers reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral cooperation, covering political, economic, trade, cultural, defence ties, and people-to-people exchanges. They also exchanged views on broader regional and global developments, and underscored the importance of continued engagement at multilateral fora. The two Ministers also signed the renewal of the MOU on Cooperation within the Framework of the Stipendium Hungaricum Program 2026–2028, ensuring enhanced scholarship opportunities for Pakistani students in Hungary. They also reaffirmed maintain close contact to expedite the finalization of other pending agreements to further deepen cooperation between Pakistan and Hungary.



The US plan for ending the Ukraine war: What do we know?

KYIV, UKRAINE: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky will meet senior US army figures in Kyiv on Thursday, after Washington presented a plan to Ukraine that would end the war on terms favourable to Moscow. The surprise proposal from the United States envisages Ukraine giving up land to Russia and limiting its military capacity, concessions that Kyiv has previously rejected as an unacceptable capitulation to Moscow, which launched its full-scale invasion almost four years ago. Details of the plan, shared with AFP by a senior source familiar with the matter, suggest Ukraine is being asked to give in to some of Russia's key demands, while it remains "unclear" what commitments Russia would make in return. On territory, the plan calls for the "recognition of Crimea and other regions that the Russians have taken", the source said. Russia's army occupies around a fifth of the country – much of it ravaged by years of fighting. In 2022, the Kremlin annexed four Ukrainian regions – Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson – despite not having full control over them. Russia also annexed the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine in 2014. Russian President Vladimir Putin has previously demanded Ukraine completely withdraw its troops from Donetsk and Lugansk, and offered to freeze the front line in the southern Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, according to Turkey's foreign minister, who mediated three rounds of peace talks earlier this year. Ukraine has said it will never recognise Russian control over its land, but has conceded it might be forced to get it back through diplomatic means. Ceding territory in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions that Ukraine still controls could leave Ukraine vulnerable to future attacks by Russia. "It is a matter of our country's survival," Zelensky said recently. The plan calls for Ukraine to reduce its army to 400,000 personnel, cutting its military by more than half, the same source told AFP. Kyiv would also be required to give up all long-range weapons. That fits with other Russian demands put to Ukraine at talks in Istanbul earlier this year when Moscow called for a reduction in troop numbers, a ban on mobilisation and a halt to the flow of Western weapons. Russia has also repeatedly said it will not tolerate any NATO troops on Ukrainian soil. By contrast, Ukraine wants concrete Western-backed security guarantees, including a European peacekeeping force, to prevent Russia from re-invading in the future.—APP

Comet sparks scientific fascination, online furor over 'alien' origins

WASHINGTON: A flying piece of cosmic rock or an alien threat? Comet 3I/ATLAS is hurtling through our solar system and captivating scientists and internet users alike, even prompting Kim Kardashian to ask NASA for answers. Questions on whether the comet could actually be an alien spacecraft are coming from sources as varied as the reality TV star, a member of US Congress and a Harvard researcher, as well as from prominent conspiracy theorists. But that theory has been shot down by NASA, which released new images of the comet on Wednesday after the speculation gained traction online. "It's amazing to see how people are really engaged in the discussion," said Thomas Puzia, an astrophysicist who led the team at the Chilean observatory that made the discovery. But, "it's very dangerous and to a certain degree misleading to put speculations ahead of scientific process," he told AFP in a thinly veiled criticism of another researcher who has been insisting for weeks that the extraterrestrial spacecraft hypothesis cannot be ruled out. "The facts, all of them without exception, point to a normal object that is coming from the interstellar space to us," he said. He added the comet was "very exceptional in its nature, but it's nothing that we cannot explain with physics." Since its detection in July, the comet has generated intense speculation – unsurprisingly so, given it is only the third interstellar object foreign to our solar system ever discovered to be passing through. The first was the Oumuamua comet, which sparked similar ripples of excitement and debate in 2017. Even then, Harvard Professor Avi Loeb supported the theory that Oumuamua could be a spacecraft, a controversial position he later defended in a book.—APP



LONDON: High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK, Dr. Mohammad Faisal with Dr. Farhan Nizami, Director of Oxford Center for Islamic Studies at presentation ceremony of gift from Pakistan to the Oxford Centre.

German Christmas market opens year after deadly car attack

MAGDEBURG, GERMANY: The Christmas market in Germany's eastern city of Magdeburg opened Thursday with a quiet chime from a nearby church bell, less than a year after a car ramming attack killed six and wounded hundreds. Guarded by armed police and concrete barricades painted in festive green and red, locals braved the cold and drizzling rain, determined to enjoy the holiday atmosphere, snack and sip mulled wine. No grand ceremony marked the "silent opening" at 11:00 am, which came as the high-security trial continues nearby over the December 20, 2024 attack that plunged the historic city centre into a scene of bloody carnage. Saudi man Taleb Jawad al-Abdulmohsen, 51, is accused of steering a rented SUV through the crowd in an attack inspired by a mix of personal grievances, far-right and anti-Islam views. A year on, locals and visitors tried to enjoy the market, rows of wooden stalls with with a huge Christmas tree at its centre, despite the dark memories and the heavy security. "I think it spoils the feel of the Christmas market a bit," said Magdeburg local Monika Hartmann, 68. "But it has to be this way, otherwise the Christmas market wouldn't take place. We must accept it and come to terms with it. I'm trying not to take no-

atmosphere. "Great. Simply wonderful," Brade told AFP while wandering the market. "A joy that it's been opened up." Fierich, 71, acknowledged that the new security measures were "probably necessary" but told AFP that she did not enjoy "feeling so boxed-in" by the new layout and added barricades. "Every sporting event doesn't have such a tight security setup as this – just because of one crazy person," added Brade, 70. Joerg Stangenberg, 57, said he initially planned to be at the market on the day of the attack last year, adding: "Well, it's a good thing that I didn't." He said people remain shaken by what happened last year – "it really gets to you" – but he wished this year's market had gone ahead without nearly as much debate over security. "They should have just said, 'We'll have the Christmas market as usual, and security as normal', and that would have been perfectly sufficient," said Stangenberg. At one entrance to the market, flowers and candles circled a series of plaques, remembering each of those killed. Borris said survivors and those who responded to the attack were invited to gather in the square before the market opened. "They saw and experienced a great deal that evening and will likely never forget it," she said. "Everyone processes it in their own way, but I believe it will never be forgotten."—APP

Spain's top prosecutor guilty of media leak against opposition

MADRID: Spain's Supreme Court on Thursday said it had convicted the top prosecutor of leaking confidential legal information against the conservative opposition in a fresh blow to Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. The conviction of Alvaro Garcia Ortiz, consistently defended by Sanchez's government, which appointed him in 2022, increases the pressure stemming from several legal affairs that have embarrassed the minority left-wing coalition. Garcia Ortiz will be banned from his post for two years, fined around 7,300 euros (\$8,400) and pay 10,000 euros in damages to complainant Alberto Gonzalez Amador, the partner of right-wing figurehead Isabel Diaz Ayuso, the court said. In 2024, media reported based on leaked correspondence that Gonzalez Amador had proposed a plea deal with the public prosecutor's office in which he would admit to alleged tax offences in exchange for avoiding a trial and jail. Ayuso, the leader of the Madrid region who has been tipped for a national leadership role, and her conservative Popular Party (PP) accused Garcia Ortiz of orchestrating the leak to damage her. PP leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo wrote on X that the unprecedented conviction would "always hang over Sanchez", demanding he apologise for a "clumsy political operation". Government sources said they "respect the ruling, but do not agree with it", with the selection process for a new attorney general to begin "in the coming days".—APP

Magnitude 5.5 quake hits Bangladesh: USGS

DHAKA :A 5.5-magnitude earthquake struck Bangladesh on Friday, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, with no immediate reports of casualties. The quake struck at 10:38 am (0438 GMT), near the city of Narsingdi, about 33 kilometres (16 miles) from the crowded capital Dhaka. The USGS's PAGER system, which provides preliminary assessments on the impact of earthquakes, estimated the potential for "significant casualties" and damage. According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, which recorded the magnitude as 5.7, shaking lasted for 26 seconds and the epicentre was in Madhabdi, Narsingdi. The Friday morning earthquake sparked terror with many in the Muslim-majority nation of 170 million people at home on their day off when they heard a loud bang and rushed outside. Some people were seen weeping, while others appeared shocked, AFP reporters in Dhaka said. Moinul Hossain, director of hospitals for the Directorate General of Health Services, said they "were not aware of casualties".—APP

Frida Kahlo painting auctions for \$54.6 mn

NEW YORK: A self-portrait by legendary Mexican artist Frida Kahlo sold for \$54.66 million in New York on Thursday, setting a new record for the price of a painting by a woman, the auction house Sotheby's said. The sale of Kahlo's 1940 artwork, titled "El sueno (la cama)" – which translates to "The dream (The bed)" – breaks the previous record in this category, set by American artist Georgia O'Keeffe, whose 1932 painting "Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1," sold for \$44.4 million in 2014. Kahlo's painting is "the most valuable work by a woman artist ever sold at auction," Sotheby's said in a post on X. The auction house said Kahlo's work was "painted in 1940 during a pivotal decade in her career, marked by her turbulent relationship with Diego Rivera." Kahlo's self-portrait went on the auction block at Sotheby's with an estimated price ranging from \$40 million to \$60 million. buyer's name was not disclosed. The artwork depicts the artist sleeping in a bed that appears to float among clouds in the sky, laying beneath a skeleton with legs that are wrapped with sticks of dynamite. This painting is a "very personal" image, in which Kahlo "merges folkloric motifs from Mexican culture with European surrealism," Anna Di Stasi, head of Latin American art at Sotheby's, told AFP. The Mexican artist, who passed away in 1954 at age of 47, "did not completely agree" with her work being associated with the surrealist movement, Di Stasi said.

Police to request arrest warrant for 2 sailors over ferry grounding accident

SEOUL: Police investigating the grounding accident of a ferry off the southwestern coast earlier this week said Friday they will request an arrest warrant for the ship's first mate and helmsman on charges of causing injury by gross negligence. The first mate, in his 40s, and the helmsman, an Indonesian national in his 40s, were apprehended Thursday after the 26,546-ton Queen Jenuvia II carrying 246 passengers and 21 crew members ran aground at the uninhabited islet off the coast of Sinan, 366 kilometres south of Seoul, the previous night. The two are accused of causing the grounding accident by not properly steering the ferry while doing something else outside of work, according to the Mokpo Coast Guard in charge of the probe. The first mate, suspected of looking at his phone at the time of the accident, was supposed to change course about 1,600 meters away from the accident site but failed to do so, the Coast Guard said.—APP

Briefs

30-plus
nations
oppose
COP30 draft

BELÉM, BRAZIL: More than 30 countries have co-signed a letter opposing Brazil's draft proposal at the UN climate conference because it fails to include a roadmap phasing out fossil fuels, the Colombian delegation told AFP on Thursday. COP30 is scheduled to end Friday evening, after a dramatic blaze at the venue in Belém brought a premature close to Thursday's proceedings. The summit's leader, Brazilian diplomat Andre Correa do Lago, is under pressure from the nearly 200 countries gathered in the Amazonian city since last week to forge a text capable of achieving consensus, as required under the summit's rules. His latest draft, seen Thursday by AFP, makes no mention of fossil fuels – despite President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva having championed the idea as a signature initiative since the summit began. “We cannot support an outcome that does not include a roadmap for implementing a just, orderly, and equitable transition away from fossil fuels,” said the letter provided to AFP – with signatories from Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Pacific island nations. – Agencies

Minister,
SAPM get
notices for
'violating'
ECP code
of conduct

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Election Commissioner Sharifullah on Thursday said that notices had been served on Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Huzafa Rehman for allegedly violating the code of conduct of the Election Act 2017. A spokesperson for the provincial election commissioner said that the federal minister and the SAPM were directed to submit their explanations by November 21 (today). “No minister or advisor is allowed to run an election campaign,” the spokesperson said, warning that swift action will be taken against any code violations to ensure free, fair, and impartial elections. By-elections in six national and seven provincial assembly seats in Punjab are scheduled for November 23. According to the Dera Ghazi Khan district monitoring officer, Leghari reportedly participated in the election campaign of PML-N candidate Mahmood Leghari in the NA-185 constituency. The monitoring officer said that, by taking part in the campaign as a federal minister, Leghari breached official instructions. The minister has been asked to appear before the authorities and clarify his position regarding the alleged ECP violations.

Pakistan calls for resolution of
Ukraine issue through dialogue

Ambassador Asim Iftikhar stressed that the protection of civilian lives, civilian infrastructure, and essential public services must remain a top priority for all parties

DNA

NEW YORK: Pakistan has once again urged all parties involved in the Ukraine conflict to exercise maximum restraint, pursue meaningful de-escalation, and work sincerely towards an immediate ceasefire through a sustained and result-oriented diplomatic process. The call was made during a UN Security Council session on the situation in Ukraine, where Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, presented Islamabad's stance on the ongoing crisis. Ambassador Asim Iftikhar stressed that the protection of civilian lives, civilian infrastructure, and essential public services must remain a top priority for all parties. He reiterated Pakistan's consistent position that adherence to international humanitarian law is critical and reminded the Council that “almost everyone now agrees there is no military solution to this conflict.” He emphasised that only a credible political process can pave the way for sustain-



able peace. For this reason, he urged all sides to demonstrate genuine political will and engage in a structured, meaningful and goal-driven dialogue that addresses the legitimate security concerns of all stakeholders. Such engagement, he said, must be grounded in the principles of the UN Charter, respect for international law, and relevant multilateral agreements. The Ambassador underlined that the first and most essential step in this direction is an immediate ceasefire, which would create the space required for diplomacy to take root and allow humanitarian efforts to proceed unhindered. Reaffirming Islamabad's long-standing commitment to peaceful dispute resolution, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar stated that Pakistan firmly believes in the primacy of dialogue and diplomacy over the use of force. He assured the Council that Pakistan will continue to support all efforts that seek a just, comprehensive and durable settlement to the Ukraine conflict, in line with international norms and the collective aspirations for global peace.

Death
toll from
Indonesia's
Central Java
landslides
rises to 30

Some 21 people remain missing after landslides triggered by torrential rain

DNA

JAKARTA: The death toll from landslides in two regions of Indonesia's Central Java rose to 30 as rescue efforts continued, the country's disaster mitigation agency said on Friday. Some 21 people remain missing after landslides triggered by torrential rain struck the city of Cilacap last week and the Banjarnegara region over the weekend, the agency said. Rescuers found 7 more bodies in Banjarnegara, the worst-affected area, on Thursday, bringing the death toll to 10 with 18 still missing, Abdul Muhari, the agency's spokesperson said in a statement late on Thursday. Dozens of houses were damaged, seven people injured, and more than 900 residents evacuated following the landslide there, Muhari said. At least 700 rescuers including police and military personnel continue to look for the missing, using excavators to speed up the search, he added. “We face several obstacles in the search, particularly with landslide ponds filled with debris and continuously flowing waters also risks new landslides due to rains,” Muhari said. In Cilacap, rescuers found four more bodies this week bringing the death toll to 20 with three people still missing, Muhari said. Authorities have extended search operations there until next week, and nearly 400 residents have been evacuated.

FCC
empowered
to hear all
constitutional
cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Law Aqeel Malik said on Thursday that the Federal Constitutional Court, not the Supreme Court, is authorised to hear constitutional matters following the 27th Amendment. “Judges have attempted to file their petition in the Supreme Court, but the court is not the correct forum for this request,” he said. Malik said the Supreme Court and the FCC had adopted their respective rules, adding: “The constitutional court has been established, and all cases of constitutional nature will now be heard by it.” He questioned why the judges had submitted their plea to the Supreme Court in the first place. According to him, the judges' petition “should have been filed in the constitutional court”, as only the FCC is empowered to hear it after the amendment.

Ishaq Dar discusses
bilateral matters
with Slovenian,
Danish counterparts

BRUSSELS: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met with the foreign ministers of Slovenia, Netherlands, Cyprus and Denmark, wherein they discussed the matters of bilateral, regional and global importance. The meetings were held here on the sidelines of 4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum. In a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia Tanja Fajon, the two leaders discussed the full spectrum of bilateral relations and exchanged views on key regional and global developments. Both sides also signed an MoU establishing the mechanism for Bilateral Political Consultations between the two countries. DPM Dar invited Minister Fajon to Islamabad for the inaugural round of consultations and encouraged Slovenia's participation in the Pak-EU Business Forum to be held in April 2026.

Both sides agreed to remain in regular contact, bilaterally and within multilateral frameworks, to further advance cooperation in areas of mutual interest. In a meeting with Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Ishaq Dar appreciated the positive trajectory of Pak-Denmark relations. Both leaders exchanged views on enhancing bilateral cooperation in economy, investment, trade, green energy, and people-to-people exchanges. They also agreed to maintain close contact at multilateral fora, particularly as fellow non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for the term 2025-26.

In the meeting with Foreign Minister of Cyprus Constantinos Kombos, both sides exchanged views on bilateral cooperation in diverse fields and agreed to stay in close contact in this regard. The deputy prime minister also met with Foreign Minister of Netherlands David van Weel in which they discussed areas of bilateral cooperation and noted with appreciation the positive trajectory of relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands. – DNA

Ukraine would give
Russia chunk of territory
under 28-point US plan

WASHINGTON: Ukraine would give up a swathe of eastern territory to Russia and slash the size of its army under a sweeping 28-point peace plan backed by US President Donald Trump, according to a draft obtained by AFP. Kyiv would also pledge never to join NATO, and would not get the Western peacekeepers they have called for, although European warplanes would be stationed in Poland to protect Ukraine. Russia would meanwhile be readmitted to the G8 group of nations and be rewarded with sanctions relief under the plan, which US officials said was still a “working document.” The proposal involves major concessions by Kyiv, which has previously refused to cede any land, while appearing to meet many of Moscow's maximalist demands following its 2022 invasion. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he expected to discuss the plan with Trump “in coming days.” He said any deal must bring a “dignified peace” that respected Kyiv's sovereignty. The White House denied reports it had cooked up the proposal with Moscow, saying envoy Steve Witkoff and Secretary of State Marco Rubio had been “quietly” working with both sides for the past month. “The president supports this plan. It's a good plan for both Russia and Ukraine,” White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters. Trump himself would preside over a “peace council” to oversee the ceasefire, similar to the one proposed for the Gaza truce between Israel and Hamas, according to the plan. Key parts of the

proposal correspond to Moscow's previous demands and cross Ukraine's red lines. These include that Ukraine would withdraw from the Lugansk and Donetsk regions, the frontline industrial belt known collectively as the Donbas that Ukraine still partly holds.

The two regions and Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, “will be recognized as de facto Russian, including by the United States,” while a demilitarized zone would be created in the Donbas. The war-torn southern regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia – which Russia falsely claims to have annexed – will be “frozen along the line of contact,” it said. Russia's army occupies around a fifth of Ukraine – much of it ravaged by years of fighting. Ukraine had been hoping for European-led peacekeepers but Russia's refusal to accept any such force also wins out in the plan.

NATO would agree not to station troops in Ukraine, while the country would be barred from joining NATO by both its own constitution and the alliance's statutes.

Kyiv meanwhile would reduce its army by a little less than half, to 600,000 personnel. In return, Ukraine would receive “reliable security guarantees,” the plan says without specifying, but “European fighter jets” would be stationed in neighboring Poland. Ukraine would also have to hold elections in 100 days – a further Russian demand and one echoed by Trump, who called Zelensky a “dictator without elections” earlier this year. – Agencies

IMF report urges
action on 90-plus
anti corruption
reforms

Lender says weak governance
and graft are costing
Pakistan up to 6.5% of GDP

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Governance and Corruption Diagnostic (GCD) Assessment Report has laid bare the extent of widespread corruption across all tiers of the state and called on Pakistan to implement more than 90 key recommendations to curb it. The Fund has identified 15 priority areas where weak governance, rule-of-law shortcomings and corruption are undermining Pakistan's growth potential by an estimated 5% to 6.5% of GDP each year. The report forms part of the prior actions for the release of a \$1.2 billion tranche under the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF). Of the 92 major recommendations in the action plan, the GCD urges steps to strengthen accountability and integrity among senior federal civil servants through the publication of their asset declarations in 2026. It also recommends

the introduction of risk-based verification of those declarations, and a review and strengthening of the legal framework for appointing heads of key oversight bodies, the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), to ensure merit-based, transparent and credible selection processes.

The IMF recommended 12 major action plans for the rule of law including: establishing a programme to reduce the case backlog, particularly for commercial disputes, with progress published online; creating an action plan to update the legal framework for contracts and property rights, culminating in a draft Code of Civil Procedure for parliament; introducing procedural changes to set time limits and reduce delays in contract cases; and forming a task force to propose efficiency reforms for contract enforcement, aligned with good practices like automated proceedings. Further recommendations involve identifying all state-owned land and its controlling entity within a centralised database under the Ministry of Finance; publishing clear, rule-based procedures for transferring state-owned land and a bi-annual list of all such transfers with their value. It proposes a performance assessment methodology for courts and judges, with the first results for relevant tribunals and special courts made public. It also calls for creating standardised principles for judicial appointments and tenure, ensuring compliance in commercial courts; strengthening integrity and conflict-of-interest rules for judiciary while increasing financial transparency; initiating annual public reporting on integrity measures, including complaint statistics; expanding, institutionalising Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms alongside enacting the Arbitration Bill; and preparing a multi-year judicial reform strategy to enhance institutional performance and service delivery in Pakistan.

Faisalabad glue factory
boiler blast kills 15 as
death toll mounts

Faisalabad commissioner says boiler exploded due to suspected gas leakage, causing extensive damage to buildings

FAISALABAD: The death toll from the massive boiler explosion in Faisalabad has risen to 15, as rescuers recovered more bodies from the rubble, Commissioner Raja Jahangir Anwar said on Friday. At least seven others injured in the blast are receiving treatment at local hospitals. The explosion occurred early Friday morning at a glue-manufacturing factory in Faisalabad's Malikpur area, collapsing the building and causing extensive damage to nearby structures. The Faisalabad commissioner said that the boiler exploded due to suspected gas leakage, as per initial report. He said that the lives lost in the blast were mostly the residents of houses present around the factory. Anwar further stated that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was personally monitoring the rescue operation. Initially, three casualties with multiple injured were reported in the deadly explosion. However, the death toll gradually swelled to 10 and later to 15 after more bodies were pulled out from the debris, while

some of the severely injured succumbed to their wounds. A rescue department spokesperson said that the boiler blast in the factory caused the structure to collapse and triggered a fire. The spox further added that the debris-removal work was underway at the site of explosion and more people are feared to be trapped under the rubble. The blast took place inside the factory's chemical warehouse, and the blast caused a major part of the factory, including its roof, to collapse. Behind the premises of the factory, around seven to eight adjoining houses also suffered roof and structural damages, leaving residents as well as factory workers trapped under the rubble. Rescue teams were engaged in search and relief operations, with more debris being removed amid concerns that the casualty toll could rise. Meanwhile, civil defence personnel have been called in to assist, and officials said the Faisalabad deputy commissioner is supervising the ongoing rescue and relief efforts at the site. – DNA

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