



Monday, November 24, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Shabana Mahmood tackling immigration head on, says report

Detailed News On Page-06

Govt committed to empowerment of women: Dar

Detailed News On Page-08



Governance: Punjab CM forms bodies

Detailed News On Page-01



High-Stakes Diplomacy

Prabowo's Pakistan trip back on track

With Indonesia under President Prabowo taking on an increasingly prominent regional role, Pakistan seeks to deepen engagement not just in economic cooperation, but in strategic partnership

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The President of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto, is tentatively scheduled to visit Pakistan in the second week of December, according to sources at the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The planned state visit, which was postponed earlier for undisclosed reasons, is being viewed as a major opportunity to deepen the already close bilateral ties between Islamabad and Jakarta. Foreign Office officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told this newspaper that President Prabowo's trip will focus on strengthening political, economic, and strategic cooperation. "Both countries are trusted friends, and this visit could catalyze new agreements," one senior diplomat said. Pakistan hopes to leverage the visit to reinforce cooperation in key areas such as trade, defense, and infrastructure. According to the sources, the rescheduling of the trip had been due to logistical and timing issues. But with the December window now under consideration, the Pakistani government is expressing optimism of a positive outcome. Several senior Pakistani officials have begun preliminary planning for bilateral meetings, and a formal agenda is expected to be announced once the dates are finalized.



Analysts view the visit as especially timely. With Indonesia under President Prabowo taking on an increasingly prominent regional role, Pakistan seeks to deepen engagement not just in economic cooperation, but in strategic partnership. Islamabad sees Jakarta as an important partner in Southeast Asia, and hopes to tap into its growing diplomatic influence. From the Indonesian side, sources suggest that President Prabowo may raise issues such as trade imbalance, mutual investment opportunities, and greater people-to-people exchange. Pakistan, for its part, is expected to press for increased Indonesian investment, particularly in the energy and infrastructure sectors.

Diplomatic insiders in Islamabad say that Pakistan officials are particularly hopeful that the visit will produce landmark agreements – possibly memorandums of understanding – that could unlock new phases in bilateral ties. "There is a growing recognition in both capitals that this is not just a ceremonial visit but one with real substance," remarked one senior aide. If the visit goes ahead as expected, it would mark one of the highest-level exchanges between the two countries in recent years. Islamabad is preparing to accord the Indonesian president a warm welcome, with ceremonies, diplomatic receptions, and high-level meetings lined up. The trip of President Prabowo Subianto is being closely watched in both countries as a defining moment to cement Pakistan-Indonesia friendship and chart a forward-looking roadmap for cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China Jinag Zaidong presenting a cheque of Rs 2 million to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on the occasion of PFOWA annual bazar. – DNA

HRCP concerned at life-long immunity

DNA

KARACHI: In a statement issued on Sunday after its 39th annual general meeting, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expressed concern over the 27th Constitutional Amendment, noting that lifetime immunity for public Office holders had "concentrated unchecked power in the hands of a few". The contentious tweak was passed by Parliament on November 13 after days of heated debate, opposition protests, and last-minute revisions, and received the president's assent the same day. The amendment made significant changes to the judicial system and

Continued on Page 06

EU, Pakistan agree to root out terrorism

DNA

BRUSSELS: In a joint statement shared on Sunday, Pakistan and the European Union (EU) called on Afghanistan to deal with terrorist organisations operating from its soil and to ensure the protection of human rights, especially those of women and girls. The development came as the 7th Strategic Dialogue between Pakistan and the EU was convened in Brussels. The meeting was co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and the EU's chief diplomat Kaja Kallas. According to a joint statement shared by the Foreign Office (FO), Dar and

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli attacks across Gaza

"Pakistan reaffirms its principled position in favor of the establishment of an independent, sovereign, viable, and contiguous State of Palestine

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, on Sunday, condemned in the strongest possible terms, the attacks by Israeli occupying forces across Gaza, which reportedly resulted in the deaths of several Palestinian civilians, including women and children and left many more wounded. "Such actions constitute a blatant violation of international law, relevant UN resolutions, and the recently concluded peace agreement at Sharm el-Sheikh. These attacks also undermine international efforts aimed at achieving lasting peace and stability in the region," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement. The Government of Pakistan reiterated its call upon the international community to take immediate steps to end Israeli impunity and ceasefire violations and to uphold international human rights and humanitarian law. "Pakistan reaffirms its principled position in favor of the establishment of an independent, sovereign, viable,

Continued on Page 06

Hamas delegation in Cairo to discuss Gaza ceasefire, say sources

DNA

CARIRO: A Hamas delegation was in Cairo to meet with Gaza war mediators, an Egyptian security source and a Hamas source said, as both Israel and the Palestinian resistance group continue to trade accusations of ceasefire violations. The Hamas official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the delegation would be discussing Israel's "continued violation of the ceasefire agreement". Egypt, Qatar and the US have been mediating between Hamas and Israel, securing the ceasefire that

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Large turnout in by-polls, says Atta Tarar

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar expressed confidence that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz will secure a clear majority in the by-elections. Speaking to the media in Islamabad, he said a large turnout is being witnessed across the country where by-polls are underway, calling it an encouraging trend. The Minister said the people will cast their votes in favour of candidates based on performance and service delivery. He added that the performance of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is recognized internationally.

Punjab CM forms bodies to ensure good governance

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed to form vigilance teams to ensure good governance in the province. Chairing a meeting in Lahore today [Sunday], she said special teams will be sent to every district for monitoring issues hindering good governance. Turning to 'Suthra Punjab Program', she warned strict action against private contractors, showing poor performance. Expressing anger over unsatisfactory cleanliness situation in some cities, the Chief Minister directed to suspend the payments of such contractors. Maryam Nawaz said round the clock monitoring will be done through CCTV cameras for permanent elimination of encroachments in the province.

Iran warns of attempts to target supreme leader Ali Khamenei

Intelligence Minister Khatib cautions "enemy seeks to target Iranian supreme leader"

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's intelligence ministry has warned of attempts by foreign adversaries, including the United States and Israel, to target supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and destabilise the Islamic republic. The country's ISNA news agency reported on Saturday that intelligence minister Esmail Khatib cautioned "the enemy seeks to target the supreme leader, sometimes with assassination attempts, sometimes with hostile attacks". While it was not immediately clear if the minister was referring to a specific incident, and Iranian officials often allege foreign plots, statements on threats against Khamenei's life had been rare prior to a 12-day war between Israel and Iran in June. "Those who act in this direction, knowingly or unknowingly, are the infiltrating agents



of the enemy," Khatib added, referring directly to Israel and the United States. During the conflict earlier this year, Israel targeted senior Iranian military officials, nuclear scientists and sites as well as residential areas, with the US later joining with strikes on key nuclear facilities. Asked about reports during the war that US President Donald Trump vetoed an Israeli plan to kill the supreme leader out of concern it would escalate the Iran-Israel showdown, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was dismissive but said the move would "end the conflict". At the time, Trump had also said that Iran's supreme leader was a "very easy target" and that "we are not going to take him out, at least not for now." He later said in a post on Truth Social that he had saved Iran's supreme leader from "A VERY UGLY AND IGNOMINIOUS DEATH". The 86-year-old Khamenei has been Iran's supreme leader since 1989 and has the final say on all state affairs.

Continued on Page 06

Sanaullah invites PTI to dialogue after CM Afridi signals cooperation

Senator Sanaullah says democracy advances through dialogue; assails PTI for creating "deadlock"

STAFF REPORT

FAISALABAD: Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Senator Rana Sanaullah on Sunday reiterated his party's offer to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for talks, emphasising that democracy thrives through dialogue. Speaking to the media in Faisalabad after casting his vote in the by-elections, he assailed jailed PTI founder Imran Khan, who "never engaged in politics". The PML-N leader recalled that Khan, during his tenure as the prime minister, refused to talk to anyone. "Democracy advances through dialogue, but they [PTI] created a deadlock," he said. His comments came just a day after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Sohail Afridi assured the PML-N-led federal government of his support for the "sake of peace" in the country. In a statement, Afridi said that no meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) had taken place since his election as the KP chief minister. "I will attend a meeting of the National Security Committee," the KP CM said, adding that he would participate in any meetings convened by the Centre to "speak up" for the rights of the province.

Continued on Page 06

KP Chief Minister should resign

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ikhthiar Wali on Sunday castigated Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, saying that no CM has the moral authority to stay in office when narcotics "are being manufactured in his own constituency." Addressing a press conference, Wali accused PTI members of involvement in the narcotics business and demanded an immediate crackdown in the Khyber district. The PM's coordinator warned that the proceeds of this illicit trade fund terrorism, fuel the production of ammunition and are smuggled across the country and beyond Pakistan's borders. "This dirty money is used directly against the state," he said. Wali noted that he had earlier urged the chief minister to dismantle drug smuggling routes from the district, but "instead of action, CM Afridi denied the problem and even had his information minister hold a press conference claiming nothing was happening."



MURREE SPARKLETT'S
Bottled Drinking Water

WATER TASTES BEST IN GLASS!!

CARBONATED WATER ALSO AVAILABLE IN GLASS BOTTLE



For Sales & Supply Contact:

Adeel Butt 03334131756	Qaiser Waheed 03325808422	Riaz Muhammad 0335 5111043
---------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------------

KP's next green gold? Tea cultivation awaits CM Afridi's support

SHINKYARI: On a misty morning at Shinkyari in Mansehra district, the scent of fresh tea leaves drifts over the rolling green slopes of the National Tea and High-Value Crops Research Institute (NTHRT). To the untrained eye, these terraced rows might appear modest, but for the scientists and farmers tending them, they represent a quiet revolution that could save Pakistan's billions in foreign exchange if given the support it desperately needs by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government. Hazara and Malakand divisions, blessed with salinity-free soils, abundant rainfall and diverse ecological zones, are naturally primed for tea cultivation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Yet, despite decades of research and proven success, commercial tea farming remains a largely untapped opportunity. Pakistan's tea production began in 1958, followed by formal research under the Pakistan Agriculture Research Institute in 1976. In 1986, with the establishment of NTHRT in Shinkyari, tea cultivation truly took root. Over the next two decades, a black tea processing unit (2001), a green tea factory (2005), and a modern Turkish processing plant were added, creating the foundation for a domestic tea industry in KP. But while the fields were growing, Pakistan's tea imports were swelling even faster. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, tea imports from July–February 2021-22 surged to \$423.466 million, up 11.64% from the previous year. In just February 2022, imports skyrocketed nearly 60%, reflecting Pakistan's deepening reliance on foreign tea to satisfy one of the country's most cherished daily rituals. In 2023, Pakistan's tea exports were valued at \$18.9 million, making it the 34th largest global exporter. The main destinations for these exports were the United States (\$8.8 million), Saudi Arabia (\$1.5 mil-

lion), and Afghanistan (\$1.4 million). However, this is a small fraction of Pakistan's total exports, and the country is a net importer of tea, as evidenced by its status as the world's largest importer of tea. Dr. Abdul Waheed, Director of NTHRT, said that tea cultivation was a highly profitable business and a farmer can earn millions from a few acres of investment. "Pakistan imported 258,000 tons of black tea worth over \$596 million and 300 tons of green tea costing \$60 million during 2020-21," he explained. "At this pace, our import bill may cross Rs 300 billion in the coming years." Referring to Pakistan tea exports in 2024, he said the data shows it imported over \$468 million in tea during the first nine months of FY 2024-25 and was a top export market for Vietnam's tea in March 2025. Overall exports of coffee, tea, mate, and spices totaled \$120.51 million in 2024. Waheed said Pakistan has more than 64,000 hectares of land in KP and Azad Kashmir suitable for commercial tea cultivation. However, only 80 hectares are currently being used for tea cultivation, which is extremely low. Tea research scientist Dr. Naveed Ahmed believes that tea farming could dramatically change rural economies if proper training is provided to farmers. "It's a lucrative business," he said. "A farmer can earn up to Rs 1 million profit per acre with an investment of only Rs 0.2 million." Tea plants take five years to mature but once established, they can produce for 120 years—an intergenerational asset. With 158,000 acres in KP and 4,000 acres in Azad Kashmir found suitable for cultivation, the potential for expansion is immense. Swat, Mansehra and Batagram areas receiving over 100mm of rain are particularly ideal. Before 2008–09, he said tea thrived on 350 acres in Swat alone.

Today, scientists at NTHRT are cultivating nine varieties of tea and producing plants capable of transforming the region's agricultural landscape. Inside the Shinkyari facility, about 33 acres are dedicated to tea gardens and research on fruits, vegetables, medicinal herbs, olives and tea varieties. The institute can produce four million tea plants and process 10 tons of tea leaves annually. It has even exported six tons of tea to a foreign country and distributed over 100,000 tea plants to local farmers. Yet commercialization remains slow. "We need substantial investment," Dr. Waheed emphasized. "Farmers need support, especially after the recent floods damaged fields in Ogi, Siran, Bhattal and Shinkyari." He believes the government must step in by providing financial incentives and declaring tea and olive plantations as forestry so they aren't cleared for other uses. "The last monsoon badly affected my tea plants," said Sajid Tanoli, a farmer, looking for CM Sohail Afridi Government support. Dr. Abdul Rauf, Director General Research at KP Agriculture Department, confirms that scientific research on tea is complete and Shinkyari type tea in market produced. What remains is the push to take this knowledge out of research plots and into farmers' hands. "Encouraging farmers is the next step," he said. "The potential is here; we just need to commercialize it." Back on the slopes of Shinkyari, workers pluck tea leaves under the soft autumn sun. Each handful is a reminder of what Pakistan stands to gain: reduced import bills, empowered farmers and a thriving local industry. With timely government support, the country could not only grow its own tea varieties but reshape its economic future, one leaf at a time.—DNA



FAISALABAD: Advisor to PM on Political and Public Affairs, Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan cast their votes in PP-116 on Sunday at Polling Station No. 43, Government MC Model Girls Higher Secondary School, Samanabad.

People exercised vote right transparently: Sana

He said that Pakistan needed peace, democratic practice and continuity. Only PML-N had delivered national breakthroughs in the past and now it can lead the country toward sustained stability and development in the future, he added

DNA

FAISALABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister (PM) on Political and Public Affairs Senator Rana Sanaullah Khan has said that polling has been completed peacefully and transparently across the district as people exercised their right to vote in a free, secure, and well-managed atmosphere during by-elections 2025. Talking to the media here on Sunday, he said that Pakistan can no longer afford any more political engineering as the only way to move the country forward is political stability, democratic continuity and politics of service. He also reviewed the ground situation in five by-election constituencies of Faisalabad and said that some individuals were "deliberately pushing a narrative of rigging" even before ten votes were cast. Such claims are baseless and politically motivated, he added. He said that the people of Faisalabad would vote for service, development and problem-solving and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had consistently delivered on these fronts. He said that Pakistan's greatest national achievements including becoming the first Islamic nuclear power in 1998 and securing a historic victory in the 2025 Marka-e-Haq Bunyan-um-Marsoos Operation had come under PML-N leadership. These are the moments that brought pride not only to Pakistan but to the entire Muslim world. The 2025 victory was globally acknowledged including by India itself, marking the first time in history that the world unanimously recognized Pakistan's

success in a direct military conflict, he added. Rana Sanaullah Khan said that Pakistan was once again on the right track, regaining global respect and moving towards becoming a developed nation, similar to the upward trajectory witnessed in the late 1990s. He said that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif, and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the direction of governance and development was now clear and promising. Visible improvements across all constituencies, neighborhoods and localities reflected the public impact of ongoing development and governance measures in Punjab, he added. He urged the people to ensure no repeat of anti-democratic events, conspiracies or political engineering. Pakistan could move forward with stability and unity, he added. He expressed hope that the public would once again support PML-N which is the party that had delivered progress, national honor and strong governance in critical national moments. Responding to a question, he refuted the allegations of code-of-conduct violations and said that no individual had been stopped, harassed, arrested or booked at any polling station and no complaint had been received from any of PTI's lawyers or polling agents. He said that the polling, counting and result compilation processes were transparent and happening in full public view, making allegations of technical rigging entirely unfounded. Speaking on development, he said major projects worth approximately Rs. 70 billion including

the upcoming Metro Bus extension and WASA's major potable water initiative had been finalized but deliberately postponed for inauguration after the by-elections to avoid any perception of political influence. All these projects would be launched promptly after the electoral process concludes, he added. Regarding turnout, he said that by-elections traditionally attract 25% to 30% voter participation, even when both sides mobilize fully. PML-N was working diligently to bring out every vote whereas the opponents were "only active on social media" with no polling camps or agent presence at stations, he added. Rana Sanaullah also rejected criticism regarding his family's political participation and said that merit, service and constituency performance were the real criteria, not relationships. He said that political dialogue, not confrontation, was the essence of democracy. Even today Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had extended an unconditional offer for a "Charter of Stability" on Independence Day, he added. Commenting on Imran Khan, he said that PTI chairman had "never practised democratic politics", whether in government or opposition as he always avoided dialogue and fueled confrontation. He said that Pakistan needed peace, democratic practice and continuity. Only PML-N had delivered national breakthroughs in the past and now it can lead the country toward sustained stability and development in the future, he added.

Punjab CM observing election code of conduct fully: Azma

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari has said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has not inaugurated a single development project in Lahore or in any constituency where by-elections are being held, strictly adhering to the election code of conduct. In a statement issued on Sunday, she said the chief minister also refrained from participating in the campaign of any PML-N candidate, demonstrating complete respect for electoral rules. She said Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi is leveling baseless allegations against the Punjab CM only to divert attention from the Election Commission's notice issued to him and to cover up his own political embarrassment. Responding to his recent remarks, Azma said Afridi, just like his leader, continues to spread lies. The information minister noted that Afridi himself had openly threatened government officers, telling them they would "not see the next sunrise," and videos of these threats were publicly available. Such statements, she said, clearly show that intimidation and bullying remain a defining feature of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's politics.—APP

Voters reject boycott call, turn out in strong numbers: Talal

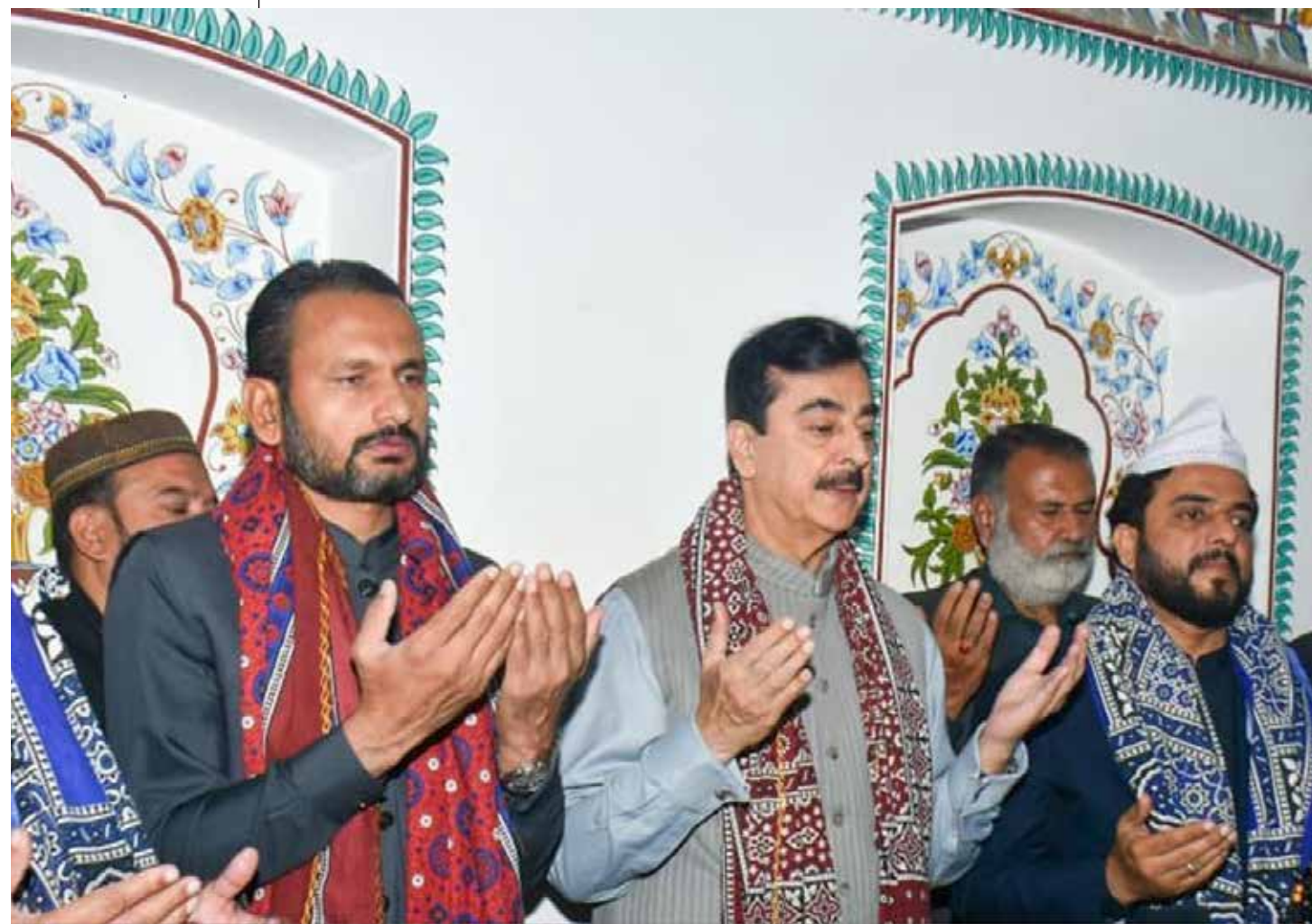
FAISALABAD: State Minister for Interior Senator Talal Badar Chaudhry on Sunday said that the most significant outcome of today's by-elections was the clear rejection of boycott calls, declaring that voters demonstrated their commitment to democratic participation despite attempts by a political party to discourage turnout. Talking to the media after casting his vote in NA-96, he said that the people of Punjab had refused to endorse the boycott narrative and questioned why, in a single day of nationwide by-elections, two different principles had been adopted — one allowing voting in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while urging abstention in Punjab. He argued that discouraging citizens from exercising

their fundamental right to vote amounted to a violation of the constitution. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should take notice of an "assault on the basic right," he added. Talal said that although various notices had been issued by the ECP, including one served to him, his party would respond to all such notices through constitutional and legal means. He said that the larger issue was the attempt by a political party to prevent citizens from voting. "If a party claims to be democratic and representative, how can it call for a boycott of a right clearly guaranteed by the constitution?" he asked. The state minister said that voters were casting ballots in recognition of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's

governance and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's performance rather than responding to slogans or agitation campaigns. He said that turnout in Jaranwala and other areas appeared higher than typical by-election levels, and not a single polling station reported a functional boycott. Responding to a question about turnout estimates, he said that while exact figures would emerge later, initial observations indicated participation above usual by-election patterns. On security arrangements, the state minister expressed satisfaction and said that no untoward incident had been reported. The police, rangers, and Pakistan Army were also deployed under the ECP's operational control, he added.—APP

Int'l Children's Day celebrated at KICH in Peshawar

PESHAWAR: International Children's Day was celebrated at the Khyber Institute of Child Health & Children Hospital (KICH) here Sunday, wherein representatives from the Pakistan Paediatric Association (PPA), paediatric specialists, UNICEF officials and officers from the provincial health department participated. The event aimed to highlight the importance of children's rights and emphasize that access to play, recreation and quality education is essential for the healthy development and bright future of every child. Children from the Save-Our-Souls (SOS) School also took part in the ceremony. The participants stressed the need to open the Khyber Institute of Child Health & Children Hospital at the earliest for the benefit of the public. Project Director Professor Dr. Amjad Mahboob stated that 95% of the hospital's construction and technical work has been completed, while the remaining work will be finalized within the next two months, making a long-delayed project available for public service. This facility is not only a state-of-the-art children's hospital but also a research center, he added. Dr. Amjad Mahboob further explained that this will be the first specialized children's hospital at the government level after tertiary care facility where treatment for all major childhood diseases will be provided. He said that despite a 20-year delay due to various reasons, the project is now in its final stages.—APP



MULTAN: Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani offering dua at shrine of Hazrat Musa Pak Shaheed on Sunday.



freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING







Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage



Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2874289 - Fax: (+92 51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

Karachi House No 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Khatkhata Mall, Main Tariq Road, 172-1 Block-2, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi. Tel: (+92 21) 3453088, 34530479 Fax: (+92 21) 34537167 E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore P-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92 42) 3573081, 3571108 Fax: (+92 42) 35711428 E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-6, 3rd Floor, Zameer Plaza, Laili Road, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92 91) 2902778 Fax: (+92 91) 2902888 E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House #4, Street #4, Chahar Angar Road, Shahr-e-Naw, Kabul - Afghanistan Tel: (+92 70021) 373, 93 779368 RSR, 93 779488 RSR E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
--	---	--	--

National Days and Armed Forces Days

NOVEMBER

Nov 01/Algeria
National Day

Nov 04/Italy
Armed Forces Day

Nov 07/Russian Federation
Socialist Revolution

Nov 09/Cambodia
National Day

Nov 11/Poland
Independence Day

Nov 14/Jordan
Birthday of King Hussein

Nov 15/Belgium
Kings Day

Nov 15/Brazil
Republic Day

Nov 15/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
National Day

Nov 18/Oman
National Day

Nov 18/Morocco
Independence Day

Nov 21/Bangladesh
Armed Forces Day

Nov 22/Lebanon
Independence Day

Nov 25/Suriname
National Day

Nov 28/Mauritania
National Day

Nov 28/Albania
Flags Day



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi..5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Jordan envoy inaugurates furniture event in the Capital

The event will bring together distinguished guests, longstanding multi-generational patrons, and the valued team and family behind the brand, creating a unique gathering to honor Pakistani cultural heritage

DNA

ISLAMABAD M. Hayat & Bros., one of Pakistan's oldest and most revered furniture houses, hosted exclusive two-day Heritage Furniture Exhibition . The event was held at a local hotel. Established in 1870, the brand will celebrate over a century and a half of dedication to traditional artistry and fine woodworking. The exhibition was inaugurated on the first day graced by His Excellency the Ambassador of Jordan Dr Maen Khreasant as the Chief Guest. Curated by Nilofar Khalid Aziz, the exhibition will present a meticulously selected collection that embodies the brand's legacy. Attendees will have the opportunity to view and acquire a range of heirloom-quality pieces, including classic bed sets, elegant consoles, dining and drawing room sets, as well as unique Safari and accent furniture. Each item is a testament to the brand's commitment to using premium hardwoods and traditional techniques that have been passed down through five generations. "We are not just showcasing furniture; we are inviting patrons to become a part of a living history," said a spokesperson for the brand. "This event is a tribute to the timeless spirit of craftsmanship and design that has defined M. Hayat & Bros. since 1870. It is a celebration of the hands that have carved, the vision that has designed, and the families who have cherished our pieces for generations." The event will bring together distinguished guests, longstanding multi-generational patrons, and the valued team and family behind the brand, creating a unique gathering to honor Pakistani cultural heritage. M. Hayat & Bros. has been a cornerstone of Pakistan's furniture tradition, shaping aesthetic sensibilities with pieces known for their durability, elegance, and deep-rooted connection to South Asian artistry. This exhibition offers a rare glimpse into the enduring legacy of a brand that has furnished Pakistani homes for 155 years.



CDA implements 85pc rent ceiling from Nov 1

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has approved an 85 percent rise in the house rent ceiling for all its employees, with the revised rates effective from November 1, 2025. Talking to media on Sunday, CDA spokesperson confirmed the decision and stated that the authority had issued the notification on November 18 titled "Revision of Rental Ceiling for Hiring of Residential Accommodation at Islamabad and Other Specified Stations including Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta." He said that the CDA adopts the decision of the Federal Government regarding an increase in the ceiling for hiring of residential accommodations of CDA employees. The spokesperson added that in this period of inflation, the 85 percent increase in the house rent ceiling is a welcome step for employees, and this decision will not only reduce their financial hardships but also help improve their standard of living.—APP

Education data-sharing framework development lauded

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Education and Professional Training, Nadeem Mahbub, has appreciated the collective efforts for developing a national education data-sharing framework, stressing that maintaining a careful balance between data sharing and protection against misuse is essential. He was addressing a policy dialogue jointly organised in Islamabad by the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) and the Data and Research in Education – Research Consortium (DARE-RC), attended by policymakers, researchers, and representatives of development organisations. The purpose of the dialogue was to build consensus on a national education data-sharing framework for Pakistan. Participants emphasised the responsible use of education data to improve policy-making and strengthen learning opportunities for children across the country. Representatives from government institutions, universities and development organisations highlighted the need for strong, transparent and ethical data systems. The discussion covered the structure and objectives of the proposed framework, ethical responsibilities in data usage, clear data access protocols and effective accountability mechanisms, said a Press release on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Nadeem Mahbub said that the Pakistan Institute of Education has been playing a commendable role in strengthening the national education data landscape. He stressed once again that a balance must be maintained between sharing data across the system and safeguarding it from any form of misrepresentation or misuse. He also welcomed the formulation of a clear and effective way forward as a result of the dialogue. Salim Salamah, Deputy Group Head for Health, Education and Demography at the British High Commission, said that Pakistan already possesses a strong base of education data; however, there is a need to make better use of it. He explained that FCDO's vision for DARE-RC is to promote evidence-based policymaking in order to develop a system that serves the needs of all children. He also appreciated PIE's growth and its collaboration with partners to establish transparent and ethical data systems. Director General of the Pakistan Institute of Education, Dr Muhammad Shahid Soroya, stated that provincial-level data consolidation and evidence-based analysis were among PIE's core responsibilities. He noted that trust was the most critical factor in this work, ensuring that data would be used in a fair and constructive manner. He thanked DARE-RC, FCDO and other partners for supporting PIE in developing data-sharing protocols. DARE-RC Team Lead Dr Ehtasham Anwar said that effective policy action is not possible without strong data systems. He clarified that the objective of the dialogue was to develop an ethical national data-sharing framework encompassing data collection, sharing, usage and protection. He added that consistent and effective use of data, rather than one-off exercises, is necessary to improve education outcomes. At the conclusion of the session, DARE-RC presented key takeaways and next steps, reaffirming its commitment to continued collaboration with PIE to strengthen systems and tools for high-quality and reliable education data. The dialogue also featured valuable contributions from Dr Kanwal Ameen, Dr Farah, Rabia Awan, Izza Farrukh and Mr Abid Gill, along with other education experts and panel members, who shared their insights and recommendations.—DNA

Govt streamlining pension system for overseas' retirees

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Controller General of Accounts and the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues, has undertaken a series of initiatives aimed at improving the pension disbursement system for overseas Pakistani retirees. According to a document available with Wealth Pakistan, the government is addressing longstanding issues related to pension disbursements, data integration and logistical challenges, ensuring that pensioners residing abroad receive their benefits without delay. The Finance Division is working to further strengthen the pension and General Provident Fund (GPF) management system by improving data integration between autonomous bodies and the AGPR system. Enhancing this linkage will help streamline the processing of pensions and GPF contributions for employees on deputation. Since many civil servants working in autonomous bodies operate under separate pension contribution mechanisms, better coordination will ensure smoother and more accurate pension transfers. To achieve this, the Finance Ministry is planning to develop a more robust and unified tracking system that will securely record pension histories and ensure timely and accurate transfer of contributions. The Finance Division is also working to improve disbursement of pensions to employees of abolished or merged entities through smoother processes. While many pensioners have been receiving their benefits without difficulty, the Division recognizes the need to further streamline procedures for those nearing retirement or approaching superannuation, particularly in matters such as leave encashment and GPF withdrawals. To strengthen this transition, the Finance Division has emphasized prioritizing these cases and putting in place measures that fully safeguard the rights and entitlements of all pensioners. A large number of Pakistani retirees living abroad will soon experience greater ease in managing their pension payments, as efforts are underway to simplify account opening and verification procedures. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is developing a dedicated online platform that will enable biometric and facial-recognition verification from anywhere in the world. Through this system, overseas pensioners will be able to submit their proof-of-life certificates remotely, eliminating the need for travel to Pakistan for physical verification. Once launched, the platform will greatly reduce inconvenience for pensioners and help ensure the timely and uninterrupted disbursement of pensions. The system is in its final development stages and is expected to be rolled out in the near future. The Finance Ministry has also instructed the SBP to work closely with banks to synchronize their systems and implement the proposed online application, ensuring the smooth flow of pension payments to overseas retirees. These reforms are part of the government's broader efforts to modernize the public sector pension system and provide better services to Pakistan's pensioners, regardless of their location. Prof. Dr. Najeeba Arif is a distinguished novelist, short-story writer, poet, editor, researcher, and critic. She also holds the distinction of being the first woman to serve as Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters. Prior to this role, she served as Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Literature at the International Islamic University, Islamabad. To date, more than twenty books by Dr. Najeeba Arif have been published. Her notable works include Mee-thay Nalkay (short stories), Mukhota (novel), Raagni Ki Khoj Mein (memoir), Ma'ani se Ziyada (poetry), and Navah-e-Kazima (a versified Urdu translation of Qasida Burda Sharif Her critical and research contributions include significant works such as Urdu Fiction: Mazahiro-Mabahis, Islam, Pakistan aur Maghrib, Raftah-o-Ainda, Atharvin Sadi ke Do Nadir Safarnamay, Sair-e-Mulke-Awadh (an unpublished travelogue by Yusuf Khan Kamalposh), 9/11 aur Pakistani Urdu Afsana (a study on the new resistance trend in Urdu literature), and Shifting Narratives: A Brief History of Sirah Literature in Urdu. Earlier, Prof. Najeeba Arif's poetry collection Ma'ani Se Ziyada received the Best Urdu Literary Book Award (2015), while her short-story collection Meethay Nalkay was honored with the Parveen Shakir Trust's Akse-Khushboo Award (2022). The Adab festival's latest honour acknowledges Prof. Dr. Najeeba Arif's outstanding creative, scholarly, and critical contributions to Urdu literature.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of a flock of ducks swimming at Rawal Lake in the Federal Capital

Najeeba wins Infaq Best Urdu Writer award

ISLAMABAD: Renowned writer, literary scholar and Chairperson of Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Prof. Dr. Najeeba Arif has been awarded the Infaq Best Urdu Writer Award 2025 during the 10th Adab Festival Pakistan, held in Karachi. The accolade celebrates her lifelong commitment to Urdu literature and her exceptional contributions as an author, critic, and academic, said a press release issued here on Saturday.—APP

Police conduct sumbal operation

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police conducted a grand search and combing operation in various areas of Sumbal Police Station under the supervision of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Qazi Ali Raza. An official told on Sunday that Superintendent of Police (SP) Industrial Area led the on-ground teams, while Ladies Police and CTD units also participated in the operation. He said the police personnel were given a detailed pre-operation briefing regarding deployment, checking procedures and coordination. During the search operation, 235 individuals and 115 houses were checked. Police teams also inspected 28 motorcycles and 31 vehicles as part of the security sweep. The official added that eight (08) suspicious individuals were shifted to the respective police stations for further verification. He said the purpose of the operation was to curb crime in the area and ensure a safe environment for residents. According to the ICT Police, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi has already directed district-wide grand search operations to eliminate criminal elements.—APP

Moot on Challenges for Inclusive, equitable edu this month

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), in collaboration with the Comparative Education Society of Asia (CESA), has planned to organize the 14th Biennial International Conference from November 23 to 25. This year's conference will focus on the theme "Challenges for Inclusive and Equitable Education," aiming to present practical research and policy recommendations for promoting equity, inclusion, and sustainability in the field of education. The opening session of the conference will be addressed by national and international renowned educationists, including Bella Jamil, CEO of the Institute of Education and Awareness (Lahore), Professor Manzoor Ahmed, Chairman of the Early Childhood Development Network of Bangladesh, Manjula Withana Pathirana, Director of the National Institute of Education of Sri Lanka, and Professor Dr Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor AIOU. Researchers, teachers, policymakers and representatives of educational institutions from various Asian countries including Pakistan will also participate in the conference, said a press release on Saturday. During the conference, participants will present their research insights on the challenges and opportunities facing the region in the context of inclusive education, gender equality, educational technology, special education, early childhood development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The conference will also serve as an important forum for strengthening educational cooperation among Asian countries, exchanging best practices and formulating common strategies for educational reforms to ensure quality, equitable and accessible education for every child and individual in the region.—DNA

Briefs

Pakistan, Italy
to collaborate
under
broader EU
frameworks

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Saturday, had an interaction with Ambassador Andrea Orizio, Head of Delegation for Italy, on the sidelines of the 4th EU Indo-Pacific Forum in Brussels. The discussion covered strengthening Pakistan-Italy ties, enhancing economic engagement and collaborating under broader Pakistan-EU frameworks, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Separately, the deputy prime minister/foreign minister, held an informal exchange on sidelines of 4th EU Indo-Pacific Forum with Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan and Bangladesh's Ambassador Khandker Masudul Alam. "They underscored the importance of maintaining positive dialogue to promote mutual understanding and shared views on current regional and international matters," it was added.—DNA

Islamabad-
Tehran-Istanbul
train service to
begin operations
soon

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, said that the railway system in any country served as backbone of economy and communication network. Chairing an important meeting on the matters related to Pakistan Railways, at the PM's House, the prime minister directed that legal and economic experts of international standards should be engaged, particularly for the projects related to regional connectivity and international train links. He further stressed that a public-private partnership model should be adopted for matters related to railway property and land. The prime minister also appreciated the steps taken towards restoration of the railways system and commended Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi and his team for their work on the revival and up-gradation of Pakistan Railways. The meeting was attended by Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema and other senior government officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the measures being taken to improve Pakistan Railways. It was informed that seven digital portals under 'Rabta' initiative were operational for the digitalization of Pakistan Railways, 56 trains had been shifted on it and 54 railway stations had been digitized. The participants were informed that free wi-fi facility was provided at Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad railway stations while an additional 48 stations would get free wi-fi service by 31 December this year. It was further informed that an online freight booking system had been introduced. A pilot project for a digital weighing bridge was launched at Karachi City Railway Station whereas in the next phase, this facility would be extended at Pipri, Karachi Cantonment, Port Qasim, Lahore.—APP

MF graft report alarming as
Rs 5.3t irregularities exposed

Anjum Nisar says women driving progress, urges govt to launch deep reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the FPCCI's Businessmen Panel (BMP), Mian Anjum Nisar, has reacted strongly to the IMF's governance and corruption diagnostic report, terming it "an alarming charge-sheet against Pakistan's governance system" after revelations of Rs5.3 trillion in irregularities. He said the business community was shocked not only by the magnitude of leakages but also by the institutional weaknesses highlighted by the IMF. At the same time, he said the economic improvement Pakistan has witnessed in recent months—especially in exports, small entrepreneurship and workplace productivity—has been "largely driven by women's increased participation in the economy," emphasising that Pakistan must now supplement this progress through deep, long-term structural reforms.

Commenting on the report, Mian Anjum Nisar said the IMF's findings were "a wake-up call" for the government and policymakers. Instead of treating the report as criticism from a foreign lender, he said, the government should view it as "professional, evidence-based feedback" pointing to long-standing structural weaknesses in governance, oversight, procurement and public-sector management. The scale of governance failures, he said, clearly explains why Pakistan's fiscal space collapses re-

peatedly and why the economy remains trapped in cycles of crisis, bailouts and emergency measures. He said the IMF report has, for the first time in years, quantified leakages and inefficiencies with unprecedented clarity, documenting weak institutional controls, slow judicial processes, outdated audit functions, delays in accountability, and the absence of transparent procurement systems. According to him, these are issues the business community has been highlighting for a decade, urging successive governments to stop financial bleeding in public entities, reform procurement laws, digitise federal and provincial departments, and eliminate rent-seeking loopholes. "If Pakistan wants economic sovereignty, it must fix governance," he said. Mian Anjum Nisar urged the government to announce an integrated national economic reforms agenda aligned with the IMF's key recommendations. He said Pakistan cannot progress until there is unified political commitment to transparency, accountability and institution-building. Short-term administrative steps, he emphasised, no longer hold value. "The IMF has highlighted systemic failures. Therefore, solutions must also be systemic. Cosmetic actions cannot rescue an economy of 250 million people," he said. He proposed establishing a National Economic Governance Council—comprising federal and provincial representatives, economists, private-sector leaders, former finance secretaries and regulatory experts—to monitor re-

form implementation for the next five years. With political transitions frequent and policy directions changing abruptly, he said Pakistan must create institutional mechanisms that ensure policy continuity beyond governments' tenure cycles. The BMP chairman said comprehensive digitalisation of economic governance remains the single strongest tool against corruption. He noted that globally successful economies are distinguished by transparency through automation, and Pakistan must learn from this. "End-to-end digital monitoring—from procurement to payment—can drastically cut leakages and raise revenues," he said, urging the government to digitalise tax administration, customs management, PSDP execution, subsidy distribution, utility billing and budgeting processes. He said BMP has long pushed for real-time fiscal dashboards, track-and-trace systems and e-governance platforms, and the IMF report now reinforces the urgency of adopting these reforms without delay. Discussing public-sector enterprises, he said loss-making PSEs have become a "black hole for taxpayers' money," consuming hundreds of billions annually. Pakistan cannot carry this burden any longer. He urged the government to either privatise chronically loss-making entities or introduce corporate governance frameworks under which merit-based professional managers from the private sector can be appointed. "No country

can achieve sustainable economic growth while financing dead-weight institutions," he said. He also underscored the need for judicial, regulatory and audit reforms. The IMF's observation regarding judicial delays, particularly in commercial cases, is among the biggest barriers to foreign investment. "Investors avoid environments where contracts cannot be enforced promptly," he said. Strengthening commercial courts, reducing regulatory overlaps, ensuring professional and depoliticised functioning of accountability bodies, and modernising audit systems, he added, are essential for restoring investor confidence. Pakistan's ability to attract FDI will remain limited until investors know that property rights, contract enforcement, and tax systems operate with predictability and fairness. The BMP chairman said Pakistan needs to place economic policy on "institutional auto-pilot," meaning that long-term roadmaps and structural reforms remain consistent regardless of political transitions. Countries with strong institutions experience stability because policies are driven by systems, not individuals. He said Pakistan has suffered for decades due to policy reversals, inconsistent taxation frameworks, and abrupt changes in fiscal and energy policies. "If institutions are strong, economic governance becomes predictable. This is how economies grow," he said.

CDA launches online
complaint system welcomed
but question follow-through

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has introduced a new online complaint-redressal mechanism allowing the citizens to register civic issues by tagging the authority's official account @cdathecapital or CDA Chairman @RandhawaAli on social media platforms. The initiative, according to officials, aims to make municipal services faster, more transparent and easier to track. The CDA spokesperson told APP on Sunday that complaints lodged online would be addressed "immediately," with field teams dispatched to resolve issues at residents' doorstep. The system, he said, is designed to strengthen direct communication between citizens and the authority while reducing delays that often plague municipal service delivery. However, while residents have welcomed the step as a sign of modernization, many remain cautious, noting that past complaint channels have often suffered from slow response times and poor coordination among departments. "This is a positive step, but CDA must ensure the system actually works on the ground," said Zameer, a resident of G-9, who noted that similar efforts in the past "fizzled out after strong initial publicity." Another citizen, Sadia Babar from I-8, said the digital mechanism would be helpful for quick reporting, "but it needs proper monitoring; otherwise the complaints will again pile up unanswered." Civil society members also pointed out that accessibility remains a concern, as not all residents actively use social media platforms. They said the authority must ensure parallel offline complaint channels continue to function efficiently for elderly and low-income citizens. Responding to these concerns, the CDA spokesperson maintained that the initiative would improve accountability by making the process visible to the public. "Public facilitation and speedy service delivery remain among the top priorities of the authority," he said, adding that the digital system would help streamline coordination between field teams and senior officials.

The system is part of a broader push to digitise civic services in the capital, where complaints related to sanitation, streetlighting, water supply and road maintenance have steadily increased. How effectively the new mechanism performs, residents say, will depend on sustained oversight rather than announcements alone.—DNA

Membership
surge accelerates

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) continues to expand its influence as prominent business bodies, trade groups and market associations from across Lahore join the organization. A series of back-to-back joining ceremonies, held at PIAF Head Office Gulberg, highlighted the group's strengthening position under the leadership of Patron-in-Chief Mian Anjum Nisar, who is also Vice President of the SAARC Chamber. In a major development, Moazzam Rasheed, Senior Vice President of the Sundar Industrial Estate and an important figure formerly associated with the Founders Group, formally joined PIAF.

He was accompanied by delegations from the Sundar Industrial Estate Association, Glass Market Cooper Road, Beadon Road traders and the Chemical Market. A series of high-profile joining ceremonies held at PIAF Head Office, Gulberg, witnessed unprecedented participation from leading traders, industrialists and representatives from major markets across the city. In the first ceremony, senior business leader and former key pillar of the Founders Group, Moazzam Rasheed, who also serves as Senior Vice President of Sundar Industrial Estate, formally announced his unconditional joining of PIAF. The event, packed with traders and business representatives, was presided over by Mian Anjum

Nisar, who presented the official membership certificate to Rasheed and welcomed him into the organization. Addressing the attendees, Mian Anjum Nisar remarked that the inclusion of seasoned business figures like Moazzam Rasheed would bring valuable strength to PIAF and significantly enhance the performance of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). He emphasized that PIAF has always valued experience, competence and commitment, and that the growing trust of renowned business personalities is the clearest evidence of the organization's performance over the past 29 years. Prior to the formal announcement, Moazzam Rasheed arrived with delegations from the Sundar Industrial Estate Association, Glass Market Cooper Road, Beadon Road, and the Chemical Market. In the presence of the PIAF Executive Committee, he praised the leadership, vision and integrity of Mian Anjum Nisar, stating that his decision to join PIAF was driven by the group's consistent work for the business community.

APBF urges accelerated
structural reforms

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has called for urgent and comprehensive structural reforms to restore fiscal stability, improve governance, and promote sustainable economic growth in Pakistan. The move comes after the IMF's recent governance and corruption diagnostic report, which highlighted trillions of irregularities and systemic inefficiencies across public institutions. APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood said that Pakistan's recent economic improvements—particularly in exports, small business activity, and workplace productivity—have been significant. However, systemic governance gaps, inefficiencies, and financial leak-

ages remain a major risk to sustaining growth. Experts also emphasized that recent gains have been largely driven by increased participation of women in entrepreneurship and small enterprises. Women-led initiatives in technology, export-oriented manufacturing, and service sectors have strengthened resilience in local markets. Analysts argue that future reforms must actively support women entrepreneurs through access to finance, training, and regulatory facilitation. Speaking on the issue, APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood stated that the IMF report is both a warning and an opportunity. "The report clearly identifies structural weaknesses.—DNA

ICCI, Realtors back Pakistan
sustainability summit

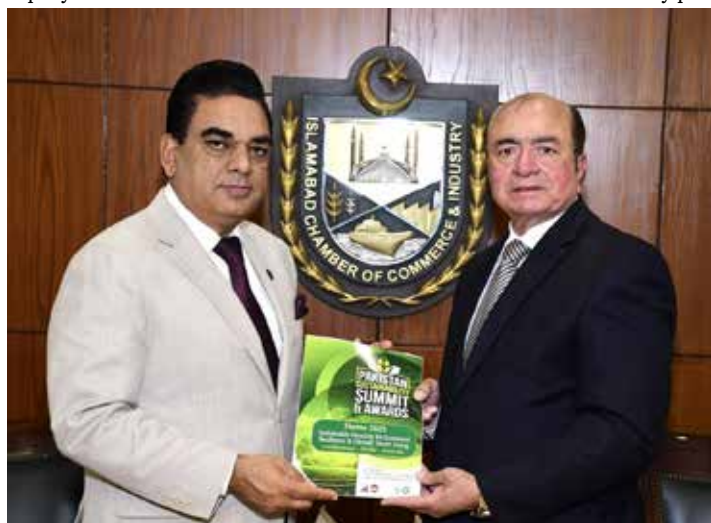
DNA

ISLAMABAD: The capital city is set to host one of the most significant dialogues on sustainable urban development as preparations intensify for the Pakistan Sustainability Summit 2025, themed "Sustainable Housing for Economic Resilience and Climate Smart Living." The upcoming summit, scheduled on December 3, is gaining momentum across both public and private sectors, as key national stakeholders express strong support for an urgent transition towards environmentally responsible, economically viable, and socially inclusive housing models in Pakistan. This renewed push for sustainability in urban planning was evident on Saturday when the Founder of the Pakistan Sustainability Summit and Executive Director of Devcom-Pakistan, Syed Munir Ahmed, called on the President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Chairman of the Realtors Association of Pakistan, Sardar Tahir Mahmood, and briefed him on the vision, objectives and national relevance of the summit. The meeting underscored the strategic

importance of engaging business leadership and the real estate sector in shaping Pakistan's housing future at a time when cities are expanding rapidly and climate vulnerabilities are

term economic resilience. "The real estate and construction sectors are the backbone of Pakistan's economy, but they must now evolve in accordance with modern sustainability prin-

dustry and Chairman of the Realtors Association of Pakistan, I assure our full support to the Pakistan Sustainability Summit 2025. This platform is critically important to bring together policymakers, developers, environmental experts, academics and communities to devise innovative, energy-efficient and environmentally responsible housing solutions for the future," Sardar Tahir Mahmood stated. He noted that climate change, rising energy costs, water scarcity, and the rapid growth of urban populations have created unprecedented challenges for the housing sector. According to him, the only way forward is to adopt low-carbon construction practices, renewable energy integration, green building standards, sustainable materials and efficient land-use planning. He reiterated that ICCI and the Realtors Association of Pakistan would encourage their members and stakeholders across the country to actively participate in the summit and contribute their insights, experiences and solutions for a greener housing future. Syed Munir Ahmed, a well-known environmentalist and climate change advocacy expert, welcomed the support.



intensifying. Expressing his full support for the initiative, Sardar Tahir Mahmood emphasized that sustainable housing is no longer an option but a necessity for Pakistan's long-

ciples," he said. "Sustainable housing is directly linked to economic resilience, climate-smart living and social well-being. As President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and In-

Unchecked
elite threatens
national survival

ISLAMABAD: Prominent business leader and former Islamabad Chamber of Commerce president Shahid Rashid Butt said that the powerful, greedy and uncontrolled elite has become a serious threat to the national economy and to the country's 250 million people. He said the public is becoming poorer and more frustrated, while the youth are leaving the country. The business leader said influential business groups are weakening key institutions and pushing the country into uncertainty, unemployment, inflation and instability for the sake of profit. Speaking to the business community, he said that almost every sector has turned into a mafia, but the public suffers the most from the flour mills mafia, the sugar mills mafia, the ghee mafia and the commission agents mafia. He said the tax and regulatory system has become a burden, electricity and gas prices continue to rise, and people are being squeezed to benefit independent power producers. Shahid Rasheed Butt added that the weak oversight system becomes active only for political revenge, while the elite enjoy growing privileges and special concessions. Secret decisions are filling their coffers and halting development. He said the public believes the entire system is designed to reward the powerful and extract from the people, and that it cannot function without borrowing. He said falling investment, the exit of multinational companies and declining output in large industries are evidence of this failed system. Industrialists, he noted, are struggling to survive due to expensive electricity, uncertain tax policies and complex regulations, while business costs keep rising. Tax revenues and exports are consistently declining, markets remain unstable, and small businesses are under severe financial strain. He said elite plunder has become a challenge to national survival. If mafia protection, political unrest and policy discontinuity are not addressed, the economy will remain weak. Regulators have become a problem for the economy, and scams worth billions of rupees are being ignored. So-called game changer projects delivered nothing, and the economy is being run on slogans. He said Pakistan needs lasting reforms instead of cosmetic steps so that both citizens and businesses can have a reliable state system. He warned that continued policy drift will deepen the recession and limit job creation.—DNA

Security at
churches
across Capital
reviewed

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police intensified security measures on Sunday as Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Qazi Ali Raza visited multiple churches across the federal capital to review on-ground arrangements ahead of upcoming religious activities. An official told APP that the visits were carried out in line with the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, who has ordered foolproof security for all worship places in the city. During the inspections, the SSP Qazi met police officers and personnel deployed at the sites, examined duty performance, and issued directions to further strengthen checking procedures, enhance vigilance, and ensure complete alertness during services and peak visiting hours. He also reviewed security at entry and exit gates, parking areas, perimeter deployment and overall implementation of the church-specific security plan. The SSP Qazi held meetings with church administration members, assuring them that ICT Police remains fully committed to protecting the lives and property of all citizens without discrimination. He said that effective cooperation between police and the public is essential for maintaining peace and stability in the federal capital—APP

**MOST EXPERIENCED
MANUFACTURERS &
EXPORTERS OF
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
IN
PAKISTAN**

**JUDO
KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND
COLOURED BELTS**

WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD
127 C, Industrial Estate
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan
Phone: +92-53-3259000 / 3256708
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

Ashraf

How a One-Night Conflict Reshaped Airspace Politics

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL

FOR years, Pakistan had longed for the day when a Pakistan-India cricket match would once again take place on Pakistani soil. The desire was not merely for a sporting contest, but for the symbolic easing of tension that such a match could represent. The region's circumstances had begun to shift in Pakistan's favour; the memory of past cricket diplomacy still echoed in the collective consciousness. Teams from across the world had resumed touring Pakistan without hesitation, acknowledging the country's stability and hospitality. Yet, in sharp contrast, India stood unmoved—unyielding in its refusal to send its team, clinging stubbornly to a narrative that no longer matched the ground reality. But then, quite unexpectedly, something happened in early May—a move so abrupt that even seasoned observers of the Sub Continent were left astonished. India, which had refused to come for cricket, suddenly appeared in Pakistan not for a match played with bat and ball, but for one played with fire and steel. It arrived not to compete on a pitch, but in the dark of night, without invitation, without prior notice, and certainly without adherence to the rules of civility that neighbours are expected to uphold. For a day or two, Pakistan was taken aback. It seemed as though India had arrived to play a match it had denied for so long, though of a far more dangerous kind. Yet, being a responsible neighbour, Pakistan chose to treat the situation with composure and clarity. If India insisted on playing a one-day contest, then Pakistan would face it with the calm confidence of a team that trusts its bowlers, its fielders, and its collective discipline. Thus began, in the intervening night between May 5 and 6, a brief but decisive engagement—one that would be remembered not for the noise it produced, but for the clarity with which it ended. India, which had strutted into the arena with misplaced bravado, could not sustain even a fraction of the contest. Before twenty overs of the metaphorical match had passed, the matter was settled. In six hours, Pakistan's armed forces dismantled India's aggression with the precision of yorkers crashing into unsteady wickets. What followed were the kind of bouncers that leave the opposing side rattled and confused. When faced with the accuracy, preparedness, and resolve of Pakistan's defenders, India abruptly insisted on ending the match altogether. The scoreboard was no longer in its favour, and the misadventure collapsed under the weight of its own miscalculation. The matter could have ended there, but international politics rarely allows things to rest in silence. Soon after the brief confrontation, the President of the United States made remarks that shook India's political leadership. With a casual tone that carried the subtlety of a seasoned satirist, he repeatedly teased India about the number of its aircraft shot down during the encounter. At times

IslamabadPOST

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue: 156

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



he said five, then moments later six, and occasionally seven. The shifting number became a source of widespread amusement. For India's Prime Minister, however, it became a lingering embarrassment. Wherever he went during the election campaign that followed, crowds echoed the question mockingly: "How many planes were there?" The scene recalled the classic dialogue from the iconic Indian film Sholay, where the villain Gabbar Singh asks in a menacing voice, "How many men were there?" Life, it seemed, had staged its own version of the script, with global politics taking on the flavour of cinematic irony. From May 6 onwards, the U.S. President continued to make fresh disclosures about the downed aircraft, each statement renewing the sting of humiliation for New Delhi. And each time the topic of aircraft resurfaced, another memory presented itself—one that had unfolded recently on an entirely different stage. At the Dubai Air Show recently as reported, where aircraft from around the world displayed their technological finesse, an Indian warplane became the subject of viral ridicule. As global audiences watched, the aircraft began leaking oil, and the footage spread across social media with remarkable speed. In the video, Indian mechanics and technicians could be seen scrambling with makeshift measures—holding plastic shopping bags to catch the leaking oil, collecting it in a box as though repairing a machine in a roadside workshop. The display reflected not the sophistication of a modern air force, but the alarming negligence and poor maintenance that have become increasingly visible in India's military assets. Just as this mishap was sinking in, tragedy struck again. An Indian Tejas fighter jet crashed during the show, killing its pilot, Wing Commander Vikram Singh. These consecutive failures reinforced the troubling truth: Indian warplanes, whether on display or in combat, had repeatedly become symbols of mishap rather than mastery. The incidents, comical to some and tragic to others, compounded the perception of recklessness and unpreparedness in India's aerial ambitions. And the chain of such events only lengthened after the May skirmish. Additionally, following India's unprovoked intrusion, Pakistan suspended the use of its airspace for Indian passenger flights. The decision was strategic, proportionate, and in accordance with Pakistan's sovereign rights. Since then, Indian airlines have had to take longer and more expensive routes, accumulating losses as they skirt around Pakistan's air corridor. In this way, even commercial aviation became a reminder of the consequences of reckless adventurism. Thus, from warplanes to passenger jets, the month of May marked a turning point—a moment when India's aircraft, whether meant for battle or for transportation, became sources of inconvenience, embarrassment, and financial strain. The lessons, however, remain clear. Pakistan seeks peace, dignity, and stability in the region. It has shown patience in cricket, restraint in diplomacy, and responsibility in defence. But peace cannot be safeguarded by one side alone. India must recognize that its actions do not merely disrupt the immediate calm; they unsettle the broader equilibrium of South Asia. At a time when the world looks toward cooperation and shared progress, adventurism serves no purpose—least of all for a nation that repeatedly finds itself on the losing end of its own misjudgments. The region deserves tranquility, not theatrics. The people of both countries deserve development, not destruction. India would therefore be wise to tread with caution, to value peace over provocation, and to ensure that no further miscalculation turns the skies—or the borders—into another dangerous arena.

How Zohran Mamdani Charmed Trump

Qamar Bashir



Trump acknowledged that their missions were not contradictory but complementary — one applying nationally, the other locally. And this recognition brought an unmistakable sense of camaraderie to the room. Both men smiled often. Both radiated assurance. Both appreciated that their philosophies, though different in ideology, converged on the fundamental question of affordability for ordinary people. It was here that Mamdani's charm proved itself most effective

THE meeting between President Donald Trump and New York's mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani was far more than a routine courtesy call. It became a living testimony to the unusual chemistry that unfolded between the two most powerful figures in the United States. One commands the entire nation — the President of the United States, the de facto king of the world. The other is now the political sovereign of New York City — the financial capital of the planet, a city richer than many countries, and home to more than eight million people who struggle daily with rent, transportation, unaffordable healthcare, groceries, and childcare. It was these very struggles that Mamdani turned into the core of his campaign. His promises of affordable rent, cheaper living costs, universal accessibility to basic services, and a fairer economic structure energised New Yorkers across all boroughs. Today, in the Oval Office, it became clear that those same promises had resonated with President Trump as well. From the moment Mamdani walked into the Oval Office, his demeanour radiated calm confidence. There was nothing of the intimidated politician bracing for a clash with Trump's famously explosive temper. His forehead shone under the lights not with anxiety, but with assurance. When both men sat before the media, Trump leaning comfortably into his chair and Mamdani standing beside him with poise, the visual alone revealed an unexpected harmony. Mamdani looked every inch a leader who believed in his mission — and had just successfully sold it to the most unpredictable president in modern American history. Trump spoke warmly, enthusiastically, and without restraint. He welcomed Mamdani into his office "with great happiness" and declared, without hesitation, that the new mayor-elect would be "an excellent mayor" for New York. He even went further, saying he now had full confidence that Mamdani possessed the ability, capacity, and commitment to deliver everything he had promised during his campaign. Trump's tone was not merely courteous — it was admiring. Journalists, sensing the unusual warmth, immediately tried to provoke the president with pointed, provocative questions. One reporter reminded Trump that Mamdani had once called him a "fascist." The remark could have triggered an eruption — Trump has unleashed furious tirades far less. But instead, he smiled. He dismissed

the insult, saying he did not feel offended at all and adding that people evolve, learn, and change with time. It was a striking moment of restraint from a man known for his instinctive aggression. Another reporter attempted to escalate the tension further by pointing out that Mamdani had famously declared he would arrest Benjamin Netanyahu if the Israeli leader ever came to New York City. Again, Trump refused to be baited. He brushed the question aside by explaining that Mamdani, like every new leader, would learn through experience. He even drew a parallel with his own political evolution, candidly admitting that during his first term he himself was naive and had to adjust, recalibrate, and grow with the responsibilities of office. This calmness from Trump did not come from political calculation alone—it came from admiration. The president who had once called Mamdani a "communist," a "danger," and a "Democratic disaster," now praised him openly, respecting the clarity of his mission and appreciating the resonance between their agendas. For months, Trump had campaigned on lowering inflation, reducing grocery prices, bringing down soaring mortgages, and dismantling Obamacare in favour of a more affordable system. Today, he recognised that Mamdani was fighting for the same goals within New York. It was this alignment of economic priorities that created a surprising bridge between two men who had once seemed destined to be adversaries. Trump acknowledged that their missions were not contradictory but complementary — one applying nationally, the other locally. And this recognition brought an unmistakable sense of camaraderie to the room. Both men smiled often. Both radiated assurance. Both appreciated that their philosophies, though different in ideology, converged on the fundamental question of affordability for ordinary people. It was here that Mamdani's charm proved itself most effective. He didn't merely communicate policy; he made Trump see himself in the same fight. Reporters continued probing, trying to extract conflict, but Trump controlled the entire exchange with surprising discipline. When pressed again about his earlier insults toward Mamdani — calling him communist, obnoxious, dangerous, and someone who should be deported — Trump did not retreat into excuses. Instead, he said that after meeting Mamdani, he now believed the mayor-elect would "do extremely good," calling him good-na-

tured, dedicated, and aligned with his own mission. The most remarkable moment came when Trump was asked whether he would help Mamdani. Instead of distancing himself, Trump leaned forward and declared: "Not only will we help him — we will help him a lot." That sentence alone symbolized the complete transformation of a relationship that had begun in hostility and evolved into respect. This was not merely political politeness. It was evidence of Mamdani's extraordinary persuasive power. He had managed to win over not just the voters of New York, but the president of the United States — a man known to bend for no one. Mamdani emerged from the meeting not as a subordinate seeking approval, but as a leader who had earned Trump's admiration through conviction, clarity, confidence, and charm. What makes Mamdani's success even more compelling is his promise not to create distance between himself and the people he serves. He has pledged not to hide behind the glass ceiling of officialdom. He will not use the bulletproof mayoral limousine but will continue to ride the same subways, eat in the same restaurants, walk the same streets, and take the same buses as ordinary New Yorkers. He intends to remain accessible, exposed, and connected — experiencing firsthand the delays, the overcrowding, the rent pressures, and the daily hardships that shape the lives of millions. It is this commitment to immersion that will give him constant, unfiltered feedback as he navigates the complexities of the job. The meeting between Trump and Mamdani ended on a note of rare optimism. A president who was once his critic is now his unexpected ally. A mayor-elect once dismissed as radical is now seen as a capable, persuasive, solutions-driven leader. With the backing of the president and the trust of his constituents, Mamdani now prepares to take office with unprecedented momentum. If today was any indication, New York City is about to witness a political chapter defined not by confrontation, but by confidence, clarity, and collaboration — led by a mayor who has already demonstrated the rare ability to charm even the most uncharismatic man in American politics. — Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France Former Press Attaché to Malaysia Former MD, SRBC Macomb, Michigan, USA

Democracy in a Changing World

Dr Muahammad Akram Zaheer



Albright believed strongly in the potential of youth movements. Young people, she argued, were more globally connected, more educated, and more determined to demand accountability than previous generations. Their willingness to challenge long-standing hierarchies appeared to offer a new force for democratic change. Yet in practice, youthful idealism has often collided with entrenched power structures. In many authoritarian or semi-authoritarian...

IN 2021, before her death, Madeleine Albright expressed the expectations about democracy and contrasts with the sobering reality that has unfolded over the past four years. She explained why the anticipated resurgence has not occurred, how authoritarian states have adapted; how the United States has shifted away from its long-standing support for democratic causes and why democratic ideals nonetheless remain alive in many societies despite mounting pressures. Madeleine Albright argued that authoritarianism was inherently weak because it relied on coercion rather than genuine public legitimacy. She believed that democratic ideals rooted in dignity, accountability, and autonomy remained powerful forces around the world. For her, the growing political activism of youth, the durability of civil society, and the universal desire for fairness pointed toward a coming democratic renewal. Her essay predicted that dissatisfaction with aging dictatorships would lead to openings for democratic change, particularly if the United States continued to support pro-democracy movements. However, four years later, events have not supported this optimistic vision. Instead of an international revival, democracy has retreated in many regions. Protest movements that once seemed promising have been crushed. Governments with authoritarian tendencies have strengthened their grip, often using legal frameworks and digital tools to justify repressive measures. A particularly significant change has occurred in the United States itself. The second Trump administration has withdrawn funding from programs that traditionally supported democratic causes abroad and reduced the government's readiness to defend democratic norms at home. According to Albright's earlier warnings, this shift in U.S. policy encourages authoritarian governments, weakens global democratic networks, and reduces America's influence as a moral and political leader. Examples from Iran and Cuba illustrate how authoritarian fragility does not necessarily lead to democratic change. In Iran, widespread protests following the death of Mahsa Amini in 2022 briefly suggested that long-standing grievances could erupt into real political transformation. Yet the government suppressed the movement through mass arrests, executions, and strict control of communication. In Cuba, historic protests in 2021 raised hopes that economic hardship and political frustration might force change. Once again, the state responded with intimidation, surveillance, and imprisonment, successfully silencing dissent. These cases demonstrate that even unpopular authoritarian regimes can survive by adapting their methods of control, especially in the absence of strong external pressure. The text also argues that the United States once played

a critical role in supporting democratic activists in such situations. Through diplomatic pressure, targeted sanctions, civil society funding, and international broadcasting, Washington helped dissidents raise their voices and protected them from isolation. However, current U.S. policy has dismantled many of these tools. Institutions such as USAID, Radio Free Europe, and numerous democracy-related programs have lost funding. Thousands of initiatives that previously trained journalists, supported election monitoring, or strengthened civil society organizations have been reduced or shut down. As a result, protest movements facing repression now have fewer resources and less visibility. Meanwhile, China and Russia, the world's leading authoritarian powers, have not offered appealing alternative models. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine discredited any notion that strongman governance brings stability or responsible leadership. China, once admired for rapid economic growth and efficient administration, now faces slowing economic performance, stricter political controls, and growing skepticism about its intentions in developing countries. In many regions, China is increasingly seen as a creditor that encourages dependency rather than a partner that supports long-term development. Yet because the United States is retreating from the democratic sphere, China has found more space to present itself as a reliable, non-interfering provider of investment and political support for governments that do not wish to face democratic accountability. Although authoritarian models appear unattractive, democracy has not advanced because its institutional foundations have weakened in many places. Yet public support for democracy remains strikingly strong. Surveys from multiple regions show that majorities continue to prefer accountable government over authoritarian rule. Even in countries experiencing political setbacks or military coups, citizens consistently express support for fair elections, independent courts, and term limits. This demonstrates that democratic ideals continue to resonate, even when democratic institutions are failing. Across the world, civic resistance movements reveal this continuing commitment. In Georgia, large crowds have challenged flawed elections and a controversial law targeting nongovernmental organizations. In Israel, massive demonstrations in 2023 defended judicial independence. In Myanmar, despite extreme repression, activists continue to resist military rule at enormous personal cost. In Tunisia, where democracy flourished for a decade after the Arab Spring but has since been dismantled by President Kais Saïed, citizens continue to challenge the erosion of rights. In Belarus, opposition

leaders remain imprisoned or exiled, but protests and international campaigns persist. Albright believed strongly in the potential of youth movements. Young people, she argued, were more globally connected, more educated, and more determined to demand accountability than previous generations. Their willingness to challenge long-standing hierarchies appeared to offer a new force for democratic change. Yet in practice, youthful idealism has often collided with entrenched power structures. In many authoritarian or semi-authoritarian states, young activists face digital surveillance, online harassment, and imprisonment. In some countries with declining democratic institutions, such as Tunisia and Turkey, many young people have responded not by organizing politically but by emigrating. This trend reflects a crisis of confidence: young citizens expect more from their governments, yet see fewer opportunities to shape political outcomes. The text emphasizes that democracy requires more than public support; it needs strong institutions capable of enforcing accountability. Independent courts, legislatures, media organizations, and election commissions form the infrastructure that sustains democratic systems. These institutions, together with global networks of assistance, have historically helped democracies build resilience. Organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the European Union, and others have long contributed to training election observers, supporting journalism, and encouraging reform. Their efforts have helped secure important victories, such as Poland's 2023 opposition win and Tunisia's decade of democratic experimentation. Nonetheless, successes are increasingly rare. Freedom House reports that nearly 60 countries experienced democratic decline in 2024 alone. Examples include the dissolution of opposition parties, the removal of term limits, and the passage of laws designed to silence civil society organizations. Meanwhile, the reduction in U.S. support for democratic initiatives has strained the international system that once helped movements survive repression. Albright's central insight: that the human desire for freedom, dignity, and accountability continues to exist even when democracy is under strain. The challenge lies not in the disappearance of these ideals but in the weakening of the structures and alliances needed to help them flourish. Albright argued that democracies must work together to support one another, counter authoritarian influence, and preserve the institutions that uphold democratic life. The future of democracy depends not only on public aspiration but also on coordinated leadership and sustained investment in democratic infrastructure.

Briefs

Sanaullah invites PTI to dialogue after CM...

FROM PAGE 01

Meanwhile, Sanaullah – while recalling Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s offer to the PTI for talks on the Charter of Democracy during and after the PTI’s government in the Centre – said that his party was still in favour of sitting with politicians to resolve issues. He lamented that the PTI founder was “solely focused” on filing cases against the opposition leaders, rather than engaging them in dialogue. The PML-N leader asserted that his party would emerge victorious in the by-elections, stating that “the public will support the PML-N”. On the voter turnout for the by-elections, Sanaullah said that the figure usually remains between 25% and 30% in the by-polls. The PML-N leader stated that the by-elections were conducted in a peaceful manner, saying “no one was arrested or stopped anywhere in the entire constituency”. “Development projects were stopped due to the election. The planning for the development project has already been done,” he added. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) held by-elections in six National Assembly constituencies – NA-18 (Haripur), NA-96 (Faisalabad), NA-104 (Faisalabad), NA-129 (Lahore), NA-143 (Sahiwal) and NA-185 (Dera Ghazi Khan).

Iran warns of attempts to target...

FROM PAGE 01

Earlier this month, Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian said he was particularly concerned for Khomeini’s life during the war and feared that the country’s institutions “would start fighting among each other.” In July, Khomeini said Israel’s attacks during the war were intended to weaken the Islamic republic, sow “unrest and bring people into the streets to overthrow the system”. A ceasefire between Iran and Israel has been in place since June 24, but both Israel and the United States have threatened new strikes if Tehran revives its nuclear programme.

Hamass delegation in Cairo...

FROM PAGE 01

came into effect last month. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted that Israel would do “everything necessary” to stop Hezbollah from regrouping in Lebanon and Hamas from doing the same in Gaza. “We are continuing to strike terrorism on several fronts,” Netanyahu said as he opened a cabinet meeting. Netanyahu claimed Sunday that Hamas had made “several attempts” to infiltrate beyond the yellow line to “try to harm our soldiers”. “We have thwarted this with great force and also retaliated and exacted a very heavy price. That includes many terrorists we eliminated,” he added. Netanyahu said it was an “absolute lie” that Israel needed outside approval before taking action.

HRCP concerned...

FROM PAGE 01

the military’s chain of command, and granted sweeping immunities to government officials. Under the Amendment, lifetime immunity from arrest and all criminal and civil proceedings has been granted to the president and anyone holding the ranks of Field Marshal, Admiral of the Fleet and Marshal of the Air Force. Referring to the Amendment, the HRCP drew attention to “escalating threats to constitutional democracy, civic freedoms, and the safety of vulnerable communities across the country”. The HRCP said it “is deeply concerned over the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, which undermines judicial independence by expanding executive control over matters that should remain free from executive interference”.

Islamabad: Torch Ceremony of the 35th National Games Held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The torch relay ceremony of the 35th National Games was held at Rawal Dam in Islamabad, featuring the participation of Olympian Sadaf Siddiqui and Asian gold medalist Muhammad Akram. A large number of athletes, organizers, and officials from the Islamabad Olympic Association were also present on the occasion. During the ceremony, the Islamabad Olympic Association formally handed over the torch to the Balochistan Olympic Association, marking the next phase of its symbolic journey. The torch had traveled through various cities before reaching the federal capital, where it received a warm welcome. The 35th National Games are scheduled to begin on December 6 in Karachi, with more than 6,000 athletes from across the country set to participate. The mega sporting event will feature competitions in multiple disciplines, showcasing the country’s top athletic talent.



Verstappen wins Las Vegas Grand Prix, Norris closes on F1 crown

LAS VEGAS: Formula One world champion Max Verstappen produced a masterful drive to win the Las Vegas Grand Prix on Saturday as McLaren’s Lando Norris finished second to edge closer to a maiden drivers’ title. Red Bull ace Verstappen pounced on a slip by pole-sitter Norris on the first turn of Sin City’s street circuit to grab the lead and controlled the race thereafter to claim the 69th Grand Prix win of his career, finishing more than 20 seconds clear. Britain’s Norris tightened his grip on the season standings, with his second place leaving him on 408 points with two races remaining, 30 clear of teammate Oscar Piastri, who finished fourth. Mercedes’ George Russell was third. After the drama of Friday’s qualifying, when heavy rain made for a treacherous surface that Verstappen likened to driving on ice, Saturday’s 50-lap race under the glittering lights of Las Vegas got under way in cool, dry conditions.

Verstappen, who could mathematically still win a fifth consecutive title after a result that leaves him 42 points behind Norris with two races remaining, was quick to exploit the improved weather. Norris, who had arrived in Vegas fresh from back-to-back wins in Mexico and Sao Paulo, attempted an aggressive move to block Verstappen right from the start. The move backfired and Norris ran off the track and allowed Verstappen to grab first place. Norris dropped back to third after he was passed by Russell into second. “I made the mistake into turn one,” Norris said. “You know you’ve got to be punchy into turn one, but I was just a bit too punchy and that cost me. “But second is still a good result, good points. It’s not like I’m too disappointed. “I went for it, I let Max have a win, let him go and have a nice race. “I wanted to put on a show right, that’s why we’re here in Vegas. It was not my best performance.

But when a guy wins by 20 seconds it’s because he’s done a good job out there.” Verstappen said Red Bull’s tyre strategy had laid the foundation for the win. “Normally the race is always a tough one for us, we are not normally that great on tyres, but today it seemed like we were more in control and I could push a little bit more,” he said. “We had a lot more pace and I could stay out a little bit longer and split the race in half and that definitely helped a lot. “The car was working pretty well, much more to my liking and at the end it was quite a decent lap. Every lap I was just feeling comfortable and not taking too much out of the tyre.” While Verstappen has an outside chance of the title, he acknowledged that catching Norris over the final two legs in Qatar and Abu Dhabi would be difficult. “It’s still a big gap, we always try and maximise everything we’ve got,” Verstappen said. “We’ve had an up-and-down season and tough times, but

Thousands march in France to demand action on violence against women

PARIS: Thousands of protesters across France braved the cold on Saturday to express their anger over the persistence of violence against women and demand more public action and funds to combat the scourge. In Paris, crowds of demonstrators – 50,000 according to organisers, 17,000 according to the police – waved signs, chanted, danced and sang as they moved through the capital in the protests organised by the Greve feministe (Feminist Strike) collective of some 60 organisations. “A man kills a woman every 2.5 days in France,” read one placard distributed by the feminist collective NousToutes (All of us Women). “Nine out of 10 victims know their rapist,” read another. “It’s 2025, is it still normal to count our dead women?” said Sylvaine Grevin, president of the national femicide victims’ federation, whose sister was killed in 2017, ahead of the start of the Paris demonstration. Hundreds of protesters also gathered in the cold in other cities, creating crowds awash in purple – a colour linked to feminism. “We have the right to be loved without being abused,” said 20-year-old student Juliette in Lille in northern France. The associations behind the protests are calling for the adoption of a comprehensive framework law against violence, along with a three-billion-euro budget (\$3.5-billion) to implement it. They are also calling for improved education and funding for groups that support victims of violence. According to official figures published Thursday by MIPROF, a government organisation tasked with protecting women from violence and fighting human trafficking, the number of intimate partner femicides rose by 11 percent between 2023 and 2024, with 107 women killed by their partner or ex-partner. A woman is a victim of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault every two minutes, and every 23 seconds of sexual harassment, indecent exposure, or the unsolicited sending of sexual content, according to MIPROF. – APP

Bosnian Serbs hold snap poll to replace banned leader

BANJA LUKA: Bosnian Serbs will head to the polls on Sunday to pick a replacement for their entity’s banned president, Milorad Dodik, after he was removed for defying Bosnia’s international peace envoy. Dodik was ejected from office in August following his conviction for ignoring rulings by the international appointee who oversees a peace deal which has held Bosnia together since the end of its 1990s inter-ethnic war. The early vote in the Republika Srpska (RS) – one of Bosnia’s two semi-autonomous entities alongside a Bosniak-Croat federation – means the winner will serve for less than a year before general elections in October 2026. It is seen as a crucial test of support for Dodik’s nationalist party, which has been in power for nearly two decades. Around 1.2 million eligible voters can choose between six candidates, but there are two main favourites. Sinisa Karan, a 63-year-old former interior minister, is a close ally and personal choice of Dodik, who remains head of his party, the Union of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD). The main opposition group, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), selected the relatively unknown Branko Blanus, a 56-year-old electrical engineering professor who has repeatedly levelled corruption allegations against Dodik and his party. The poll comes after years of clashes between Bosnia’s high representative, Christian Schmidt, and Dodik, which many analysts said pushed the country to the brink of its worst political crisis since the 1992-1995 war ended. Earlier this year, Dodik was convicted and banned from public office for six years for flouting Schmidt’s decisions. After months of defying the ruling, the 66-year-old leader, who has close ties to the Kremlin, suddenly accepted his removal in October. Within days, the US dropped sanctions against Dodik and several of his associates, including Karan, that had been in place since 2017. – Agencies

Islamic Solidarity Games 2025: One City, Many Nations, 18 Unforgettable Days

RIYADH: From the moment I arrived in Riyadh, it was clear that these would not be ordinary days. From the airport to the highways, from the stadiums to Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, the presence of the Islamic Solidarity Games 2025 could be felt everywhere. Banners, volunteers, reception centers and world-class facilities stood as proof that Saudi Arabia was fully prepared to host a grand international sporting event. After completing my registration at the Main Media Centre, the sight of journalists from across the globe, cutting-edge technology and perfectly organized operations strengthened the realization that this was not just a sporting competition, but a global mission of unity and solidarity. The following day, we visited the Athletes’ Village at Princess Nourah University. Different languages, different colors and different cultures – yet one shared purpose. African athletes on their morning runs, Central Asian wrestlers in intense training, confident Arab players, and the graceful presence of female athletes all reflected a new Islamic landscape of determination, courage and hope. With each passing day, Riyadh grew more vibrant. Beautifully decorated stadiums, an efficient transport system, firm yet courteous security, and smiling volunteers showed that the entire city was breathing with one spirit. Even before the competitions began, the atmosphere felt festive. The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and in representation of Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, in the presence of the Governor of Riyadh, Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz. This moment not only elevated the magnitude of the event but also delivered a clear message to the Islamic world: sport is the strongest language of unity. The ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Qur’an, followed by a breathtaking display of lights, an impressive drone show, and performances inspired by

Saudi heritage and culture. The drone show depicted a spiritual journey from Makkah to Madinah, symbolizing the 57 participating nations, while the sounds of traditional Saudi instruments and the serving of Arabic coffee beautifully reflected the nation’s hospitality. Saudi Minister of Sport and President of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Association (ISSA), Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, emphasized in his address that these Games were not merely about competition, but about strengthening bonds of brotherhood, friendship and unity across the Islamic world – a vision strongly supported by the Crown Prince’s commitment to bringing nations closer through sports. Four Saudi athletes – Abdulrahman Al-Qahtani, Duna Abu Talib, Hamdan Al-Bishi and Sultan Al-Daoudi – raised the Games’ flag, while the oath-taking ceremony highlighted the values of integrity, fairness and true sportsmanship. The opening ceremony was broadcast live on 40 international television channels and two global digital platforms, underscoring the worldwide importance of the event. As the delegations of 57 countries marched into the stadium and the theme “One Nation” echoed throughout the venue, it felt as if they were one body and one soul. At that moment, sport turned into a powerful message, a message of unity, peace and brotherhood. Following the opening, the competitions officially began. The first gold medal was won by Türkiye’s Gamze Altun in weightlifting, giving the Games a golden start. Soon after, futsal, volleyball, swimming, judo, boxing and athletics competitions filled the arenas, which were packed with enthusiastic spectators. Every moment in the Media Centre brought a new headline, a new record and a new story. Within days, clear leaders began to emerge. Türkiye, Bahrain and Morocco dominated athletics; Kyrgyzstan swept wrestling; Saudi Arabia demonstrated its strength in Jiu-Jitsu; Türkiye and Azerbaijan remained unbeaten in volleyball; while Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan shined in futsal. – Agencies



Shabana Mahmood, the hardline UK Labour minister tackling migration

LONDON: Shabana Mahmood is the straight-talking, combative interior minister who is overhauling Britain’s asylum system and whose politics have been shaped by her Muslim faith and upbringing as a daughter of Pakistani-origin immigrants. Dubbed “The Terminator” by The Spectator magazine and “the new hard woman of British politics” by Sky News, Mahmood is unapologetic about her attempts to slash migration to the UK. “You may not always like what I do,” the 45-year-old warned fellow Labour MPs at the ruling party’s annual conference in September, shortly after she was appointed Home Secretary. Mahmood, a former barrister, last week unveiled plans to cut protections for refugees, end automatic benefits for asylum seekers and extend the time before some regular migrants can apply for permanent status. She said record levels of irregular migration were “tearing our country apart” and insisted her proposals would help “restore order and control”. Mahmood rejects accusations from lawmakers on the left that she is “stoking division by using immoderate language”.

She believes soaring support for the hard-right, in part due to a failure to stop small boat arrivals of migrants to England, threatens people of colour. In a stunning incident in parliament this week, she revealed she was “regularly” called a term of racist abuse long directed at people of South Asian origin, and “told to go back home”. “It is I who knows, through my personal experience and that of my constituents, just how divisive the issue of asylum has become.” The 45-year-old was born and raised in the central English city of Birmingham, which has a large South Asian-origin community, to parents with roots in Kashmir. Mahmood was introduced to politics at a young age – her father was a local Labour party organiser who would include his daughter as he talked tactics with other members over tea and samosas. “Shabana would let them know exactly what to do, and when to do it,” former deputy Labour leader Tom Watson, who was among the cohort, told the Guardian. “She could see a problem and cut through it at a young age.” – Agencies

Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli...

FROM PAGE 01

and contiguous State of Palestine, based on pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital,” it was added.

EU, Pakistan agree to root out terrorism

FROM PAGE 01

Kallas discussed relations between Islamabad and Kabul amid cross-border tensions last month, with both top diplomats reaffirming their commitment to regional peace, stability, prosperity, and resolving issues with neighbours through dialogue. “The two sides called on Afghanistan’s de facto authorities to play a constructive role in achieving the shared objective of rooting out terrorism from Afghan soil,” the statement read. It added that Dar and Kallas expressed concern over Kabul’s deteriorating socio-economic conditions and were in favour of a “peaceful, stable and self-reliant Afghanistan”. They also hoped that Afghanistan would advocate for a “credible political process aligned with the UN-led ‘Doha process’, and in line with the commitments made by the Taliban de facto Authorities to the international community”, according to the statement. It added that the EU appreciated Pakistan’s hosting millions of Afghan nationals for over four decades, but emphasised that any repatriation must be “safe, dignified and in line with international standards”. “Both sides called upon the Afghan authorities to ensure protection of human rights, especially for women, girls and vulnerable communities,” the statement read.

Rubio lands in Geneva for talks on Ukraine plan

GENEVA: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Geneva Sunday morning for discussions on a US plan to end the Ukraine war, after Washington signalled room for negotiation on the controversial proposal. Trump has given Ukraine until November 27 to approve the plan to end the nearly four-year conflict, but Kyiv is seeking changes to a draft that accepts some of Russia’s headline demands. Rubio, whose reported comments about the plan have thrown an extraordinary element of confusion into efforts to negotiate an end to the war, landed shortly before 9:30 am (0830 GMT), according to AFP journalists on site. Ukrainian, European and Canadian officials were also gathering in the Swiss city, although the format for the talks remained unclear. The US plan to end the Ukraine war has drawn pushback from Kyiv, its allies and US lawmakers ahead of Sunday talks. The 28-point plan would require the invaded country to cede territory, cut its army and pledge never to join NATO. Trump told reporters Saturday it was not his final offer and he hoped to stop the fighting “one way or the other”. Trump’s special envoy for Ukraine, Keith Kellogg, speaking on Fox News, described the plan as “a work in progress”. Ukraine’s European allies, who were not included in drafting the proposal, said the plan requires “additional work” as they scrambled at the G20 summit in South Africa to come up with a counter-offer to strengthen Kyiv’s position. Washington meanwhile insisted Saturday the proposal was official US policy, denying claims by a group of US senators that Rubio told them the document was a Russian “wish list”. Rubio himself insisted on social media late Saturday that “the peace proposal was authored by the US”. “It is offered as a strong framework for ongoing negotiations. It is based on input from the Russian side. But it is also based on previous and ongoing input from Ukraine.” – Agencies

Briefs

Oman expands global reach with new air routes to Asia, Europe, Africa

RIYADH: Oman is expanding its global aviation footprint with new air routes to Asia, Europe and Africa as the sultanate accelerates plans to scale its transport, tourism and logistics sectors. The Civil Aviation Authority, working with airport operators and national as well as international airlines, is widening international connectivity as part of a broader push to build an integrated airport network and strengthen passenger and cargo movement across the country, according to the Oman News Agency. The expansion supports Oman's long-term aviation strategy, which aims to raise the sector's gross domestic product contribution from 159 million Omani rials (\$413 million) in 2018 to 890 million rials by 2030, a more than sixfold increase. The strategy also targets handling 40 million passengers annually by 2030, double the levels recorded in 2019. "The authority has focused on maximizing the benefits of Oman's position as a regional and global logistics hub, leveraging its strategic geographic location on international air routes," the ONA report stated.—APP

UAE AI initiative to boost digital infrastructure across Africa

RIYADH: The UAE has launched a \$1 billion initiative to support and finance artificial intelligence projects in African countries. Announced at the G20 summit by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the AI for Development program aims to expand the use of advanced technologies across key sectors, including education, agriculture and infrastructure. The effort is part of the UAE's broader strategy to position itself as a global hub for AI and knowledge-driven growth. During his remarks, Al Nahyan reaffirmed the UAE's commitment "to driving sustainable growth through broader international partnerships and innovative financing solutions that support development in emerging economies," according to the Abu Dhabi Media Office.

The initiative will be implemented by the Abu Dhabi Exports Office, part of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, in partnership with the UAE Foreign Aid Agency. It is designed to offer financing and technical support to African nations seeking to integrate AI tools into government operations and economic systems. "ADEX's leadership of the AI for Development initiative reflects the UAE's belief that artificial intelligence is a real force for advancing equitable growth and sustainable development," said Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, director-general of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development and Chairman of the Exports Executive Committee of ADEX.—APP

Release of 315 seized in Nigerian mass school kidnapping urged

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV called Sunday for the release of over 300 hostages taken from a Catholic school in one of the largest mass kidnappings in Nigeria. I learned with immense sadness the news of the kidnappings of priests, faithful, and students in Nigeria," he said. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) on Saturday said gunmen had kidnapped more than 300 students and teachers in raids on two schools in the country. "I make a heartfelt appeal for the immediate release of the hostages," Leo said, expressing his "deep sorrow, especially for the many young boys and girls kidnapped and for their anguished families." "Let us pray for these brothers and sisters of ours and that churches and schools may always and everywhere remain places of safety and hope," he said at the end of the Angelus prayer. Gunmen on Monday stormed a secondary school in Kebbi state, abducting 25 girls.—APP

US, Ukrainian, European officials discuss peace plan

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Sunday that Ukraine's borders cannot be changed by force, its army cannot be left vulnerable to attack and that the European Union must have a central role in a Ukraine peace deal

GENEVA: Ukrainian, US and European officials gathered in Geneva on Sunday to discuss a draft plan presented by Washington to end the war in Ukraine, after Kyiv and its allies voiced alarm over what they saw as major concessions to the aggressor Russia. On Friday, US President Donald Trump said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had until Thursday to approve the 28-point plan, which calls on Ukraine to cede territory, accept limits on its military and renounce ambitions to join NATO. For many Ukrainians, including soldiers fighting on the front lines, such terms would amount to capitulation after nearly four years of fighting in Europe's deadliest conflict since World War Two. On Saturday, Trump said the current proposal for ending the war is not his final offer. Since the plan was announced, there has been considerable confusion about who was involved in drawing it up. European allies said they had not been consulted. Before heading to Geneva, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted in a post on X that Washington had authored the plan. He posted the remark after Republican Senator Mike Rounds said Rubio had called him and other senators and explained it was a proposal the US had received and passed on to Ukraine.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on X that Ukraine's allies were ready to work on the plan, but that before doing so "... it would be good to know for sure who is the author of the plan and where was it created." A US official said Rubio and US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff arrived on Sunday for the talks in Geneva. "We hope to iron out the final details...to draft a deal that is advantageous to them (Ukraine)," a US official said. "Nothing will be agreed on until the two presidents get together," the official said, referring to Trump and Zelensky. Zelensky welcomed the diplomatic efforts in Geneva, saying that he hoped they would lead to a result. "The bloodshed must be stopped, and we must ensure that the war is never reignited," he said on X. Ahead of the hastily-convened Geneva gathering, there were also constructive talks between US and Ukrainian officials, the US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said he would speak to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Monday about Ukraine and share the outcome with European and US leaders and allies. The draft plan, which includes many of Russia's key demands and offers only vague assurances to Ukraine of "robust security

guarantees," comes at a perilous moment for the country. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Sunday that Ukraine's borders cannot be changed by force, its army cannot be left vulnerable to attack and that the European Union must have a central role in a Ukraine peace deal. Russia has been making gains along the front in the east and south of Ukraine, albeit slowly and, according to Western and Ukrainian officials, the advances have been extremely costly in terms of lives lost. The transportation hub of Pokrovsk has been partially taken by Russian forces and Ukrainian commanders say they do not have enough soldiers to prevent small, persistent incursions. Ukraine's power and gas facilities have been pummeled by drone and missile attacks, meaning millions of people are without water, heating and power for hours each day. Zelensky himself has been under pressure domestically after a major corruption scandal broke, ensnaring some of his ministers and people in his close entourage. Kyiv had taken heart in recent weeks after the United States tightened sanctions on Russia's oil sector, the main source of funding for the war, while its own long-range drone and missile strikes have

caused considerable damage to the industry. But the draft peace plan has caused major concern as it appears to hand the diplomatic advantage back to Moscow. Ukraine relies heavily on US intelligence and weapons to sustain its war against Russia. Convoys of diplomatic vehicles shuttled through Geneva on Sunday morning as the talks were about to get under way. US Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll was also in Geneva for the talks, while Ukraine's delegation is led by the head of Zelensky's office, Andriy Yermak. Yermak said his delegation met with the national security advisers from Britain, France and Germany and would next hold talks with the United States. European and other Western leaders have said the US peace plan was a basis for talks to end the war but needed "additional work." A German government source said a European draft peace plan, which is based on the US proposal, had been sent to Ukraine and to the US administration. Zelensky has warned that Ukraine risked losing its dignity and freedom — or Washington's backing — over the plan. Russia's Putin described the plan as the basis for a resolution to the conflict, but Moscow may object to some proposals in the scheme, which requires its forces to pull back from some areas they have captured.—Agencies



BELÉM: Secretary Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Ms. Asiha Humera Moriani addressing "Operationalising Loss and Damage: Financing Resilience and Recovery in Vulnerable Countries" at the Pakistan Pavilion on the sidelines of the UN climate summit (COP30) in Belém, Brazil.

Pakistan urges urgent grant-based climate finance

The goal, she said, was to ensure that vulnerable countries receive the resources needed to recover, rebuild and adapt to accelerating climate impacts

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has called for rapid, grant-based and predictable financing for climate-vulnerable developing countries, warning that recurring climate disasters are worsening debt distress and undermining development gains in nations that have contributed least to global emissions. The appeal was made at a high-level side event titled "Operationalising Loss and Damage: Financing Resilience and Recovery in Vulnerable Countries", organized jointly by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and UNICEF at the Pakistan Pavilion during the UN climate summit (COP30) in Belém, Brazil. Secretary for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Aisha Humera Moriani, in her keynote address, said Pakistan was investing heavily in strengthening national resilience despite contributing less than one per cent to global greenhouse gas emissions. She recalled the catastrophic floods of 2022 and 2025 that displaced millions, damaged infrastructure and caused multi-billion-dollar economic losses. "The scale and frequency of such disasters in developing countries underscore the disproportionate climate burden placed on nations that played almost no role in heating the planet," she said. Representatives of the newly established Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), government officials, development partners and experts attended the event to discuss ways of operationalising the global Loss and Damage mechanism. Panelists noted that repeated climate shocks had pushed several vulnerable economies into what they described as a "debt emergency," forcing them to borrow for reconstruction in the absence of adequate grant-based support. They stressed that new, additional and concessional financing was essential if Loss and Damage assistance was to be transformative rather than short-lived. Speakers also highlighted that children were bearing the greatest burden of climate stress, with Pakistan having nearly half its population under 18. Recurring disasters, they said, were severely affecting nutrition, health, education and mental wellbeing. "Climate disasters are not only destroying infrastructure, they are also robbing a generation of its right to safety and opportunity," Moriani added. The discussion further underscored the need to prioritize the Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM), which call for simplified application procedures, faster disbursement and flexible financial windows to support countries with constrained fiscal space. Participants also emphasized the importance of financing mechanisms that can address slow-onset events such as glacial melt, desertification and sea level rise. Ministry spokesperson Muhammad Saleem Shaikh told APP that a significant part of the dialogue focused on support for vulnerable groups, particularly children and young people. He pointed out that non-economic losses — including trauma, cultural disruption, displacement and community breakdown — remained insufficiently recognized in global policy frameworks. He added that Pakistan had announced its readiness to submit two proposals under the FRLD's initial funding cycle, aimed at rebuilding critical social infrastructure and strengthening resilience in key sectors, including agriculture, community systems and water resources. While domestic resources were being mobilized, he said, the scale of climate-related loss far exceeded national capacity. Calling Loss and Damage financing a matter of national survival, the ministry reiterated Pakistan's position that climate justice and the principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) must guide international action. "Climate justice demands immediate access. Our people cannot wait," the ministry stated, urging developed countries and multilateral institutions to translate commitments into tangible financial delivery. Moriani reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working with the UN, international partners and global climate finance bodies to shape an equitable framework for climate recovery. The goal, she said, was to ensure that vulnerable countries receive the resources needed to recover, rebuild and adapt to accelerating climate impacts.—DNA

Smaller EU nations push for greater Africa role

Some EU nations with no former empires have sought to use their history — and in some cases their past domination by Russia — as an asset to establish relations seen as egalitarian, not top-down

HANNESBURG: From Finland opening diplomatic outposts in Senegal to Czech instructors training Mauritanian security forces, a group of smaller European nations has joined a global scramble for influence in Africa. Estonia, Romania and Malta are among European Union countries that have sought to boost their presence on the continent over the past five years, revamping diplomatic and trade links. "There is a wave of second-generation Africa policy refreshes completed and... underway," said Alex Vines of the European Council on Foreign Relations. "It shows the growing importance of Africa across the EU including for its smaller member states." Africa has emerged as a renewed diplomatic battleground in recent years, with China, the United States and Russia competing for its minerals, energy potential and political support. The EU styles itself as the continent's "leading partner" in areas ranging from trade to security, a role it will try to reinforce at a summit with the African Union in Angola on Monday and Tuesday. Yet it has suffered setbacks at times, fueled by resentment at the West's colonial past, with China securing strategic resources in some countries and Russia taking over as preferred security partner in others. Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali have, for example, turned to the Kremlin for support after cutting ties with France following a string of military coups. This has led to a strategic rethink in many corners

of the 27-nation EU. "We needed to somehow get back into the game," a European diplomat told AFP. Some EU nations with no former empires have sought to use their history — and in some cases their past domination by Russia — as an asset to establish relations seen as egalitarian, not top-down. "We are not seen as the big oppressor from the past telling them to do this thing or the other," said a second diplomat speaking on condition of anonymity. Estonia's painstaking transition from ex-Soviet republic to EU member has helped it find some common ground with African nations, said Daniel Schaer, the Baltic country's ambassador to Kenya and South Africa. "In the '90s, we had all of these advisers coming to tell us how we should do things. So I think our advice is in some ways fresh," he said. Similarly, Kaarina Airas, who is in charge of Africa policy at Finland's foreign ministry, said her country's struggle for independence has helped generate goodwill. "Our African partners want trade, they want political relations with us and not only development aid," she told AFP. After a policy review in 2021, Finland opened a new embassy in Senegal, followed by Sweden and Denmark, and is aiming to double trade with Africa by 2030. Estonia has deployed its tech expertise to digitalize private and public services from Namibia to Uganda, while Hungary has gained a foothold in Chad, opening a humanitarian aid center and a dip-

lomatic mission in the capital, with plans to launch a military mission to train local forces. Such efforts often pursue national political and business interests, from fighting Islamist militants to curbing migration and winning contracts for local firms. But they have allowed the EU to diversify its offer at a time when African nations have no shortage of suitors. Whether that will pay dividends remains to be seen, said Geert Laporte of ECDPM, a European think-tank. Some initiatives experienced teething problems as a few countries started their new engagements almost from scratch or with limited resources. As Estonia still has only one embassy in Africa — in Egypt — Schaer said he spends about half his time traveling. And Airas said it has taken some time for Finnish businesses to build knowledge and opportunities in Africa, as many — aside from telecoms group Nokia — had practically no experience there. Trade figures show encouraging signs for the inroads made by smaller EU nations. While still a small fraction of Europe's total, Estonia's trade in goods with the continent has almost doubled since 2019, while Hungary's was up 35 percent over the same period, EU figures show. The Czech Republic, Finland and Denmark, have also seen significant increases, albeit at a slower pace than the 25 percent recorded by the EU as a whole. We are on a good path," said Airas.—Agencies

Canada says it will resume US trade talks 'when appropriate'

JOHANNESBURG: Canada will resume trade discussions with the United States "when it's appropriate," Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Sunday, noting he did not have a pressing issue to address with President Donald Trump last month suspended the talks over an anti-tariff advertisement issued by Ontario's provincial government. "We are very busy with the future of Canada, and with new partnerships. There will be conversations with the president, probably in the next two weeks," Carney told reporters on the sidelines of the G20 leaders' meeting in Johannesburg. "We will re-engage when it's appropriate." Carney reiterated that he was open to dialogue. "I don't have a burning issue to speak with the president about right now. When America wants to come back and have the discussions on the trade side, we will have those discussions." Canada wants a deal to lower import tariffs on steel, aluminum and autos imposed by Trump.—APP

Hamas delegation discuss Gaza ceasefire

CAIRO/JERUSALEM: A Hamas delegation was in Cairo on Sunday to meet with Gaza war mediators, an Egyptian security source and a Hamas source said, as both Israel and the Palestinian militant group continue to trade accusations of ceasefire violations.

The Hamas official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the delegation would be discussing Israel's "continued violation of the ceasefire agreement."

Egypt, Qatar and the US have been mediating between Hamas and Israel, securing the ceasefire that came into effect last month.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had said the country's military killed five senior Hamas members on Saturday after a fighter was sent into Israeli-controlled Gaza territory to attack Israeli soldiers there.

Health officials in Gaza had said Israeli air strikes killed at least 20 people on Saturday. The military on Sunday said a local Hamas commander was among those killed in the Saturday strikes.—APP

Erdogan says Turkiye evaluating deployment of forces for Gaza stabilization force

ANKARA: President Tayyip Erdogan said Turkiye was still evaluating how to potentially deploy its security forces to an international stabilization force being planned in Gaza, adding that a decision would be made after these discussions. NATO member Turkiye played a key role in negotiations for a ceasefire in Gaza, becoming one of the signatories of the accord signed in Egypt. It has vowed to monitor its implementation and voiced a desire to join the planned stabilization force. Speaking at a press conference on Sunday after the G20 summit in South Africa, Erdogan repeated his view that the attacks in Gaza amounted to "genocide" and that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was responsible for these. Israel rejects accusations of genocide.—APP

Netanyahu vows to keep striking Hamas and Hezbollah

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted on Sunday that Israel would do "everything necessary" to stop Hezbollah from regrouping in Lebanon and Hamas from doing the same in Gaza. Over the past week Israel has hit multiple targets in neighboring Lebanon, with the Israeli military saying on Saturday it had struck Hezbollah launchers and military sites. Gaza's civil defense agency said 21 people were killed and dozens more wounded in multiple Israeli air strikes on Saturday, as Hamas and Israel again traded allegations of violating the fragile ceasefire in place since October 10.—APP

Briefs

ECP takes notice of viral ballot papers

HARIPUR: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has taken strict notice after reports that some voters made ballot papers viral on social media during the NA-18 Haripur by-election. A spokesperson for the Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday said the District Returning Officer (DRO) and Returning Officer (RO) have been directed to ensure complete secrecy of the ballot and enforce all regulations inside polling stations. The spokesperson added that clear instructions were issued to all security agencies through the control room, stating that no voter should be allowed to take a mobile phone inside the polling station. The directive aims to ensure the secrecy of the vote and prevent any misuse of polling materials. The ECP reiterated that maintaining ballot secrecy is essential to ensuring free, fair and transparent elections. — APP

Govt denies considering 28th Constitutional Amendment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Despite recent statements by some cabinet members, top government figures now insist that no proposal for a 28th Constitutional Amendment is currently under consideration. Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, categorically denied reports suggesting that the government was working on the 28th amendment package. Speaking to The News, both on his own behalf and on behalf of Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar, he said: "There is no 28th Amendment under consideration." A key official in the Prime Minister's Office also said that nothing related to a new constitutional amendment is being examined at the PMO. "There is no such proposal under review," the source said. Dr Tariq clarified that no meeting has been held on the matter and termed the current discussion "a media-amplified issue." He explained that while some proposals, originally part of the 27th Amendment package but dropped due to lack of consensus, might be revisited in the future, there is presently no move towards initiating a 28th Amendment. "Right now, there is no consideration for a 28th Constitutional Amendment," he stressed, adding that he had reconfirmed this with the law minister. "Anyone asking about the 28th Amendment is being told the same. There is no such thing under consideration." Speculation intensified after a few cabinet members talked about the 28th Amendment. Prime Minister's Adviser on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanaullah, was quoted a few days earlier saying that the government would "soon introduce the 28th Constitutional Amendment."

Govt committed to women empowerment, says Ishaq Dar

While this year's bazaar drew participation from several friendly nations, European countries were notably absent. According to some diplomatic sources, security-related concerns were among the factors that discouraged their participation



SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday reaffirmed the government's commitment to women's empowerment and the promotion of welfare initiatives aimed at improving socio-economic conditions across Pakistan. Speaking at the inauguration of the Annual Charity Bazaar 2025, organized by the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA), he praised the

Association's longstanding humanitarian contributions and service "beyond duty." Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch accompanied him as he visited various country stalls set up at the event. While this year's bazaar drew participation from several friendly nations, European countries were notably absent. According to some diplomatic sources, security-related concerns were among the factors that discouraged their participation. Despite this, stalls of Morocco, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Brunei, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Türkiye, Sudan, Myanmar, and Malaysia drew special attention

from visitors for their vibrant displays and cultural presentations. In his remarks, Ishaq Dar said the stalls symbolize enduring cooperation and friendship with Pakistan. He added that PFOWA's humanitarian efforts—including assistance during recent floods and support to NDMA, the PM's Relief Fund, PIMS, and Polyclinic—reflect its deep-rooted commitment to public welfare. Highlighting PFOWA's contributions to education, health, and social services, he said the Association continues to uphold a proud legacy of generosity, supporting both Foreign Service families

and marginalized communities nationwide. Referring to his recent international engagements, the Deputy Prime Minister said he had just returned from a busy diplomatic tour, which included the SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting in Moscow and the EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Brussels. He noted that the Brussels leg involved a "successful" 7th Pakistan-EU Strategic Dialogue and nearly two dozen bilateral meetings, describing the Foreign Office's diplomatic efforts as "extremely valuable" for the national interest.

G20 summit in South Africa adopts declaration

DNA

PRETORIA: Group of 20 leaders adopted a declaration addressing the climate crisis and other global challenges on Saturday over US objections, prompting the White House to accuse South Africa of weaponising its leadership of the group this year. The declaration, which was drafted without input from the United States, "can't be renegotiated," South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's spokesperson told reporters, reflecting strains between Pretoria and US President Donald Trump's administration, which boycotted the event. "We had the entire year of working towards this adoption and the past week has been quite intense," spokesperson Vincent Magwenya said. Hours later, the White House said Ramaphosa was "refusing to facilitate a smooth transition of the G20 presidency" after initially saying he would pass the gavel to 'an empty chair.' "This, coupled with South Africa's push to issue a G20 Leaders Declaration, despite consistent and robust US objections, underscores the fact that they have weaponised their G20 presidency to undermine the G20's founding principles," said White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly. Trump looks forward to "restoring legitimacy" to the group next year, when the US holds the rotating presidency.

Tejas crash dampens export hopes for Indian fighter jet

Dubai is world's third-largest air show after Paris and Britain's Farnborough

DNA

NEW DELHI: The crash of India's Tejas fighter in front of global arms buyers at the Dubai Airshow is the latest blow to a key national trophy, leaving the jet reliant on Indian military orders to sustain its role as a showcase of home-built defence technology. The cause of Friday's crash was not immediately known but it capped a week of jockeying for influence at the event, attended by India's arch-rival Pakistan six months after the neighbouring foes faced off in the world's largest air battle in decades. Such a public loss will inevitably overshadow India's efforts to establish the jet abroad after a painstaking development over four decades, experts said, as India paid tribute to Wing Commander Namansh Syal, who died in the crash. "The imagery is brutal," said Douglas A Birkey, executive director of the US-based Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, referring to the history of crashes at air shows where nations and industries seek to tout major national achievements. "A crash sends quite the opposite signal: a dramatic failure," he said, adding, however, that while the Tejas would suffer negative publicity, it would most likely regain momentum. Dubai is the world's third-largest air show after Paris and Britain's Farnborough, and accidents at such events have become increasingly rare.

US to launched new Venezuela operation

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States is poised to launch a new phase of Venezuela-related operations in the coming days, four US officials told Reuters, as the Trump administration escalates pressure on President Nicolas Maduro's government. Reuters was not able to establish the exact timing or scope of the new operations, nor whether US President Donald Trump had made a final decision to act. Reports of looming action have proliferated in recent weeks as the US military has deployed forces to the Caribbean amid worsening relations with Venezuela. Two of the US officials said covert operations would likely be the first part of the new action against Maduro. All four officials quoted in this article spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of impending action by the United States. The Pentagon referred questions to the White House. The CIA declined to comment. A senior administration official on Saturday did not rule anything out regarding Venezuela. "President Trump is prepared to use every element of American power to stop drugs from flooding into our country and to bring those responsible to justice," said the official, speaking on the condition of anonymity. The Trump administration has been weighing Venezuela-related options to combat what it has portrayed as Maduro's role in supplying illegal drugs that have killed Americans. He has denied having any links to the illegal drug trade. Two US officials told Reuters the options under consideration included attempting to overthrow Maduro.

Pakistan's internet speed set for major boost

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has significantly expanded its international internet capacity with the launch of the South-East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe (SEA-ME-WE) 6 submarine cable system, the Ministry of Science and Technology said on Saturday. According to a statement issued by the ministry, the 19,200-kilometre high-capacity fibre network connects the country to major digital hubs between Singapore and France. The system, offering over 100 terabits per second (Tbps) of total capacity, provides one of the lowest-latency routes between Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Western Europe.

Gunmen seize 315 in latest Nigerian mass school kidnapping

LAGOS: Gunmen have kidnapped more than 300 students and teachers in one of the largest mass kidnappings in Nigeria, a Christian group said Saturday, as security fears mounted in Africa's most populous nation. The early Friday raid on St Mary's co-education school in Niger state in western Nigeria came after gunmen on Monday stormed a secondary school in neighbouring Kebbi state, abducting 25 girls. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) had earlier reported 227 people seized, but the new number came "after a verification exercise" that concluded 303 students and 12 teachers were abducted. The number of boys and girls - aged between eight and 18 years - kidnapped from St Mary's is almost half of the school's student population of 629. The Nigerian government has not commented on the number of students and teachers abducted. Niger state governor Mohammed Umar Bago said on Saturday the intelligence department and police were "doing the head count". Bago, whose government had ordered some schools shut, also announced the closure of all schools in his state as attention focuses on rescuing the students and teachers. Nearby states have also shuttered all their schools as a precautionary measure. The national education ministry has also ordered 47 boarding secondary schools across the country be shut. President Bola Tinubu has cancelled international engage-

ments, including attending the G20 summit in Johannesburg, to handle the crisis. The two abduction operations and an attack on a church in the west of the country, in which two people were killed and dozens abducted, have happened since US President Donald Trump threatened military action over what he called the killing of Christians by radical Islamists in Nigeria. US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth called on Abuja to "take both urgent and enduring action to stop violence against Christians", during talks with Nigerian National Security Advisor Nuhu Ribadu, the Pentagon said Friday. Nigeria is still scarred by the kidnapping of nearly 300 girls by Boko Haram militants at Chibok in northeastern Borno state more than a decade ago. Some of those girls are still missing. In a video clip shared by CAN, looking distraught, an unidentified St Mary's staff described hearing the sounds of motorcycles and cars before "there was serious bang, bang on different gates of the compound". "Children were crying," she said, describing her panic while looking for keys to the section where the crying was loudest. A security guard was heard groaning and after some time she heard the gang driving away. The "attackers operated aggressively and without interruption for nearly three hours, moving through dormitories", said the local Catholic diocese. — Agencies

NOVEMBER 2025

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pk
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-8488394